

## Message from Chief Brendan Sheppard

The Federation of Newfoundland Indians has reached a Supplemental Agreement with the Government of Canada that will allow a fair and equitable review of all valid applications.

As many of you know, in 2008 the Government of Canada and the Federation of the Newfoundland Indians reached an agreement to create the new Qalipu Mi'kmaq Indian First Nation. The Agreement included an enrolment process for founding members. The Agreement was designed to establish a landless Indian Act Band for the Mi'kmaq groups in Newfoundland.

Since 2008 we have received over 103,000 applications for founding membership in the Qalipu band. Nearly half of them were submitted between September and November of 2012. It was not possible for the enrolment committee to review the volume of applications received during the timeframe of the original Agreement. In August 2012 I had requested an extension to the Original Agreement to allow time for all applications that were received to be reviewed. Since last November we have been working hard to secure that extension.

The parties involved with the 2008 Agreement believe it is important to be true to the integrity and credibility of the original enrolment process for membership in the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation. It was neither reasonable nor credible to expect such a huge number of individuals to become members of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation due to the fact that over the past number of decades less than 20,000 individuals had self identified as Mi'kmaq people living in NL.

Everyone who has applied for membership in our Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation will be treated in a fair and equitable manner. The review process will be in line with the original criteria for membership.

All current members will retain rights and services until the end of the current process which is expected to end March 2016.

## NO CHANGE IN ORIGINAL AGREEMENT

This Supplemental Agreement does not change the original 2008 Agreement. That agreement is still in effect and the criteria for enrolment in section 4.1 of that Agreement have not changed. What the Supplemental Agreement does, however, is provide more clarity in terms of self-identification and substantial connection for the enrolment committee as they review the applications. I make my personal commitment to put the processes in place to keep you informed about the progress. One of our primary tools in that regard is the website and I encourage you to check out our website (<http://qalipu.ca/> and the government of Canada website.