



HONOURABLE GLEN ABERNETHY  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE LEADER  
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR SENIORS  
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

DEC 05 2017

**Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories (Revised)**

In light of the revisions made to the *Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019*, I am writing to confirm your mandate as Minister of Health and Social Services. In addition to your formal portfolio, you will also be Minister Responsible for Seniors, for Persons with Disabilities, and for the Public Utilities Board; you will also continue to chair the Social Envelope Committee-of-Cabinet. You will also continue as Government House Leader.

Together, Cabinet is responsible for implementing the Revised Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories in order to advance the priorities set by all Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. The people of the Northwest Territories have entrusted all of us to manage effectively, prudently, and responsibly over the remaining two years of the term of this Assembly. It is my expectation that you will continue to do your part to achieve the Legislative Assembly's vision of a healthy, just, sustainable and prosperous territory.

We face both challenges and opportunities for the remainder of the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. In order to grow the NWT economy, we must stimulate economic growth, respond to the effects of climate change, and confront the rising cost of living. At the same time, we must continue to provide quality programs and services to residents. We know that in order to sustainably grow our economy we need to increase the territorial population, attract investment, settle outstanding land, resource, and self-government agreements, and address the ongoing impacts of colonialism and residential schools.

These pressures exist at a time when our fiscal situation requires a strong commitment to prudence and strong financial management. Difficult decisions will be required to ensure fiscal balance and future prosperity. More than ever, we must continue to ensure our actions are responsible and transparent.

.../2

We are well-positioned, in this post-devolution environment, to leverage our good working relationships and partnerships with other levels of government to our mutual benefit. Indeed, many of the Revised Mandate objectives, such as adapting to climate change, lowering the cost of living, and investing in strategic infrastructure, renewable and alternative energy solutions and the knowledge economy are aligned with the priorities of other governments, including the Government of Canada.

Making the most of these advantages and achieving meaningful long-term change for the people of the Northwest Territories will require a disciplined and strategic approach to our relations with other governments, including the Government of Canada. To ensure that NWT priorities and needs are fully understood and factored into decisions and policies at the federal level, it will be important for all Ministers to speak clearly and consistently about the GNWT's priorities in all their dealings with their federal counterparts and avoid being diverted to initiatives and subjects of lower priority to our government. Maintaining a similar clarity in our interactions with our provincial and territorial counterparts, as well as Indigenous leaders, will further help improve awareness and understanding of GNWT priorities as outlined in our Federal Engagement Strategy.

People want a government that is more open and transparent, and which is clearly open to input from them. They also want their government to take the interests of all residents, in communities both big and small and in every region, into account. Meaningful dialogue and engagement with the residents of the NWT must be an ongoing priority for all Ministers.

The Guiding Principles of consensus government set out expectations for all Members, as well as the relationship between Cabinet and Regular Members. I expect Ministers to respect and act within the provisions of the Process Conventions governing Cabinet's communications, consultation and relationship with Standing Committees of the Legislative Assembly, Caucus and Regular Members. Our consensus government depends upon our collective commitment to working effectively together for the public good, in all that we do.

In addition to collaboration with Standing Committees, I expect Ministers will continue to work closely and effectively with each other, to ensure that all pertinent, cross-departmental perspectives are considered when solutions to complex issues are developed. Ministers should use the appropriate Committee-of-Cabinet to advance Mandate commitments. Your Deputy Ministers are accountable for assisting you to fulfill the responsibilities of your portfolio and the specific Mandate objectives for which you are accountable.

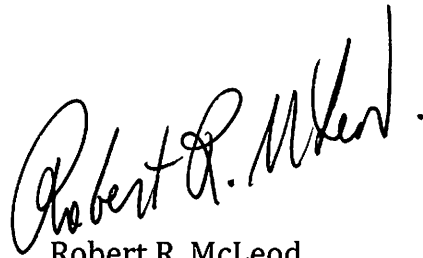
You can continue to rely upon your Deputy Ministers to advise you on process and policy, and to bring forward comprehensive options and advice for your consideration, but it is your responsibility to provide clear direction to your Deputy Ministers, including your expectations with respect to cross-departmental collaboration.

In addition to meeting the provisions of your Department's Establishment Policy, you are accountable for the specific Mandate commitments listed in the attachments to this mandate letter. Although they are not all included in the attachment, it is understood that you will continue to be accountable for the entire scope of programs, services and operations for the portfolios you hold.

As Minister, you must continue to exercise the utmost compliance with the *Conflict of Interest Act*, the *Financial Administration Act*, and the policies and procedures of the Financial Management Board. The role of Minister demands the highest ethical standards and must bear the closest scrutiny. Your actions will be the basis on which this government is measured for its commitment to ethical conduct, openness and transparency.

Our Cabinet has broad experience, fresh ideas, diverse backgrounds, a shared commitment to respectful relationships and transparency – qualities that will generate innovative solutions to complex problems. I have full confidence that our collective capacity will result in good governance, programs and services that improve the lives of residents, stronger relationships with Canada and provinces and territories, NWT Indigenous and municipal governments, and strategic investments that enable the prosperity of future generations and make the Northwest Territories an attractive place to live and work.

I look forward to working with you for the remainder of the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to realize our commitments. While the future of the global economy and what this will mean for the Northwest Territories remains uncertain, I am certain that with a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility, thoughtful deliberation, respectful engagement and a willingness to innovate, we can achieve our vision of social progress, environmental sustainability and economic development built on a foundation of strong consensus government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert R. McLeod". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small dash at the end.

