

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the federal government, to address the fact that Nunavut is the only territory or province in Canada without a dedicated performing arts centre, invest \$30 million over two years toward construction costs of \$63.6 million for the first Inuit Performing Arts & Cultural Learning Hub, to be known as *Qaggiq*.

Introduction

Canadians are committed to a wide-ranging, good-faith effort to turn the page on the past and pursue genuine reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and the Government of Canada has a key role to play in making this a reality. A national discourse on the topic of reconciliation has been taking place for many years now and was comprehensively examined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, culminating in 94 calls to action for the nation to consider as a means of pursuing true reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Language and tradition have played a critical role in preserving Indigenous culture in the face of willful means to assimilate Indigenous peoples to a more colonial way of life. Despite this reality, they still remain at risk of being lost forever as traditional knowledge keepers pass away without having shared the full breadth of their knowledge and experience with the next generation. We know that the performing arts are key to preserving language and culture and moving forward with reconciliation.

Canada lacks a performing arts space dedicated to promoting and preserving Indigenous culture, however. Nowhere is this as disconcerting as it is in Nunavut, the only territory or province in Canada without a dedicated performing arts space. This is our reality despite the richness of Inuit artistic heritage and the fact that more Inuit live in Nunavut than any other region in Canada.

Building a permanent performing arts space and cultural hub in Nunavut is crucial to maintaining Inuit culture and language and to empowering Inuit, especially youth, through artistic and creative expression. The lack of a permanent performing arts space in Nunavut is a human rights issue that misses an opportunity to address cultural, economic and youth-related issues throughout Canada's Arctic region.

Qaggiq: A carbon conscious solution

Qaggiq is an Inuit term describing a magnificent iglu where people gather to strengthen culture and celebrate life in song and story.

In early 2019, Qaggiavuut commissioned an RFP to study the feasibility of constructing ***Qaggiq: the Inuit Performing Arts & Cultural Learning Hub*** in Iqaluit. A primary consideration for building *Qaggiq* is that it be financially, economically and environmentally sustainable. It is designed to be a leader for energy sustainability in the Canadian Arctic. This feasibility study was officially launched as of this summer and will assess the project on a variety of measures, including specific consideration for the environmental impact of building a structure such as this in Canada's Arctic.

A top goal of this feasibility study is to bring the community together and collaboratively determine what resources and supports are needed and how to most effectively provide them to communities throughout Canada's Arctic. It will include a comprehensive consultation process involving elders, youth, artists, private businesses, non-profit organizations, and local and territorial governments. Input will be gathered through online submissions, interviews with stakeholders, public surveys, and with a proactive, concerted effort to engage youth.

In 2018, Qaggiavuut undertook architectural and business planning in preparation for construction of *Qaggiq*. Colliers International, who developed the plans, estimated the cost of building *Qaggiq* at \$63.6

million. The project is shovel ready and could break ground as early as Spring 2020, bringing a myriad of benefits to Canada's North.

About Qaggiavuut

Based out of Iqaluit and providing support and resources throughout Canada's North—an area we refer to as *Inuit Nunangat*, or Inuit Land—Qaggiavuut is a not-for-profit society committed to building **Qaggiq: the Inuit Performing Arts & Cultural Learning Hub**.

Qaggiavuut is also dedicated to building wellness, culture and Inuit language sustainability in Nunavut and throughout Canada by supporting Inuit performing artists with training and opportunities to strengthen the reach of their creative efforts. To date, Qaggiavuut has provided training and performing arts programming to over 300 Inuit performing artists and to over 5,000 children and youth.

Growing competitiveness, amplifying job-ready skills training, addressing Indigenous suicide: *Qaggiq's* benefits

While Qaggiavuut has demonstrated its ability to develop and sustain a wide range of programming and training, the construction of a multi-use, modern performing arts centre would bring stable support for these efforts. It would provide significant benefits through improving the creativity and competitiveness of Inuit artists and performers, generating economic opportunities, amplifying job-ready skills training and education and addressing social issues such as youth alienation and suicide.

As a cultural hub, *Qaggiq* will attract Inuit artists from across Canada and encourage them to collaborate, train, teach and present their works in a modern, digital environment that can be shared with those who would not otherwise be able to access them. *Qaggiq* will also offer youth the opportunity to participate in Inuit performing arts programming, both live and through performance broadcasts and master classes.

Most importantly, *Qaggiq's* programs would tackle the root causes of widespread personal isolation by providing a community resource, employment opportunities, and addressing the lack of performing arts infrastructure. Research conducted throughout the world indicates that regular exposure to the performing arts is a key to building resiliency and a sense of belonging, identity and life meaning.

It is important to note that a 2018 report from the all party House Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, *Breaking Point*, makes direct links between the development of Indigenous language and cultural programs and suicide prevention. As a project aimed at promoting Inuit language and culture sustainability, *Qaggiq* is uniquely positioned to address this issue as a community resource.

There exists both a wealth of Inuit artistic heritage and an interest and passion among Canada's Arctic communities to access, celebrate and ensure its sustainability. *Qaggiq* provides an excellent opportunity for elevating the performing arts industry in Iqaluit and throughout Canada's Arctic region as a high-value industry. Qaggiavuut's initiatives, as well as research by other similar organizations, have highlighted a wide variety of personal and community benefits from arts engagement, including personal well-being, arts education and better community vitality, a business plan for *Qaggiq* by Colliers International concluded.

Building on success

Overall, *Qaggiq* would assist Qaggiavuut's efforts to continue its wide set of initiatives, including these accomplishments:

- 300 Nunavut performing artists have received professional and arts management tools.
- 100 performing artists in Nunavut received direct employment as a result of participating in Qaggiavuut's training.
- 5,000 children and youth received Inuit performing arts programming.
- 30+ Inuit adults and youth were trained in technical skills such as video editing, camera operation, digital design, stage management, and more.
- 20+ elders earned incomes as resource creators and teacher/facilitators.
- 50+ videos of traditional songs and stories were produced in Inuktitut as teaching resources for years to come.
- Launch of the Nunavut Pisiit Project and the revitalization of pisiit (traditional songs).

We understand the demand both domestically and abroad for original performances that celebrate Inuit heritage and culture. The number of successful works we could create and showcase internationally is limitless if we had a world-class venue to train, perform and create. This would also create jobs and address issues such as isolation and suicide while preserving Inuit culture for future generations.

As previously mentioned, *Qaggiq* is shovel ready, however, in order to break ground and complete the project, a commitment from the federal government is needed. We recommend that the federal government invest \$30 million over two years toward construction costs of \$63.6 million.

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Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to take part in the consultations in advance of Budget 2020. In the spirit of true reconciliation, we believe the merits for allocating federal funding for the building of *Qaggiq*: Inuit Performing Arts & Cultural Learning Hub are compelling. It should be a matter of fairness and national pride to ensure that our artists, our children and youth have the same access to established arts institutions as those in the South in order to face a hopeful future.

Without the arts and a space to perform, train and create new work, Indigenous languages and culture are at a real risk of being lost forever. If this is to happen at a point in history when Canadians are acutely aware of and interested in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, it will become increasingly difficult for Canada to ever address the severe negative impacts of colonization.