



# NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT BUSINESS PLAN

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009

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## Message from the Premier

I am proud to present the 2008–2009 government business plan, which highlights my government's continuing path to build a new Nova Scotia.

Our vision for Nova Scotia is simple. Like all Nova Scotians, my government wants this to be a safe, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and prosperous province in which to live, work, and raise a family. It's an ambitious vision, but one that I believe we can all benefit from.

Our path to 2020 will be secured with focused social and economic plans. *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity* sets out to make Nova Scotia one of the economic leaders of the 21st century. The social prosperity framework outlines how existing and new initiatives will be coordinated to offer social support to Nova Scotians and our communities so they can be full participants in the New Nova Scotia.

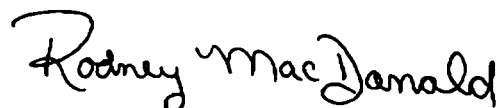
To make this vision of the New Nova Scotia a reality, my government is focusing on five priorities for 2008–2009. They are educating to compete, protecting our environment, improving roads and infrastructure, creating safer and healthier communities, and reducing wait times.

We are working to make education more accessible, to become leaders in environmental protection and conservation, to address infrastructure needs, and to make our communities safer and healthier—all within the province's fiscal means.

With investments in the business sector and revenues from the offshore, the province has improved its financial position and worked to reduce debt. This financial improvement supports the sustainability of government services in all areas and helps us move closer to the New Nova Scotia.

The province will have challenging times ahead with the uncertainty of the global economy. But with a clear vision to 2020 and a commitment to self-sufficiency, Nova Scotia will stay on course to be one of the most viable provinces in Canada.

Sincerely,



Rodney MacDonald



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# Introduction

The 2008–2009 government business plan outlines the government’s goals to advance the New Nova Scotia. It presents a directional, high-level discussion of the path to 2020, along with the government’s immediate priorities to advance this long-term vision.

The New Nova Scotia vision is supported by both an economic and a social framework. Together, the frameworks demonstrate how social prosperity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are linked and depend on each other.

Flowing from the two frameworks are five immediate priorities, which were set out in the November 2007 Speech from the Throne. The 2008–2009 government business plan provides a high-level discussion of initiatives within the immediate priorities of *Safer, Healthy Communities; Better Roads, Infrastructure; Protecting Our Environment; Educating to Compete; and Reducing Wait Times.*

While the New Nova Scotia provides the long-term path for the province, the five immediate priorities will feed in to the overall direction of the government and advance the path for 2020.

When read with the budget address and the business plans of individual departments, the government business plan will provide the steps to be taken in 2008–2009 on the path to 2020. Links to departmental business plans have been included to provide more detail on specific 2008–2009 strategic priorities.



# The Planning Context

## **The New Nova Scotia** **A path to 2020: Building for families, building for the future**

### **Four New Nova Scotia Priority Areas**

There are four priority areas of the New Nova Scotia that will build the province's longer-term path to 2020.

- **Creating Winning Conditions**  
Laying the foundation for economic growth
- **Seizing New Economic Opportunities**  
Preparing for good jobs and careers, here at home
- **Building for Individuals, Families, and Communities**  
Healthier children, safer communities
- **A New Democracy**  
Engaging youth and advancing democracy

## **The Social and Economic Frameworks**

The New Nova Scotia vision is supported by both an economic and a social framework. *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity* and *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric* provide a path to ensure that the province's strategies, policies, and programs work together to advance the vision for Nova Scotia.

The province's economic plan has been in place for a number of years, but with the launch of *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity* in 2006, the course was set to ensure that sustainability would guide growth and competitiveness. The strategy is based on the concept of sustainable competitiveness, which means we must build a competitive economic and cultural model that is sustainable into future generations.

The province's first social framework, *Weaving the Threads*, provides the other side of the sustainability pyramid. It ensures that social and economic prosperity move forward together to support social prosperity, now and in the future.

Together, the frameworks demonstrate how social prosperity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are linked and depend on each other. Sustainable prosperity can really only be achieved through a

coordinated, collaborative effort to balance development, social development, and environmental protection. This is the basis of all we do within the New Nova Scotia.

