



THE PREMIER
Halifax, Nova Scotia

March 24, 2021

My colleagues and fellow Nova Scotians,

I am honoured to serve as Premier of Nova Scotia, and I am fortunate to have a dedicated team of Ministers working with me as we implement our forward-looking agenda.

Nova Scotia is beginning a new chapter, one that reflects our past and presents new and better opportunities for all Nova Scotians, in all parts of our province. Previous governments have collaborated with all sectors to build a strong foundation on which we can build and propel our province into a future full of new opportunities.

Our shared priority is to ensure we continue to keep Nova Scotians healthy and safe by following Public Health protocols as the COVID-19 vaccine program is completed. Our collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic thus far has made Nova Scotians an example for the world. It is clear to me what can be accomplished when we work together. Putting people first is the way forward. It is how we will stay healthy and safe, act on climate change, right historic wrongs, inclusively grow our economy, create jobs, and advance our collective well-being.

The nexus between the environment, economy, and equity is the focus of my government's agenda. These principles are the basis for how government will develop and implement policies, programs, and services. Now is the time to turn challenge into opportunity by embracing sustainable solutions and creating places where people want to be. We have a generational opportunity to act on climate change, recover and advance our economy, and create more opportunity, while taking a more inclusive and sustainable path, making our communities even more attractive and welcoming.

We commit to the people of Nova Scotia that our government will constantly strive to improve the lives and livelihoods of all Nova Scotians. Addressing discrimination and systemic racism together, our generation will achieve change. Addressing persistent inequality is a priority. Division weakens our social fabric and limits our horizons. Social justice must no longer be a distant ideal. It must become a definite, measurable goal. Government will take an active role in addressing systemic racism, promoting diversity, countering anti-ableism, and achieving anti-racist outcomes through meaningful inclusion of all Nova Scotians in social and economic progress and well-being.

Your respective mandate letters set us on our path. I expect and have confidence that you will have command over your portfolio and its issues. There is no way forward unless it is together. You are responsible for building constructive working relationships and fostering collaboration within your departments, across the public service, among stakeholders, and the community.

I remind all Ministers of our shared House of Assembly obligations. You are expected to review, understand, and act according to applicable legislation, regulations, and policy. I and each of you must conduct ourselves with the highest degree of integrity, transparency, and accountability. These are sacred responsibilities of democratic governance.

Nova Scotia entered the pandemic in a strong fiscal, demographic, and economic position. While our economy remains impacted by the pandemic, the foundations are in place to allow us to recover and advance beyond what was previously achieved. Low carbon approaches will spearhead economic recovery and growth. Sustainability will enhance our competitive position, increase our capacity to innovate, reduce inequalities among Nova Scotians, and create more opportunities for everyone. The economy and people cannot be disentangled. What is good for people is good for our economy. We will build on our recent economic success and introduce policies and programs to achieve inclusive economic growth that benefits all Nova Scotians, especially those who have been treated unfairly in the past.

We have seen how Nova Scotians can work together to achieve progress on long term goals. Building on the work of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy, I will create an Economic Growth Council to consult and collaborate on our next ten-year population, economic inclusion, and wellbeing goals.

Fiscal sustainability remains important. Our government intends to continue along the path of fiscal discipline to regain the capacity to invest in the things that matter most to Nova Scotians. With affordability in mind, we will make strategic investments where they are needed most to improve the social well-being of Nova Scotians. The return on those investments is increased workforce participation, higher wage jobs, and a healthier and happier population.

As Premier and President of the Executive Council, I will lead based on these principles.

I will also serve as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of L'nu Affairs, Minister of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness, Minister responsible for Military Relations, Minister responsible for Youth, and Minister responsible for the Office of Citizen-Centred Approaches and the Office of Strategy Management. To ensure coordinated action and maximize the impact of these portfolios, I will be looking to each of you for collaboration and support on matters that connect to your assigned responsibilities.

As Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, I will lead the province's intergovernmental priorities, advance the province's interests, and manage its relationship with the Government of Canada, other provinces and territories, and foreign governments. The province will work with the federal government to ensure Nova Scotia remains prepared and positioned for the continued roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines. With the Minister of Energy and Mines, I will work to secure federal financial support for carbon reduction and renewable energy advancements. I will also lead efforts to renew the *Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy* agreement with the Government of Canada. The Minister of Health and Wellness and I will join with the other Atlantic Provinces to create an Atlantic Digital Health Innovation Fund. With my colleagues, I will strongly promote Nova Scotia's agricultural, fishing, resource, population, and trade interests at the federal level.

It is my privilege to lead the newly re-named Office of L'Nu Affairs as we actively work toward reconciliation with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. The change in name, from the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, is intended to better reflect the unique and important relationship between the province and the Mi'kmaq.

L'nu is a Mi'kmaw word meaning "the people" and refers primarily, but not exclusively, to the Mi'kmaq people. They are the First People of Nova Scotia and using the Mi'kmaw language in the name of the Office reflects the importance of this fact and the language, culture, and identity in the fabric of our province.

Through the Office of L'Nu Affairs, I will work with Mi'kmaw leaders to foster greater social and economic inclusion across Nova Scotia. Working with partners within and beyond government, we will focus efforts on greater public education, awareness of issues, and deepening our collective understanding of Mi'kmaq contributions. In addition, the Office of L'Nu Affairs will work closely with Mi'kmaw leaders and health professionals, and the Department of Health and Wellness and others to utilize health data that examines the intersections of race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, income, citizenship, sexual orientation, language, and disability. Together we will acknowledge and improve our understanding of systemic barriers and the relationship between marginalized populations and healthcare. The Office of L'Nu Affairs will strengthen its work with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education on targeted skills training, comprehensive employment services, and career placement opportunities in Mi'kmaq communities.

Nova Scotia must have an appropriate and predictable regulatory environment to promote investment, competitiveness, and quality of life. Over the last several years, government significantly reduced the regulatory burden on citizens and their businesses. As Minister of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness, I will lead efforts to continuously reduce unnecessary regulation and improve service delivery including a new target for reducing regulatory burdens. All Ministers are expected to continue these efforts and foster an environment of regulatory and service excellence.

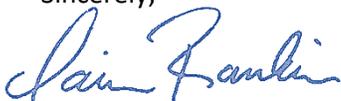
As Minister of Military Relations, I will cultivate our principal relationship with Nova Scotia's veterans, the Department of National Defense, and the Canadian Forces. Many Nova Scotian families have long histories with our military and direct connections to those serving and those who have served. We will consider the well-being of past and present members and their families as we advance economic and social conditions in our province.

Addressing climate change and systemic inequities are the major crises of our time. As Minister responsible for Youth, I will advance this and the other priorities of young Nova Scotians. We will deliver programming and services that meet their needs and prepares them for a happy future here. The decisions we make must maximize benefits in the future. Government decision-making will account for intergenerational equity. I will work with a Youth Council to engage the younger generation in policy.

Finally, it is my honour to act as the first Minister responsible for the Office of Citizen-Centred Approaches. The Office will work to accelerate system-level change and different ways of working to measurably improve the social well-being of Nova Scotians. Through it, Government's priorities will be advanced and supported in a manner that fosters and facilitates a citizen-centred, restorative approach. I charge all Ministers with adapting and promoting these approaches in strategy, decision-making, policy design, and operations.

I am excited by the road ahead and honoured to lead government as we and all Nova Scotians walk it together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Iain Rankin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Iain" being more prominent than the last name "Rankin".

Honourable Iain Rankin, M.L.A.

Premier of Nova Scotia