



TSESHAHT FIRST NATION

5091 Tsuma-as Dr. Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8X9
P: 250.724.1225 | F: 250.724.4385 | Tseshaht.com

April 11, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPEN LETTER FROM TSESHAHT FIRST NATION'S ELECTED CHIEF COUNCILLOR (WAHMEESH) KEN WATTS

To our brothers, sisters and relatives:

On behalf of **čišaaʔath (Tseshaht) First Nation**, I would like to offer our utmost honour, respect and support to **ʕaahuusʔath (Ahousaht) First Nation**, Survivors and the families whose children never made it home. The work being done by the **ʔahʔiihčp ʔukʷit ʔiqhmuut (Honouring Our Ancient Ones) Residential Research Project** team is a sacred responsibility for Survivors and the future of First Nations communities. However, we know the toll it can take on your hearts and minds. We stand with you during this challenging time.

Our Nations are connected through this tragic history. When fires occurred at the Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS), students were moved to the Ahousaht Indian Residential School. There are many intermarriages between Tseshaht First Nation and Ahousaht First Nations members, creating a long-interconnected history. We also know many of our Nuu-chah-nulth peoples were sent to and transferred between these institutions and others across the province. It is through this work that we are able to establish these links and document our history to remember our ancestors and educate future generations.

We are sending our healing and loving prayers to our **ʕaahuusʔath** brothers, sisters, leadership, staff and all Survivors of these institutions and those who never made it home.

For those impacted by the announcement made yesterday, please know that cultural and mental health support and resources are available. **čišaaʔath (Tseshaht) First Nation** will continue to create a safe space for AIRS Survivors, families and those affected by this news.

Kleco kleco,

Wahmeesh (Ken Watts), Elected Chief Councillor
čišaaʔath (Tseshaht) First Nation



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Cultural and Mental Health Supports available:

Healing and support for local Survivors, Elders, Members and others can reach out to Linda Pelech,
Counselling support at 250.730.0547

Other mental health support contacts:

Quu'asa Cultural Support (Nuu-chah-nulth members only)
250.724.3939

KUU-US Crisis Line Society
1.800.388.8717
www.kuu-uscrisisline.com

Hope For Wellness
1.855.242.3310

Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line
1.800.721.0066