## ***Fiscal Management***

The province could not advance the New Nova Scotia without making a commitment to keep the province's fiscal house in order. Six consecutive balanced budgets, and the seventh coming in 2008–2009, have meant increasingly positive credit ratings from all three bond-rating agencies.

With an aggressive approach to managing the debt, the province not only stopped the growth of Nova Scotia's debt, but is also now in the position to start paying down the debt. One of the most important steps in this process has been the debt-reduction plan.

The plan has two components—a legislated requirement to ensure that the \$830 million received from the Offshore Offset Agreement is applied to the debt and a policy commitment to have the net direct debt decline.

Applying the \$830 million to the debt of the province helped to reduce the annual debt-servicing costs. These savings have been redirected to help fund the programs and services that Nova Scotians use every day.

Although Nova Scotia has taken a number of significant steps in managing the debt, including stopping its growth in 2007–2008, these efforts must be sustained over many years to see any significant reductions in the overall debt load.

It is a positive trend that debt-servicing costs have dropped in the last few years; however, the total cost of our debt still remains high, and Nova Scotia faces ongoing fiscal challenges in the areas of health care and infrastructure renewal. Keeping our focus on the longer-term downward trend in debt and debt-servicing costs will be important.

It will also be important for the province to manage the fiscal environment within these uncertain economic times. Rising oil prices and a high Canadian dollar will undoubtedly affect the path to 2020. The province will need to react to global economic challenges to sustain the progress made in debt reduction and program investment.



## The Economic Investment

Sound investments in Nova Scotia's economy are key to ensuring sustainability of government services and helping the province move closer to the New Nova Scotia.

In 2008–2009 the government will continue its commitment to sustainable prosperity through economic investments in businesses and communities.

Nova Scotia Business Inc., as the economic investment arm of government, has played a key role in attracting investment to Nova Scotia, targeting the sectors of financial services, IT, and defence and aerospace. Keane Canada Inc. and Modern Media Inc. are just two examples of IT business expanding in Nova Scotia, creating several hundred jobs within the next five years.

The province also recognizes that innovation and productivity, and research and development are key characteristics of a thriving knowledge-based economy. Business adoption of best practices and timely investments in the use of new technologies help to improve performance and lead to new products and processes, contributing to the increased competitiveness of Nova Scotia companies.

The government is committing \$1 million to a productivity and innovation initiative that will help businesses access advice, information, contacts, and funding for research and development that enables them to innovate and become more productive. This investment will help businesses deal with challenges such as the high value of the Canadian dollar, globalization, and pending demographic shifts.

Last year, modifications were made to the payroll rebate to encourage Nova Scotia businesses to undertake productivity enhancements and thereby improve competitiveness. In 2008–2009, Nova Scotia Business Inc. will continue this work and partner with agencies such as the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters to promote this tool.

Building on the successes of last year's pilot, the province will invest further in the Nova Scotia Business Development Program. This program encourages business start-ups and provides help through qualified consultants for business operators to review and assess their practices and develop new approaches. Government assistance will be available to help businesses access training and recruitment services, market research and business plan development, advertising and promotional planning, and fiscal management tools.

Through its Industrial Expansion and Strategic Opportunities Funds, the government invests in important industries such as aerospace, biotechnology, financial services, manufacturing, and processing. The province's Industrial Expansion Fund created or retained an estimated 11,000 full-time jobs during the six-year period ending March 2007. In the coming year, the province will continue to use these funds to strategically invest in key industries to ensure the economic prosperity of Nova Scotia.

Part of the favourable business climate that supports economic investment in Nova Scotia is made possible by the work of the Better Regulation Initiative. By considering the impact of regulation on business, the province is working to create a fair and competitive market economy. With initial success in reducing paperwork for businesses and by processing most licences and permits within 10 days, Better Regulation is the province's ongoing commitment to make it easier to do business in Nova Scotia.





# Government's Five Immediate Priorities

The 2008–2009 government business plan focuses on the long-term goals of the New Nova Scotia with five immediate priorities that feed into the overall direction of the government and advance the path for 2020.

The immediate priorities for 2008–2009 are

- Safer, Healthy Communities
- Better Roads, Infrastructure
- Protecting Our Environment
- Educating to Compete
- Reducing Wait Times

Highlights of these priorities are outlined below.

