



SEP 16 2020

HONOURABLE R.J. SIMPSON  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE LEADER

**Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories**

I am writing to confirm your mandate as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Minister of Justice, and Government House Leader. In addition to your formal portfolios, you will also Chair the Economic Diversification and Growth & Environment Committee-of-Cabinet.

Consensus government in the Northwest Territories depends on a collective commitment by all Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together, within their respective roles, openly and cooperatively. As Premier, I have committed to improving and enhancing the relationship among Cabinet and Regular Members. I expect all Ministers to make effective and regular dialogue with Members an ongoing priority and to work closely and respectfully with Standing Committees at every appropriate opportunity.

Cabinet must work as a cohesive team given the collective nature of Cabinet decision making, recognizing that many of the issues we will be tackling do not exist in silos. Ministers should use the appropriate Committee-of-Cabinet to advance commitments and develop coordinated proposals for Cabinet's consideration. We must conduct ourselves with professionalism and integrity, and maintain confidentiality on all matters related to Cabinet and Cabinet related meetings, discussions and proceedings.

In your capacity as Chair of the Economic Diversification and Environment & Environment Committee-of-Cabinet, you will ensure cooperation between Ministers and departments on key policy initiatives relating to sustainable, diversified economic development and effective environmental management.

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As Cabinet Ministers, we have the collective responsibility to advance the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly by implementing the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, tabled on February 7, 2020. In addition to carrying out all of the duties associated with the portfolios you hold and meeting the provisions of your Department's Establishment Policy, you are accountable for fulfilling the specific Mandate commitments listed in the attachment to this letter and for tracking and reporting on your progress.

As a Cabinet, we have agreed that our decisions will reflect the Guiding Principles we tabled on December 10, 2019. These principles should guide us and our departments in both our assessment of issues and our decision-making. We must lead with courage and compassion in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories.

A productive partnership between Indigenous governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories is fundamental to the success of our Mandate and the future prosperity of our territory. The decisions we make as Cabinet should always reflect our commitment to reconciliation and the affirmation and advancement of Indigenous rights and self-determination. I expect every Minister to foster constructive and respectful government-to-government relationships with our Indigenous partners and to seek ways to advance reconciliation, recognize and affirm Aboriginal rights, and support expanded program and service delivery by Indigenous governments.

Successfully achieving our Mandate commitments will also require a close working partnership with community and municipal governments across the territory. Ministers must also build effective working relationships with federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to foster the strategic government-to-government relationships required to fulfill our shared goals and to leverage support for Northern priorities.

The people of the Northwest Territories want accountable government that is open, transparent and reflective of their interests, in keeping with the principles of our Open Government Policy. I expect the fulfillment of every Minister's mandate to be carried out in meaningful dialogue with all residents and stakeholders, including GNWT staff, the broad business community, and investors. You must also uphold the principles of open, transparent, and evidence-based decisions, solution-oriented service delivery and effective public awareness of government operations and decision-making.

Economic uncertainty, increasing impacts and awareness of climate change and complex social needs create significant challenges for the Government of the Northwest Territories. While decisive action is required, our fiscal situation calls for prudent, publicly accountable financial management. Difficult decisions will be required on the part of all elected leaders to meet the best interests of residents while ensuring fiscal balance and maintaining future resources. This requires careful financial decision making to support meaningful and effective investments in jobs, in people and in communities across the NWT.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed not only the NWT, but the entire world. Cabinet and departments reacted quickly to put essential supports in place. Work will need to continue to support NWT residents and businesses as the NWT faces potential future waves of the pandemic, but also moves towards social and economic recovery. Ministers will need to work collaboratively with MLAs and each other to determine how best to provide supports while being mindful of the need to fulfill the GNWT's mandate.

We also must acknowledge the reality that the Northwest Territories is not immune to systemic racism and systemic discrimination. Unconscious bias and discrimination hinder our ability to fully embrace the vibrant diversity of the Northwest Territories, advance our collective priorities, and achieve inclusion and cooperation. It is critical to address the ongoing legacies of colonialism and the devastating impacts it has had on Indigenous people's culture, language, education and health. As Minister, I expect you to support the GNWT in its efforts to build a territory where all persons, including Indigenous people and people of all racial backgrounds, have an equal opportunity to succeed, as well as advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice.

As Minister you must exercise utmost compliance with the *Conflict of Interest Act*, the *Financial Administration Act*, the Respectful Workplace Policy and all other and the policies and procedures of the Financial Management Board and of Executive Council (Cabinet). The role of Minister demands the highest ethical standards and bears the closest scrutiny. Your actions will be the basis on which this Government is measured for its ethical and respectful conduct, professionalism and impartiality.

Your Deputy Minister is responsible for assisting you to fulfill the responsibilities of your portfolios and the specific Mandate objectives for which you are accountable. You can rely on your Deputy Minister and other skilled public servants as key sources of advice on process and policy and to bring forward comprehensive options for your consideration. You are, however, responsible for providing clear direction to your Deputy, including your expectations for interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration.

Our Cabinet brings together diverse backgrounds, fresh perspectives, and a shared dedication to the people of the Northwest Territories. I am certain that, working together with our colleagues in the Legislative Assembly and our Indigenous and other government partners, we will develop innovative solutions to the complex and long-standing issues Northerners face, ensuring a bright future for the Northwest Territories well beyond our own four year terms.

I am honoured and excited to be working with you to achieve this.

