

# Government Business Plan

## Message from Premier Stephen McNeil

I am pleased to share the 2015–2016 Nova Scotia Government Business Plan. This plan highlights initiatives that government will undertake in the year ahead.

Government remains committed to serving Nova Scotians and ensuring that each person has an equal opportunity to succeed and play a part in our growth.

In providing quality services and opportunities, we have had to take an inward look in government to focus on our core responsibilities. This has involved a review of our programs and structures to ensure we are making strategic investments with limited government resources.

We are committed to making decisions that address long-term challenges facing Nova Scotia. This is evident in the restructuring of our health care system that will directly benefit patients; government's response to the Education Review that will have a direct impact on our classrooms; our commitment to modernizing our regulatory system, among many other significant initiatives.

The four goals government has adopted as a result of the One Nova Scotia report remain at the forefront of government priority setting:

- creating a climate for private-sector driven economic growth
- balancing our budget by 2017–2018 and maintaining fiscal sustainability
- improving opportunities for young people by renewing our education system, and creating more workforce-participation opportunities for Nova Scotians
- enhancing health and wellness initiatives and the well-being of our communities

Every Nova Scotian has a role to play in maximizing growth opportunities in the province.

Government is committed to upholding our responsibilities and, in doing so, making decisions that put our province on a path to growth and sustainability.

Sincerely,



Stephen McNeil  
Premier of Nova Scotia

## Building a Stronger Nova Scotia

Business planning for 2015–2016 focuses on government staying true to its core responsibility of delivering services and programming to citizens while adhering to key priorities. Through this lens, government is examining how programs meet their objectives and provide real return on investment of tax dollars to the benefit of Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotia faces serious challenges that require government to look at where to focus resources in order to maximize opportunities for the province. We have a responsibility to maintain a social safety net for our most vulnerable citizens and it is only through close examination of current programs, and adhering to core mandates, that we can ensure that we are providing the best service possible for Nova Scotia.

As well, it is imperative for all departments to look for efficiencies to ensure that we do not limit opportunities for Nova Scotia's future.

The OneNS Commission outlined the challenges facing our province. Based on its report, government adopted its four priorities: fiscal sustainability; economic growth; education; and addressing and adapting to demographic challenges.

The Commission and its report was clear in that government shares the responsibility with all Nova Scotians to address these challenges. This is why government is committed to building collaborative relationships across sectors to look at opportunities to build a business climate where innovation is encouraged and where entrepreneurs are confident to start and expand ventures here, in Nova Scotia; where we invest in education, support communities and social well-being, and support those most in need.

Collaboration and partnerships across sectors and between communities will shape how Nova Scotia will continue to respond to the 19 goals of the OneNS Commission in addressing challenges facing our province.

## Addressing Today's Challenges with Long-term Vision

While delivering programs that contribute to the province's core objectives, departments are being asked to consider programs that need further examination as they: no longer align with the priorities of government or the department; are not producing expected results against established measures; might be better delivered in a new way; could be improved or provide more efficient and effective service if consolidated with other existing programs.

Initiatives and policies based on government's priorities of fiscal sustainability; education; economic development; and our people will align the work of government, with growth and sustainability, and allow departments to use limited resources more effectively for the benefit of Nova Scotians and for better outcomes.

## Core Responsibilities of Government

Government has key responsibilities in ensuring that we are delivering services that improve the lives of citizens. Government's priorities must align with our responsibilities for the advancement of the province.

- Early childhood development and education
- Promotion of health and wellness and delivery of health care services
- Public infrastructure and transportation
- Protection of the environment, public health and public safety
- Enforcement of provincial laws, rules and regulations
- Protection of the most vulnerable and maintaining a social safety net
- Prudent fiscal management and accountability for the financial affairs of the province, including the effective and efficient use of public resources
- Promotion of the social and economic well-being of all citizens

## Highlights for 2015–2016 Business Plan

- Government is committed to changing how private enterprise interfaces with government to support and encourage entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth
- Implement Minister's Action Plan, the 3 R's: Renew, Refocus and Rebuild, in response to the recommendations outlined in the 2015 Minister's Panel on Education report
- Government is developing a multi-year plan for foundational changes to our post-secondary education system, including apprenticeship and training opportunities
- We are modernizing our approach to tourism as a multi-sectorial driver for economic activity
- Government is adhering to its commitment to fiscal sustainability, focusing on disciplined public spending control and concentrating on government priorities and goals

## Fiscal Sustainability

### Goal

Government remains committed to balancing the budget and achieving a sustainable cost of government by 2017–2018.

#### *Key Initiatives:*

- Reach agreements with public-sector workers that do not put an unreasonable burden on the taxpayer
- Restructure government and its operations to achieve better outcomes that best meet the needs of Nova Scotians
- Initiate a Strategic Facility Management initiative to reduce government's physical footprint and the associated costs as part of an asset optimization initiative
- Continue to implement the Shared Services Project to reduce internal cost without adversely impacting service delivery, and focus on value creation and better service to citizens
- Incorporate Lean Government into practices to enable continuous improvement by reducing internal process complexity, duplication and variation
- Undertake continuous review of programs and ensure accountability measures are in place to monitor effectiveness and efficiency

Government is focused on increasing value for money and service levels to citizens, which will require a stronger emphasis on setting priorities, reallocating resources and deciding what the Government of Nova Scotia will not do.