## ***Safer, Healthy Communities***

Nova Scotians deserve safe, healthy, and prosperous communities in which to live, work, and raise a family. With reports of random acts of violence increasing, Nova Scotians want assurances that their otherwise safe communities will be protected.

To address this situation, we must not only make tough laws, we must also get at the root causes of crime. We must tackle issues like poverty and provide support for healthy families and communities.

## **Crime Prevention**

The province has committed to ensuring safer communities in Nova Scotia with a comprehensive crime prevention strategy designed to make our streets and communities safer and to ensure a long-term, sustainable approach to crime prevention.

The comprehensive strategy is based on national and international best practices with a focus on enforcement, intervention, and prevention. Since the release of the strategy last December, the province has been working on implementation with its community and law enforcement partners.

In 2008–2009, in the area of enforcement, the focus will be on youth crime, drug and organized crime, youth released on conditions, and getting people into court faster. To accomplish this, the province will add 70 new police officers, expand electronic supervision to include youth, and develop a better way to enforce restitution collection orders so that victims are properly compensated.

In the area of intervention, the focus will be on preventing recidivism among high-risk offenders, as well as increasing offender accountability. To accomplish this, the province will work with justice partners to develop a made-in-Nova Scotia mental health court program, expand the youth attendance centre into Cape Breton, and

continue to strengthen our response to family violence.

The final area of focus is on prevention. The province will be investing in communities, developing partnerships, and ensuring that all Nova Scotians have the information they need to prevent crime in their communities. A crime prevention unit within the Department of Justice will ensure that Nova Scotians have the support, information, and tools they need to implement effective crime prevention programs in their communities.

## **Youth Strategy**

Last year, the province released *Our Kids Are Worth It*, a strategy with a mix of short- and long-term priorities to ensure that children and youth are healthy, safe, nurtured, and responsible.

The strategy is now well under way with the coordination of local and regional working groups to ensure a unified provincial vision that meets local needs. The Provincial Child and Youth Social Policy Committee, made up of senior officials from the Departments of Health, Education, Community services, Health Promotion and Protection, and Justice, meets regularly to fulfill the goal of improved service delivery to address the needs of children, youth, and families.

In 2008–2009, the province plans to build on the 10 initiatives already implemented through the Child and Youth Strategy.

These initiatives, involving more than 25 partnering agencies across the province, will deliver services that were identified as gaps.

A good example of these initiatives is a program called Youth Navigators, which will assist youth 16–18 years old and their families to access appropriate, available resources. Parenting Journey is another service that will provide in-home parenting support for families who are challenged with the behaviour and needs of their children over the age of five.

In 2008–2009, the Child and Youth Strategy will also focus on monitoring and evaluating the implementation and outcomes of the initiatives that began last year. This entails identifying needs, gaps, and opportunities for additional and expanded initiatives, along with building stronger structural and operational connections between departments to promote more seamless and effective services to children, youth, and families.

## **Poverty Reduction**

Social prosperity and economic prosperity go hand in hand. That is why the province is making a long-term commitment to win the fight against poverty.

The province has made strides in addressing poverty, with the number of families living in low-income situations down 35 per cent since 1996. This represents progress, but there is still much more to be done.



The province's ongoing work continues to focus on making child-care programs more affordable and accessible for low-income families, maintaining the affordable housing program, making prescription drug coverage available to uninsured families, increasing income assistance rates and raising our minimum wage rates, and strengthening services for children and youth and people with disabilities.

Specific investments in child care this year for initiatives under the Early Learning and Child Care Plan, and continuing investments over the next eight years, will help more families get affordable, quality, and inclusive child care. In addition, parent fees for subsidized child care will be reduced, making access to child care more affordable for low-income families.

More investments will be made in housing projects through the Affordable Housing Agreement and the Off-Reserve Housing Trust. To date, over 1070 affordable housing units have been created or preserved. Increasing support for persons with disabilities will see an investment to the Abilities Foundation for the Wheelchair Recycling Program. Helping to ease the financial burden of home heating will also continue to be a priority. Your energy rebate and the Heating Assistance Rebate Program will assist about 284,000 families.

With recommendations from the Poverty Reduction Working Group expected at the end of June, the province will continue to further address poverty in Nova Scotia.

