

# **'NAMGIS RATIFICATION EXPERIENCE** **LESSONS LEARNED**



# BACKGROUND

## FIRST VOTE

- **Community votes held in March 2013 at Alert Bay, Vancouver and Victoria to approve AIP.**
- **292 of 1270 or 23% of all eligible 'Namgis voters participated in the March 2013 community votes.**
- **131 out of 292 or 45% yes and 161 out of 292 or 55% voted no.**

# BACKGROUND

## SECOND VOTE

- **'Namgis will hold a second vote in September 2014 to approve the AIP.**
- **We are holding a second vote for two main reasons:**
  - **Low voter turnout**
  - **Effective exclusion of 50% of our members from the first vote.**

# QUESTIONS

- 1. What happened?**
- 2. What are we doing differently?**

**WHAT HAPPENED?**

# WHAT WE DID RIGHT

- Regularly held community meetings over 20 year period to inform members and seek their input.
- Communications materials (AIP and treaty process) developed, distributed to members and posted on webpage.
- Community newsletter to provide progress reports on AIP negotiations.
- In other words, we did all of the things that we should have done to pave the way for a successful outcome.

# INFORMATION GAP

- Despite our best efforts to share information with our members, we believe that many who cast their vote in March 2013 were largely uninformed about the content of the AIP and its benefits.
- Due to this information gap, we believe many of our members cast their ballots on the basis of **opinion** rather than **fact**.

# REASONS FOR GAP

## **Community Meetings**

- **Community meetings main vehicle for sharing information**
- **Low attendance at community meetings**
- **Correlation between attendance at meetings and voter participation:**
  - **Attendance: 10% (Alert Bay), 20% (Vancouver) and 27% (Victoria)**
  - **Voter participation: 40% (Alert Bay), 40% Vancouver and 75% (Vancouver)**
- **Unless members obtained information about the AIP from other sources, those who participated in the vote likely cast their ballot on the basis of opinion rather than fact.**

# REASONS FOR GAP

## **Webpage**

- Webpage next main vehicle for sharing information.
- Information about the AIP and its benefits was located at four different sites on our webpage.
- This made it difficult for our members to navigate our webpage and find important information about the AIP on our webpage.
- So webpage was arguably not effective in filling information gap caused by low attendance at community meetings.

# REASONS FOR GAP

## **Newsletter**

- **Newsletter next main vehicle for sharing information.**
- **However, over time our newsletter became increasingly focused on non-treaty matters.**
- **This reduced its effectiveness in providing information about the AIP and treaty negotiations to our members.**
- **Thus, newsletter not effective in filling information gaps caused by low attendance at community meetings and challenges navigating webpage.**

# **LOW VOTER TURNOUT**

## **Information Gaps likely contributed to Low Voter Turnout**

- **Information gaps may also account for low voter turnout.**
- **Members may have stayed away from the polls if they felt that they did not have enough information to make an informed decision.**

# **LAND AND CASH**

- **Anecdotal evidence to support view that many members did not support AIP due to dissatisfaction with land and cash provisions.**

# **OUTSTANDING ISSUES (FISH)**

- **Fishing is an integral part of the fabric of our community.**
- **No fisheries chapter in AIP.**
- **Anecdotal evidence to support view that many members did not support AIP due to lack of fisheries provisions.**

# **OUTSTANDING ISSUES (TAX)**

- **Many of our members object to removal of *Indian Act* tax exemption.**
- **Many other taxation provisions to be negotiated during Final Agreement negotiations.**
- **Anecdotal evidence to support view that many members did not support AIP due to unresolved taxation issues.**

# **WHAT WE ARE DOING DIFFERENTLY**

# **COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

- **We developed a comprehensive Communications and Community Engagement Plan, which includes**
  - **Information campaign**
  - **Community engagement campaign**

# INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

- The information campaign consists of the following activities:
  - **Community Information Sessions:** Held between October 2013 to January 2014 to share information set out in the handbooks on the Land, Resources, Governance, Fiscal and Procedural chapters of the AIP and on outstanding issues.
  - **Home Visits:** To be held between February and May 2014 to share information set out in AIP Booklets and Flip Books developed specifically for Home Visits.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The community engagement campaign consists of the following activities:
  - **Home Visits:** A Home Visit team will meet with members at Alert Bay, Vancouver and Victoria to gather input from members about their:
    - **likes and dislikes** with the **AIP**; and
    - **goals and objectives** in connection with the **outstanding issues** for negotiation.
  - **Telephone Interviews:** The Home Visit team will conduct telephone interviews with members in other locations
  - **Community Survey:** A Community Survey will also be used to gather information from members in other locations

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

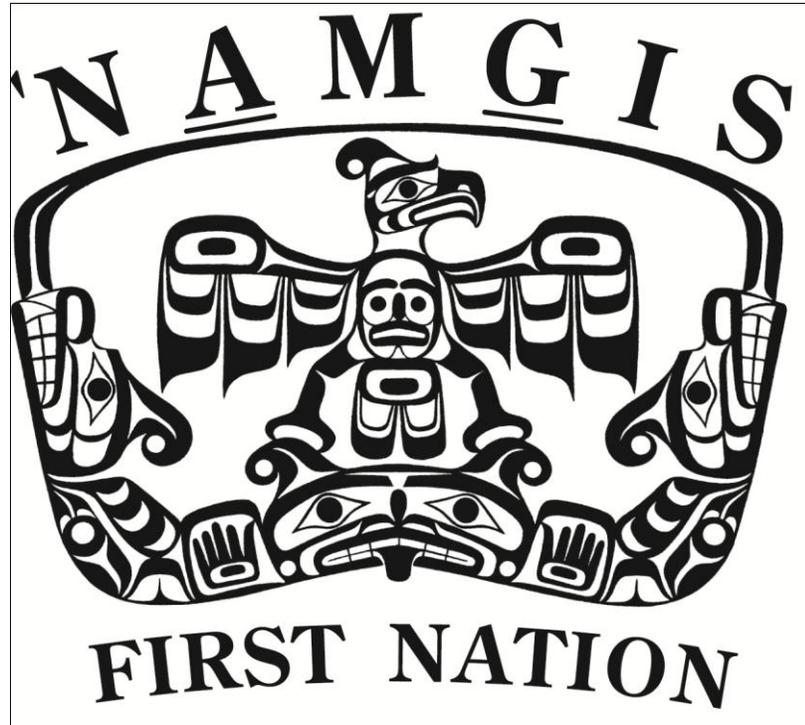
- Input received from members at Home Visits and through the Community Surveys will be consolidated into a Community Engagement Report
- Community Engagement Report submitted to 'Namgis Treaty Caucus and members in June 2014

# COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- Namgis Treaty Caucus will respond to the report at Community Meetings that will be held in June or July 2014

# CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- We will continue to work hard to:
  - inform all our members about the contents of the AIP and its benefits; and
  - ensure that their voices are heard and their concerns addressed.
- We will also continue to work hard to get out the vote from July to September 2014, which is when the second vote will be conducted through mail-in ballots.
- Through all of this work, we are optimistic that the result on September 2014 will be different.



**GILAKAS'LA**