Robert R. McLeod  
Premier

Attachment

## **Mandate of the Minister of Health and Social Services**

- Continue implementing Right from the Start to improve early childhood development, by:
  - Improving access to and outcomes of early intervention services for children 0-5 by looking at the results of evaluating NWT rehabilitation services and by continuing pilot projects in the Dehcho, Tłı̄chǫ, and Beaufort Delta regions, along with territorial program design
  - Continuing to support parents with programs and supports to help ensure their children have a strong foundation
  - Collaborating with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and working with our partners to identify the need for any additional assessments for 3- and 4-year-olds entering school, beginning in the 2018-2019 school year
  - Improving oral health and developmental outcomes for children aged 0-5
  - Developing options to enhance access to birthing services and pre- and post-natal care, including development of a territorial midwifery model
  - Continuing to support community wellness initiatives with early childhood development funding and subject matter expertise
- Enhance access to culturally-appropriate programs and services, and develop a comprehensive mental health and addictions framework that:
  - Addresses gaps in integrated community-based services
  - Compiles baseline data so that government can be better held to account for the performance of mental health and addictions services
  - Enhances treatment options at local and regional levels, including aftercare
  - Evaluates our land-based addictions healing programs
  - Models a mobile addictions treatment team
  - Prioritizes improvements to outpatient mental health services, with a particular focus on youth mental health services in schools and the broader community
- Enhance support to communities in crisis by providing appropriate responses to suicide, which include:
  - Establishing a support team of headquarters and regional staff, to form a crisis response network that can respond and provide support to communities

- Providing specialized trauma informed training and critical incidence stress debriefing (CISD) training to the crisis response network
- Building surge capacity so there is coverage for team members participating on the network
- Utilizing the expertise of the crisis response network team members to promote enhanced suicide intervention activities
- Developing a program monitoring framework
- Support elders to live in their own homes for as long as possible and ensure adequate supports are available for those who can no longer do so, by:
  - Completing a review of existing programs in order to project, over a 20-year period, policy and financial needs
  - Developing and implementing an action plan for enhanced home and community care services
  - Developing and implementing an action plan for expanded palliative care services
  - Developing financing options for long-term care facilities
  - Proposing a regulatory framework for long-term care
- Continue implementing the Building Stronger Families action plan to transform child and family services by:
  - Continuing audits to ensure compliance with the *Child and Family Services Act*
  - Developing caseload and workload measures for child protection in order to monitor and track the resources that are required to ensure compliance with *the Child and Family Services Act*
  - Reviewing the standards and delivery methods of the Healthy Family Program to determine whether there are more effective ways to reach families-at-risk
- Continue to support at-risk children and families through preventative and collaborative approaches, including:
  - Ensuring services for children in care focus not just on safety, but also on stability and child development
  - Improving system supports for aboriginal children and families including improving the cultural competence of service providers
  - Improving the coordination, delivery and effectiveness of family services through an integrated care model

- Continue implementing Right from the Start to improve early childhood development, by:
  - Improving oral health and developmental outcomes for children aged 0-5
  - Developing options to enhance access to birthing services and pre- and post-natal care, including development of a territorial midwifery model
  - Continuing to support community wellness initiatives with early childhood development funding and subject matter expertise
- Reduce the burden of chronic disease by promoting healthy lifestyles and improving screening and management, with specific focus on:
  - Developing and proposing updated tobacco control legislation
  - Developing improved supports for patients and families battling cancer
  - Giving health care providers tools and training to support patients and families in the management of chronic disease such as diabetes
  - Continuing to host healthy living fairs in communities
  - Increasing awareness and availability of smoking cessation aids
  - Continuing to promote healthy eating in NWT communities through a variety of programs including healthy family collective kitchens and drop the pop
  - Standardizing access to cancer screening across the NWT
- Continue integration of the health and social services system, including taking steps to bring the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority into the public service, to improve care for our people, by clarifying timelines, appointing people to Regional Wellness Councils and the NWT Health and Social Services Leadership Council, finalizing roles and responsibilities, and ensuring seamless service delivery for all residents during the transition
- Continue to work collaboratively to reduce poverty in the NWT by funding community-based partners, convening meetings of stakeholders, finalizing indicators that allow performance to be assessed, collecting information from these indicators into an annual report, and developing additional options for action, and ensuring continuous quality improvement to the administration of the Anti-Poverty Fund based on evaluation results
- Ensure effective supports and programs are in place for persons with disabilities by preparing an accessible inventory of the GNWT supports systems that already exist, and then by responding to previous evaluations of government supports

- Reduce poverty in the NWT by implementing the GNWT commitments in the Territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan, continuing to work with our partners to advance the plan and supporting communities' priorities for wellness
- Work with all relevant stakeholders, including non-government organizations from the disabilities sector, to complete the NWT disability review and develop a strategic framework and five-year action plan to ensure effective supports and programs are in place for persons with disabilities
- Strengthen initiatives and partnerships to prevent and reduce family violence by:
  - Continuing to implement 'What Will it Take?', the social marketing campaign on family violence
  - Providing funding to develop family violence protocols and response teams in regions with no shelters
  - Continuing to support five family violence shelters across the NWT, including support for the overall capacity of the people who work in these shelters
  - Continuing to support programming for children who have witnessed violence
- Continue to provide funding to Aboriginal community governments and work with communities to develop wellness plans that meet local needs and priorities

In addition to the Mandate objectives listed above, you are also accountable for:

- Supporting the efforts of our government to build and maintain respectful government-to-government relations by implementing the government-wide Aboriginal government engagement strategy
- Supporting the efforts of our government to advance the federal engagement strategy
- In collaboration with residents, Aboriginal governments, community governments and other stakeholders, develop and implement the policy, program and legislative regimes necessary to support the legalization of cannabis in the Northwest Territories