## **Pharmacare**

Part of the New Nova Scotia vision is to also build healthier families and communities. This goal is being realized with the introduction of the new Family Pharmacare program, which is helping hard-working Nova Scotians and their families with the cost of prescription drugs.

It is the first universal drug coverage plan in the province that bridges the gap between a family's ability to pay and the high cost of prescription drugs. With no premiums or enrolment fees, the program caps annual out-of-pocket costs for eligible drugs at a percentage of a family's income. This makes it much easier for families to manage disease and stay healthy.

Meeting the changing needs of seniors is also a priority in 2008–2009. Nova Scotians aged 65 and older will have more payment options and no fee increases in prescription drug coverage. Seniors now have the flexibility to pay their co-payment over a period of time during the year, which will help ease the financial burden. These changes to the program ensure that this part of the health-care system remains both affordable and sustainable over time.

The Seniors' Pharmacare program is cost-shared, and the province is committed to covering 75 per cent of the cost of prescription drugs so they are within reach of seniors who need them to stay healthy or to manage illness.

## **Better Roads, Infrastructure**

Nova Scotia has a multi-million dollar infrastructure deficit. We need better roads, libraries, courthouses, schools, hospitals, and Internet connections to make the province more economically competitive.

Through partnerships with other levels of government and the private sector, the province can improve its infrastructure without running a budget deficit.

## **Strategic Infrastructure Plan and Partnership**

In 2008–2009, the province will develop a Nova Scotia Infrastructure Plan with a framework for prioritizing infrastructure investments to address the province's long-term infrastructure needs. The plan will provide a long-term strategic approach to managing our current infrastructure, while examining options to address the demand over the next decade.

We will continue to improve our transportation network, including meeting our four-year goal of paving 2000 kilometres of roads across the province. We also continue to make improvements to our highway infrastructure with ongoing expansion of the 100-series highway system through twinning and upgrading.

Nova Scotia is looking at new and innovative ways to meet our infrastructure

needs. A memorandum of understanding with Partnerships British Columbia is helping us explore new possibilities for building roads, health facilities, courts, correctional facilities, and other projects to address the province's multi-billion dollar infrastructure deficit.

The agreement gives Nova Scotia access to the expertise Partnerships BC has developed through strategic infrastructure partnerships with the private sector. Partnerships BC is a Canadian leader in strategic infrastructure partnerships and has demonstrated value for money through more than 20 projects completed or under way, on time and on budget, in partnership with the private sector.

## **Broadband**

Broadband is a vital piece of infrastructure that will enable all areas of Nova Scotia to compete globally. It will help improve the quality of life and the economic prosperity of rural and remote communities.

We are making high-speed Internet accessible to all Nova Scotian homes, schools, and business, rural and urban, by the end of 2009. This will make Nova Scotia one of the most connected broadband regions in all of North America. We are on track to having the right infrastructure in place to make this province a connected, competitive player in the global economy.

This government has made a substantial commitment to the people, businesses, and



communities of Nova Scotia. All levels of government have embraced this initiative and have made substantial commitments to its success.

New subscribers will begin getting access in some areas of the province as early as this summer (2008). It is important to remember that even the most remote and rugged areas will have service by the end of 2009.

It is not enough to have high-speed access to the Internet. The province is also developing assessment and development tools. They will help communities take full advantage of this new infrastructure to meet economic and development goals.

We are creating winning conditions for the New Nova Scotia. High-speed access to the Internet will help our communities become even more attractive to new businesses, skilled workers, and young professionals.

## **Gateway**

Transportation systems that enable Canada to move goods and people with world-class efficiency are essential to Canada's future prosperity. That's why Nova Scotia is working with the private sector and groups like the Halifax Gateway Council and other private stakeholders to identify strategic priorities related to implementing growth strategies and improving efficiency of the Nova Scotia Gateway.

In partnership with the private sector, the government has identified a number of initial projects that, with support from Ottawa, will build on Nova Scotia's competitiveness as an international gateway. The projects include the development and implementation of a marketing strategy and business development action plan, infrastructure projects to support the ongoing development of the Atlantic Gateway, and research projects that identify potential efficiencies and support growth opportunities.

