



June 12, 2024

HONOURABLE CAITLIN CLEVELAND
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT

Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories

I am writing to confirm your mandate as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and as Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

As the Executive Council (Cabinet), of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), we are embarking on a collective journey that will lead the Territory through a period of transition and transformative change over the life of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Together, we will advance our shared vision of a Northwest Territories (NWT) that thrives in all aspects, promotes the use and advancement of our human and natural resources, establishes and maintains sustainable fiscal management, and advances cooperative governance with Indigenous governments.

Our collective success in achieving the Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly (the Priorities), requires the will and commitment of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together in their respective roles for the benefit of the residents of the NWT. In the spirit of consensus government, I expect you to maintain constructive, open, respectful, and collaborative relationships with both your Cabinet colleagues and Regular Members. The Guiding Principles and Process Conventions set out the core principles for communication, transparency, accountability and inclusive decision-making essential to effective consensus government in the NWT. As a Minister, you are accountable to the Legislative Assembly for upholding these principles, for your leadership, for the performance of your responsibilities, and for decisions made by Cabinet.

The GNWT is only one of the governments in the NWT. Collaboration with Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations is fundamental to delivering our Mandate, and the NWT has the potential to demonstrate to Canada and the world what collaborative governance between Indigenous and public governments can achieve.

As a Minister, you should advance reconciliation and good governance as you work to implement the Mandate through commitment to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; working to advance, settle and implement Indigenous rights agreements; implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Calls to Justice; information-sharing and innovation through partnerships with Indigenous, federal, and community governments, non-governmental organizations and private industry; and honouring the GNWT's dedication to openness, transparency, and accountability.

.../2

I expect Ministers to strengthen government-to-government relationships with Indigenous governments and advance issues of shared interest by jointly engaging with the federal government to increase funding to the NWT.

The Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly will guide our work through a challenging time. The GNWT must shift toward more collaborative, coordinated approaches to delivering programs and services, ensuring they are designed with a person-centred approach that prioritizes equity and ease of access for all residents. Departments will need to engage, collaborate, and communicate with each other across government in order to provide Cabinet with the best advice and most comprehensive options for consideration. Recognizing this need, I have not assigned symbolic client-based portfolios for Youth, Seniors, and Persons with Disabilities in this government. Instead, I expect all Ministers to direct their departments to work together to meet the needs of diverse client groups effectively and equitably within their department's existing establishment policies, and to find policy solutions that are person-centred by design and promote cohesive, efficient program and service delivery. The GNWT has identified Mandate Commitments aligned with each of the Priorities to realize this vision. I expect you, in collaboration with Cabinet colleagues, to use the appropriate Committee of Cabinet to advance Mandate commitments and develop coordinated proposals for Cabinet's consideration.

The GNWT has an amazing workforce, one which continuously strives to provide services and programs to the best of their ability to residents. As Ministers, we must provide public servants with the guidance and tools necessary for them to work with us in our commitment to serving the people of the NWT. I ask that you lead by example to show that collaboration is the key to success. Strengthening relationships and building new ways of working together will require innovation, creativity, adaptability, and humility across government and throughout the public service. We must conduct ourselves with professionalism and integrity, maintain confidentiality on all matters related to Cabinet and related discussions and proceedings, and never lose sight of our shared vision of an NWT where people are supported in the ways they wish to live, work, and grow.

The impacts of climate change demand immediate attention and should underpin responsible decision-making. Floods, wildfires, and permafrost degradation increasingly impact our operating context and are a source of strain financially, culturally, and emotionally. As a government, we must be responsive in the face of a changing environment and take action that instills public trust in our ability to support residents and meaningfully addresses the causes and effects of climate change.

We are faced with the challenge of providing the programs and services that residents expect and need while operating within a constrained fiscal reality. While this is a difficult task, it is not an impossible one. We have the opportunity to restore fiscal balance to the GNWT and set the Territory and its residents on a path for long term success through sound government spending. We will be guided by the Fiscal Sustainability Strategy to meet the challenges we face over the next four years, including unknown challenges that will inevitably arise, while also allocating government spending to appropriately address the Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly. By ensuring our fiscal house is in order, we will provide certainty and security for residents now and into the future.