  
Caroline Cochrane  
Premier

Attachment

## **Minister of Education, Culture and Employment**

As Minister of Education, Culture and Employment you are responsible for providing residents of the Northwest Territories with access to quality programs, services and supports to assist residents in making informed and productive choices for themselves and their families in regard to education, training, careers, employment and labour, child development, languages, culture and heritage. To achieve these goals your Department engages in a broad range of activities that you continue to be accountable for.

In addition to the Departmental goals, you will undertake the following to support the achievement of the Government's Mandate:

- Co-Lead with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and with the support of the Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation and the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, the efforts of our government to increase employment in small communities by:
  - Increasing seasonal, part-time and full-time employment in small communities;
  - Preparing residents for current and future jobs and business development opportunities; and
  - Supporting small communities in developing skilled tradespeople.
- Co-Lead with the Minister of Health and Social Services the efforts of our government to improve early childhood indicators for all children by:
  - Ensuring better coordinated services for children and their families;
  - Ensuring our programs and services respect the cultural needs of children and youth; and
  - Providing greater supports for parents.
- Lead the efforts of our government to advance universal child care by increasing availability and affordability by:
  - Increasing availability and reducing the costs of childcare in communities;
  - Providing support for NWT students to pursue post-secondary programs that produce qualified childcare workers; and

- Working with partners to support communities to tailor early learning and childcare programs to meet community needs.
- Lead the efforts of our government to increase student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada by:
  - Working with Indigenous governments, community governments, families and partners to identify and begin to address the impediments to student success and promote the value of education; and
  - Addressing concerns about social passing.
- Lead the efforts of our government to create a polytechnic university by:
  - Transforming Aurora College into an accredited and independent polytechnic university over the next six years.
- Support the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, efforts to enable seniors to age in place with dignity by:
  - Increasing supports for seniors to stay in their homes and communities; and
  - Helping protect seniors from abuse or neglect.
- Support the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs to advance our government's efforts to strengthen government's leadership and authority on climate change.
- Support the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs to lead our government's efforts to increase regional decision-making authority by:
  - Ensuring that GNWT decision-making reflects the full understanding of communities and regions.
- Support the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs in efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by:
  - Identifying, prioritizing and strengthening key actions to further implement UNDRIP.

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

- Leading the efforts of our government to advance the vision and goals for post-secondary education as outlined the *NWT Post-Secondary Education Strategic Framework 2019-2029* by:
  - Working with post-secondary education partners, to implement the *Post-Secondary Education Act* and its associated regulations to provide responsive post-secondary learning opportunities for NWT residents;
  - Creating an accessible post-secondary education system by developing quality assurance processes for post-secondary programs and institutions.
- Leading the efforts of our government to advance the Skills 4 Success (S4S) initiative by:
  - Implementing S4S strategies related to Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification, Small Communities Employment and Immigration;
  - Updating the 15-year Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment to forecast labour market demand to the year 2035; and
  - Releasing the S4S Action Plan 2021-2025 to advance the implementation of evidence-based actions that will help NWT residents to succeed in adult and post-secondary, and skills training pursuits that lead to employment;
- Leading the efforts of our government to support the development and operation of the JK-Grade 12 Education system by:
  - Renewing and beginning to implement a new JK-12 Education Renewal and Innovation Action Plan to respond to the Office of the Auditor General Report recommendations and to increase student education outcomes;
  - Developing and introducing competency-based professional standards for NWT educators and an associated growth and development model; and
  - Exploring options for renewing the education curriculum in order to better meet the needs of students;

- Lead the efforts of our government in promoting growing the network of public libraries by:
  - Establishing at least three more school/community libraries in the NWT; and
- Initiate a review the Income Assistance program to ensure its objectives, benefits, and delivery support the social and economic aspirations of the people of the NWT.

## **Minister of Justice**

As Minister of Justice you are responsible for carrying out the administration of justice in the Northwest Territories, including policing and corrections, in a manner which respects community and Indigenous values and encourages communities to assume increasing responsibilities. You must also ensure that the government's administration of public affairs accords with the law. By virtue of your office, you are the Attorney General for the Northwest Territories, entrusted with the powers and charged with the duties specified in the *Department of Justice Act*.

In addition to the Departmental goals, you will undertake the following to support the achievement of the Government's Mandate:

- Supporting the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs to lead our government's efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by:
  - Identifying, prioritizing and strengthening key actions to further implement UNDRIP.
- Support the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs to lead efforts to strengthen our government's leadership and authority on climate change.
- Support the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs to lead our government's efforts to increase regional decision-making authority by:
  - Ensuring that GNWT decision-making reflects the full understanding of communities and regions.



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

- In collaboration with the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs , developing a policy for public engagement and consultation with Indigenous governments on the development of regulations;
- Supporting the provision of police services that meaningfully reflect the unique needs and cultural history of each community, address the complex challenges of policing in the north, and seek opportunities to continually build trust in the communities being served;
- Ensuring that principles of restorative justice are supported throughout the criminal justice system in the Northwest Territories, from pre-charge options through to offender rehabilitation and reintegration back into their communities;
- Working with communities to explore options for preventing and reducing crime, looking to community-based solutions to build capacity in communities to continue to inform and shape their own justice responses;
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement for the Corrections Service through legislative and regulatory initiatives and culturally responsive and evidence-based programming;
- Undertaking modernized builders' lien legislation; and
- Ensuring that Integrated Service Delivery is effectively implemented in collaboration with the Ministers of Health and Social Services, Education Culture and Employment, Municipal and Community Affairs, Executive and Indigenous Affairs, Finance and the Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

### **Government House Leader**

As Government House Leader, you are responsible for coordinating the conduct of government business in the Legislative Assembly and for the development of the government's overall legislative agenda. You will also provide regular updates to Caucus on the government's intended house business and legislative plans.