Timely access to federal funding will be critical to ensuring that this region is internationally competitive. The province has called upon the federal government to move quickly and expedite the process of funding and is working through the Council of Atlantic Premiers to identify key infrastructure, policy, and regulatory enhancements.

The time is now for Canada and Nova Scotia to secure the Atlantic Gateway. Competition for container traffic travelling through the Suez Canal to North America is intense. The Atlantic Gateway is competing with major US East Coast ports, which are aggressively pursuing the traffic and investing in land-based infrastructures to improve their efficiency and cargo-handling capabilities.

In light of the urgency, the province will launch a joint project with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Dalhousie University to integrate academic resources on

the gateway initiative. This two-year pilot will see Dalhousie University expand course offerings in gateway-related issues, create a working paper series, and develop an international gateway conference.

The province will also work with the Nova Scotia Community College to build a strategic framework that will engage the private sector in identifying the gaps and opportunities that must be addressed to ensure the gateway remains competitive.

## **Protecting Our Environment**

With a legislative commitment to the environment through the *Environmental Goals and Sustainability Prosperity Act* and a new department of Environment, we have solidified our focus on protection and conservation.

Now, it's time to build on what we have accomplished and aggressively meet the 2020 provincial targets.

## **The Green Economy**

Developing a sustainable environment and energy future is a goal for all Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotia has committed to having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world. The province also aims to improve Nova Scotia's economic performance to a level that is

equal to or above the Canadian average. But to be truly sustainable, we must recognize Nova Scotia's environmental assets and develop renewable energy resources.

The business community has a key role to play in the green economy. Recognizing the economic value of the province's environmental assets is essential to the long-term prosperity of the environment.

Recently, many businesses have embraced the concept of sustainability, responding to increasing expectations from clients, both at home and abroad, for cost-effective cleaner and greener options.

C-Vision has recognized that it is just good business to make the link between environment and global competitiveness. In advance of international requirements to eliminate lead from the manufacturing of circuit boards, they shifted their production to lead-free circuit boards. Working closely with the EcoEfficiency Centre, the company continues to look for opportunities to save money, while reducing greenhouse gases—efforts that are good for business and good for the environment.

Nova Scotia Power Inc. is adding 240 megawatts of wind power over the next two years, increasing to up to 500 megawatts by 2013. In addition to reducing greenhouse gases, this initiative will create new business opportunities for suppliers of renewable energy and is expected to generate a \$500-million direct investment in the province.



With government support, three private companies are establishing a centre for tidal energy excellence along the Bay of Fundy. With the appropriate assessments and approvals in place, technology pilot tests will determine the effectiveness of harnessing the power of these extreme tides. If successful, this renewable energy source will offer tremendous business opportunities and significantly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

There are many opportunities for all business sectors to establish clear environmental goals while improving the province's economy. As we move towards an economy that embraces growth and renewal, eliminates waste, and encourages creativity, we will be better able to adapt and respond to new and exciting opportunities that come our way.

## **Energy Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan**

The renewed energy strategy will envision an energy sector that balances economic growth, social goals, and respect for the environment for generations today and tomorrow.

Nova Scotia has considerable energy resources—onshore and offshore non-renewable petroleum resources and a growing renewable energy sector. These

resources are the foundation for economic growth and represent an opportunity to transform our economy by developing globally competitive firms.

The non-renewable resources provide decades of opportunities for people and businesses to develop within this globally competitive industry. They are able to gain skills to last for generations to come. The revenues from the offshore have been used to permanently improve the province's financial position through the reduction in the province's debt. This financial improvement underpins the sustainability of government services in all areas.

Renewable resource development is a growing part of the Nova Scotia economy. Wind energy is becoming a significant part of our energy mix, and new tidal technology holds out the possibility of major gains in energy and business opportunities.

The renewed strategy will set out the government's plans to continue develop our energy resources in a socially and environmentally responsible manner to the benefit of local communities and all Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotia recognizes that the production of energy from fossil fuel has an environmental impact that must be reduced. Improving air quality and mitigating the factors that contribute to climate change are key objectives in the renewed strategy.

In 2007 the province passed the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, which contains the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 10 per cent by 2020.