In addition to ensuring that we are focusing our existing resources to have maximum impact, we must focus on economic development. This focus includes bridging the significant infrastructure gap between our Territory and the rest of Canada, as the well-being of residents is directly impacted by the strength and resiliency of infrastructure in the NWT. You are responsible for interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration to help streamline regulatory processes and maximize the benefits of development for Northerners. By supporting the development of suitable and affordable housing, transportation networks, clean and reliable energy systems, and digital infrastructure, we will enhance our economic potential, improve quality of life for residents and communities, enhance opportunities for education, skill development and entrepreneurship, and lay the groundwork for future growth and sustainability.

The Priorities of the 20th Legislative Assembly recognize that individual, collective, and intergenerational trauma is behind many of the health and social challenges impacting NWT families and communities. Colonization and systemic racism are root causes of this trauma for Indigenous peoples and must be addressed to reduce and prevent mental wellness and social issues. Cultural safety, including easy and equitable access, must be at the center of policy and program design. Advancing cultural safety requires engaging in meaningful anti-racism work individually and systemically. You are responsible for leading by example in this respect. Indigenous leaders have expressed a strong desire for the GNWT to engage them as partners in addressing the mental wellness and social issues facing residents by removing barriers and supporting the design and delivery of culturally appropriate, person-centred programs. You are responsible for supporting this by ensuring interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation, which includes advancing Integrated Service Delivery, and fostering a culture of solutions-oriented collaboration.

Our role as Cabinet is pivotal in guiding our government to achieve a shared vision for the future of the NWT. Together we can build the foundation for a united, resilient, and prosperous Territory grounded in true partnership and collaborative governance. I trust that you will work tirelessly beside me in the challenging and rewarding task of leading the GNWT to realize the fullest potential and aspirations of the NWT and its peoples; today and for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a stylized, flowing script.

R.J. Simpson
Premier

Attachment

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

As Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, you are responsible for directing your Department to carry out its Mandate as set out in the *Department of Education, Culture and Employment Establishment Policy*, which includes providing residents of the Northwest Territories with access to quality programs, services and support 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:

- Advance reconciliation and good governance by:
 - Engaging with Indigenous governments, through the NWT Council of Leaders Secretariat, and education partners, on additional customizations and modernizations to the *Education Act* to reflect unique circumstances of the NWT;
 - Implementing the NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan to support Indigenous Languages in line with Articles 13, 14, and 15 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; and,
 - Together with EIA, working to advance Integrated Service Delivery, specifically through the Income Assistance Program and connections to the GNWT's Homelessness Strategy.
- Improve the suitability, accessibility and affordability of housing options in the NWT by:
 - Launching new Income Assistance Programs for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and continuing the Income Assistance Program with enhancements, including an integrated services approach; and,
 - Conducting a review of existing ECE land reserves.
- Strengthen the economic foundation of the NWT, support the development of the private sector and community capacity, encourage a diversity of economic activity across sectors, and reduce the cost of doing business in the NWT through:
 - Supporting the development of the post-secondary education landscape in the NWT through the implementation of the *Post-Secondary Education Act*;
 - Offering professional development opportunities for early childhood educators;
 - Increasing the number of employed Income Assistance clients;
 - Supporting recruitment and retention of Indigenous Language Instructors;
 - Providing communication, funding and other supports to increase the number of apprentices and certified journeypersons;
 - Working with ITI and other GNWT partners to advance plans to transition the diamond mine workforce; and
 - Participating in the Giant Mine Remediation Project as a co-proponent with the federal government to ensure regulatory requirements are met.

- Strengthen preventative measures, public awareness and improve access to trauma-informed, culturally appropriate health care by:
 - Implementing school-based mental health and wellness programs and services that support mental health promotion and preventative intervention services to JK-12 students.
- Prevent, interrupt and address the effects of trauma by:
 - Implementing the new Income Assistance for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Program and enhanced Income Assistance Program with trauma-informed policies and procedures.
- Enhance the safety of residents and communities by:
 - Continuing to support education bodies in fulfilling the requirements of the Safe Schools regulations and encouraging education bodies to actively engage in community emergency plans through regular review of Safe School Plans; and,
 - Developing and implementing updated ECE business continuity plans that reflect ECE's responsibilities under the NWT Emergency Plan and ensure delivery of critical ECE services in emergencies.