## Economic Development

### Goal

Create climate for private-sector and social-enterprise economic growth to support OneNS economic goals.

#### *Key Initiatives:*

- Modernize how private enterprise interfaces with government and supports economic growth
- Modernize our regulatory regime and make it easier for Nova Scotia enterprises to do business by harmonizing and eliminating trade barriers with our neighbours
- Continue ongoing dialogue around restructuring our tax system to provide greater fairness and encourage growth
- Support the tourism industry by strategically focusing resources on overseas markets and collaborating with industry operators to increase the number of first-time visitors

- Collaborate and build relationships across sectors to enhance our international trade outcomes and help grow the value of Nova Scotia exports, as well as increase the number of Nova Scotia companies engaged in trade. Particular focus on Asia and Europe will enable more Nova Scotia products to enter those markets and at a higher place in the value chain
- Invest in incubators and accelerators of high-growth business in Ocean Technology and Information and Communication Technology
- Enable growth in private-sector aquaculture production, while protecting the ocean environment, based on the recommendations of the Independent Aquaculture Regulatory Review for Nova Scotia
- Introduce an Electricity Plan for 2015–2040 to ensure that Nova Scotia has a robust and diversified electricity system that can provide adequate and reliable supply at reasonable cost over the long term, while achieving appropriate environmental goals
- Promote the continued development of Nova Scotia's offshore energy sector, promote the development of a tidal-energy industry, especially technological expertise that can be exported worldwide
- Strengthen land-use planning through the multi-year Land Asset Management Technology Project so it can be more readily used for decision-making by communities, developers, industries and others

## Education

### Goal

Increase workforce participation and entrepreneurship by improving early childhood and P-12 education and continually improving opportunities for skills development through post-secondary education, training and apprenticeship.

#### *Key Initiatives:*

- Implement Minister's Action Plan, the 3 R's: Renew, Refocus and Rebuild in response to the recommendations outlined in the 2015 Minister's Panel on Education report
  - Establish Brilliant Labs pilot program in Nova Scotia, encouraging partnerships between government and private sector in bringing entrepreneurial education to the classroom
  - Create a streamlined, co-ordinated, and innovative curriculum for grades Primary to 3
  - Provide students with hands-on learning activities for developing their technology skills
  - Add more Discovering Opportunities 9 programs in schools across the province to help students make the connections between learning and work opportunities
  - Offer Early Intervention Support in math for students in grades Primary to 3

- Enter into MOUs with other jurisdictions regarding the recognition of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training, specifically the Atlantic Workforce Partnership and the New West Partnership; continue to support and participate in the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project involving the harmonization of the apprenticeship system and 10 specific trades by 2017
- Sign four-year MOU with universities to set groundwork for viability and sustainability in the university system to ensure that Nova Scotians can access and participate in our high-quality post-secondary institutions

## Demographics

### Goal

Increase net interprovincial in-migration and international immigration levels; enhance wellness and health initiatives; enhance workforce participation of youth, older workers and marginalized communities; and enhance communities and social well-being.

### Key Initiatives

#### Supporting workers here:

- Continue to implement Graduate to Opportunity Program, which offsets the costs employers incur in hiring new, recently graduated employees
- Continue to increase employer participation through the Apprenticeship START program
  - establish Trade Advisory Committees to advise the Apprenticeship Board concerning policy, regulation and other matters specific to trade
  - develop a diversity and inclusion strategy for apprenticeship to target under-represented groups

#### Connecting people to the workforce:

- Integrate and transform employment and workforce-development services across Nova Scotia to better help all Nova Scotians identify, train for, and secure a good job; ensure current and future labour supply for employers; and better align employment and labour-market programs with employer needs
- Enable the expansion of the Connector program to open networking and job-sourcing opportunities across the province

#### Youth:

- Develop a Youth Action Plan with a focus on increasing collaboration and integration of services and programming across government concentrating on education opportunities, community development and workforce attachment

#### Protecting our most vulnerable:

- Develop a structured continuum of services for youth, from prevention to early intervention, to reduce likelihood of families being involved in formal care
- Begin implementation of Sexual Violence Strategy with actions and timelines

#### Health and Wellness:

- Implement consolidation of the nine DHAs and develop a provincial health workforce planning framework and health services plan; develop a sustainable long-term capital and infrastructure plan for the health system
- Renew Nursing Strategy to best meet patient need
- Optimize the scopes of practice, as well as mix and distribution of health professionals working collaboratively, to achieve the most effective and cost-efficient health system
- Continue to implement the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

#### Immigration:

- Realign Nova Scotia Nominee Program to ensure immigration meets demographic and economic needs of the province
- Launch a new business immigration stream within the Nova Scotia Nominee Program to attract prospective immigrants to acquire, establish or partner in a business
- Provide settlement funding to help newcomers adapt successfully to life in Nova Scotia

This government business plan is built to serve not simply as a collection of initiatives that government plans to undertake in 2015–2016, but to set the direction for the development of future government programs and initiatives in the coming years.

Government will continue to make strategic investments in strengthening our education system, supporting those most in need, enhancing health and wellness initiatives, and supporting innovation and economic growth so Nova Scotians can reach our fullest potential and continue to work collaboratively towards the achievement of the OneNS goals.