In Nova Scotia, 42 per cent of emissions come from electricity, and 26 per cent come from transportation. The green house gas target requires a reduction in emissions by at least 5 metric tons by 2020.

Later this year, the province will release a Renewed Energy Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) that will help Nova Scotia meet this target while enhancing objectives on air emissions and economic growth. The CCAP will also focus on climate change impacts and adaptations and set up the foundation and framework for addressing these risks.

The CCAP will build on the province's regulated requirement to ensure that 18.5 per cent of electricity comes from renewable energy sources by 2013, the creation of Conserve Nova Scotia, and the development of funds and projects that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as Eco-Trust, the Gas Market Development Fund, carbon capture and storage, and tidal energy projects.

## **Coastal Management Framework**

To coordinate and strengthen coastal management efforts in Nova Scotia, the province has adopted a Coastal

Management Framework. The first of its kind in Canada, the framework defines Nova Scotia's objectives for coastal management and identifies a series of strategic activities to accelerate action on priority coastal issues. The framework is an important step toward providing greater certainty for economic growth along our coast while protecting the environmental and social qualities that are important to Nova Scotians.

The Coastal Management Framework was developed by the Provincial Oceans Network (PON), an interdepartmental committee consisting of 12 departments and agencies with a mandate or interest in coastal management. Implementation of the framework will be led by a three-person Coastal Secretariat, housed within the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

PON has identified several priority coastal issues for Nova Scotia that the Coastal Management Framework will help to address. These include coastal development, sea-level rise and storm events, public coastal access, working waterfronts, coastal ecosystems, and water quality.

The Coastal Management Framework will focus on these coastal issues over the next two years through a variety of initiatives, including completing a report on the state of Nova Scotia's coast, developing a Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy, establishing a coastal research network, mapping important coastal areas, building





a coastal web portal, developing public awareness and education, and establishing formal partnerships with the federal government.

## ***Educating to Compete***

To compete in the economy of the 21st century, Nova Scotia needs to have a high-quality education system in place to ensure that the province has a well-educated population able to take on the challenges of tomorrow

Our approach will be multi-dimensional to include investment in public schools, adult training and skills development, and post-secondary education.

## **Public Schools**

Educating to compete starts at the public school system with a focus on working with families so that children are healthy and ready to learn when they start school.

To help communities establish priorities for improved health and well-being of young children, a new Early Development Instrument is being introduced for primary students. A population health measure for communities, the instrument provides information on the educational and general well-being of young children. In 2008–2009, the province plans to introduce the instrument in schools across the province.

The province is also working to increase the number of resource teachers, school psychologists, guidance counsellors, and speech language pathologists to support classroom teachers.

Schools Plus is a project that will more effectively coordinate programs and services for at-risk children and youth. At five pilot sites around the province, children and families will get help more quickly through swift and easy referrals to a wide range of specialists and community services. Services such as mental health, parent and family support, sexual health, crisis intervention, and child care are examples of the types of services that could be offered within a family of schools.

The highly successful Options and Opportunities (O2) program, currently offered in 34 schools, will continue to be offered to grade 10 students in the existing schools and will be expanded into grade 11 in 34 schools and into grade 12 in 27 of those schools. This innovative program connects high school students with employers, secures admission to the Nova Scotia Community College upon graduation, and helps prepare them for success in the labour market. Funding will be provided for additional schools to offer this program.

The province will support boards and their schools in the growth of community-based learning. The expansion of co-operative education will be supported, along with professional learning opportunities for co-op

teachers, guidance counsellors, and school administrators.

Finally, the province will develop a comprehensive plan to support the implementation of collaborative professional learning communities at the school level, within the context of the school accreditation process. The focus will be on teacher collaboration and shared learning, instructional leadership skill development, and providing the supporting resources to increase student achievement.

## **Training and Skills Development**

The retention and recruitment of a skilled workforce is also a vital element of the New Nova Scotia. To help make this a reality, the province is creating a new integrated Department of Labour and Workforce Development, which will better align training and skills development with current and future economic needs and provide broader funding support.

Initiatives such as raising the number of certified tradespeople through apprenticeship training will help meet growing industry demands and ensure that Nova Scotians have access to high-quality programs and trade services.

The new department will also help capitalize on the skills and ideas of newcomers to our province and provide opportunities to lure expatriates back home.