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

- In collaboration with the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, establishing and implementing an approach for legislative development in coordination with Indigenous governments with respect to the *Education Act*;
- Working with the Minister of Housing NWT and the Minister of Finance to ensure market housing is available for teachers in small communities where lack of housing has been identified as a barrier to teacher retention;
- Working with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to consolidate arts programs into Industry, Tourism and Investment;
- Working with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to consolidate immigration into the Department of Education, Culture and Employment;
- Working with the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Prosper NWT to strengthen partnerships with organizations that support or provide training with the goal of increasing entrepreneurship;
- Working with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to enhance community access to recreation infrastructure located within schools;
- Encouraging the expansion of Regional Training Partnership Committees to all regions; and,
- Continuing to work interdepartmentally to pursue the streamlining of programs and services across government.

Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment

As Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, you are responsible for directing your Department to carry out its Mandate as set out in the *Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment Establishment Policy*, which includes promoting economic self-sufficiency through the responsible development of mineral and petroleum resources; the development of renewable industries, including agriculture, commercial fishing, film and the traditional economy; and the promotion and support of tourism and parks, trade and investment, business, and manufacturing and secondary industries, to create a prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy for the benefit of all residents. 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:

- Advance reconciliation and good governance by:
 - Completing regulations under the *Mineral Resources Act* in collaboration with Indigenous governments as per the Intergovernmental Council Legislative Development Protocol;
 - Aligning programs under ITI's Grants and Contributions Policy to ensure consistent and transparent funding delivery in support of economic reconciliation; and,
 - Improving accessibility of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program streams.
- Improve the suitability, accessibility and affordability of housing options in the NWT by:
 - Working with the Department of Finance, Housing NWT and other partners to complete analysis and research on the NWT housing market to better describe the total housing continuum, supply and demand and quantify gaps and barriers;
 - Supporting community governments with their community economic development plans including identifying housing opportunities; and,
 - Supporting the transfer of skills from mine closures by working with Indigenous governments, Development Corporations, partners and departments to identify opportunities for skill transfer and workforce migration.
- Strengthen the economic foundation of the NWT, support the development of the private sector and community capacity, encourage a diversity of economic activity across sectors, and reduce the cost of doing business in the NWT through:
 - Working with ECE and other GNWT partners to advance plans to transition the diamond mine workforce;
 - Promoting and supporting mentorship and capacity-building programs in all non-extractive sectors;
 - Supporting Indigenous governments in increasing geoscience information about the resource potential of their lands;
 - participating in the Giant Mine Remediation Project as a co-proponent with the federal government to ensure regulatory requirements are met; and
 - Working with mineral and energy sector clients to assist them in business case development for infrastructure projects.

- Prevent, interrupt and address the effects of trauma by:
 - Reviewing programs under ITI's Grants and Contributions Policy to ensure that trauma-informed, anti-racist and cultural safety considerations are prioritized; and,
 - Working with industry partners on program design that identifies and addresses barriers and ensures culturally appropriate protocols and provisions.
- Enhance the safety of residents and communities by:
 - Participating in federal supply chain initiatives;
 - Supporting increased understanding of the impacts of permafrost thaw on infrastructure; and,
 - Supporting ECC with flood and permafrost hazard mapping integration, especially pertaining to community surficial geology maps and geotechnical information.

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

- Working with the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous governments to identify and address barriers to full participation in the responsible development of mineral and petroleum resources;
- Working with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to facilitate resource development through enhanced collaboration with the Single Window Pathfinders;
- Working with the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, and with the Governments of Yukon and Nunavut, to secure support from the Federal government for a North of Sixty Mineral Exploration Tax Credit;
- Working with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to consolidate arts programs into the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment;
- Working with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to consolidate immigration into the Department of Education, Culture and Employment;
- Investigating options for fisheries management under the *Freshwater Fish Marketing Act*; and
- Advancing ITI's regulatory and policy initiatives.