

to restore those connections. They believe that reconciliation with other Canadians calls for changing the country's collective, national history so that it is based on the truth about what happened to them as children, and to their families, communities, and nations.

Public memory is important. It is especially important to recognize that the transmission of that collective memory from generation to generation of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals, families, and communities was impaired by the actions of those who ran residential schools.

As Commissioners, we are governed in our approach to reconciliation with this thought: the way that we all have been educated in this country—Aboriginal children in residential schools and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in public and other schools—has brought us to where we are today: to a point where the psychological and emotional well-being of Aboriginal children has been harmed, and the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples has been seriously damaged. We believe that true reconciliation can take place only through a reshaping of a shared, national, collective memory: our understanding of who we are and what has come before. The youth of this country are taking up this challenge.

At the Alberta National Event in March 2014, Jessica Bolduc, an Indigenous youth representing the 4Rs Youth Movement, a national consortium of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth-representing organizations, said:

We have re-examined our thoughts and beliefs around colonialism, and have made a commitment to unpack our own baggage, and to enter into a new relationship with each other, using this momentum, to move our country forward, in light of the 150th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in 2017.

At this point in time, we ask ourselves, "What does that anniversary mean for us, as Indigenous youth and non-Indigenous youth, and how do we arrive at that day with something we can celebrate together?"... Our hope is that, one day, we will live together, as recognized nations, within a country we can all be proud of.¹⁸¹

Reshaping national history is a public process, one that happens through discussion, sharing, and commemoration. As Canadians gather in public spaces to share their memories, beliefs, and ideas about the past with others, our collective understanding of the present and future is formed.¹⁸² As citizens, our ideas, world views, cultural identities, and values are shaped not only in classrooms and museums or by popular culture, but also in everyday social relationships and patterns of living that become our way of life.¹⁸³

Public memory is dynamic—it changes over time as new understandings, dialogues, artistic expressions, and commemorations emerge. Public memory, much like national history, is often contentious. Although public memory can simply reinforce the colonial story of how Canada began with European settlement and became a nation, the process of remembering the past together also invites people to question this limited version of history.