Within this new department, the province is negotiating with the federal government for the transfer of the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) and a new Labour Market Agreement (LMA). This will support Nova Scotians in returning to work or to upgrade their skills while at work.

Through this transition, Labour and Workforce Development will have the opportunity to reduce overlap and duplication between programs, create more efficient and effective workforce development programs and services, and help ensure that Nova Scotians have access to the supports they need to maximize their participation in the labour market.

Once these agreements are signed, it is expected that the federal programs and staff connected with the LMDA will join Labour and Workforce Development, providing a greater capacity to deliver workforce development programs and services.

## **Post-Secondary Education**

A new funding agreement between the province and universities will freeze university tuition at current levels for the next three years to help to make universities more accessible for young Nova Scotians.

The three-year funding commitment established with Nova Scotia universities under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) sets out a schedule of increased funding to universities, designed to meet operational costs



and eliminate tuition increases for all students over the next three years.

A Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Trust is also being established to further help make the cost of education more affordable for Nova Scotian and out-of-province Canadian students.

The \$66-million trust will provide annual bursaries to be dispersed to Nova Scotian students studying at Nova Scotian universities for 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011 and for out-of-province students studying at Nova Scotian universities in 2010–2011. This will bring the costs for our students to the national average by 2011.

For Nova Scotians, the bursary will provide a maximum per-student benefit of \$761 in 2008–2009, \$1,022 in 2009–2010, and \$1,283 in 2010–2011. Canadian students from outside Nova Scotia will benefit from the tuition freeze and a bursary of \$261 in 2010–2011.

Financing a post-secondary education will also get a little easier. College and university students will pay hundreds of dollars less in interest on student loans as the result of the direct-lending initiative.

Nova Scotia student loans are currently administered by a bank. Starting this summer, the province will obtain money through routine treasury operations and lend it directly to students. The results will be a reduced interest rate of two percentage points and Nova Scotia having one of the lowest student-loan rates in the country.

Direct support to ease fiscal pressures on universities has also been established through the Nova Scotia Crown Share University Infrastructure Trust Fund. The trust will provide ongoing capital project funding to Nova Scotia universities for the academic years 2008–2009, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011. Funding from the trust will support renovations, refit, or new construction that would reduce deferred maintenance requirements for 2008–2009 to 2010–2011.

Ten per cent of the Crown Share payments to Nova Scotia for 2007–2008, to a maximum of \$25 million, would be appropriated to contribute to reducing the \$422 million deferred maintenance requirement at Nova Scotia universities.

And finally, an investment in the Nova Scotia Community College will help advance the province's goal of preparing for jobs in today's economy and work towards the college's development plan to have 10,000 seats province-wide.

## ***Reducing Wait Times***

Achieving shorter wait times and increased access for Nova Scotians to health-care treatments and services is an immediate priority of this government.

In a complex system like health care, shorter wait times are not achieved overnight, nor can they be realized without

sustained effort across a number of areas and initiatives. There is no single quick fix.

This why the province has identified a wide variety of programs and initiatives to tackle wait times.

### **Orthopedic Surgery**

The province will support a demonstration project between Capital Health and Scotia Surgery in Dartmouth. Through this project, Capital Health will be able to serve an extra 500 more patients this year, allowing them to be treated faster and return to their normal daily activities that much sooner.

### **Bone and Joint Canada Project**

In addition to this demonstration project, we will invest to begin the implementation of a Bone and Joint Registry project. This project, already proven successful in Alberta, will establish a clinic where patients waiting to see an orthopedic surgeon can be assessed much faster and have access to the right services and treatment for them. This will include preparation for surgery or access to non-surgical treatments. In Alberta, this project has reduced the wait for orthopedic surgery from months and years to just weeks. Once fully implemented, Nova Scotians will also see significantly shorter waits.

### **Wait Times Guarantee**

Nova Scotia has secured funding from the federal government to help achieve shorter wait times.

This year, the province will continue its work towards establishing a wait time guarantee of eight weeks for patients requiring radiation therapy. Construction will begin in Halifax and Cape Breton to allow for the addition of new linear accelerators used in radiation treatment.

Two pilot projects have also been initiated to begin addressing wait times. One will improve access to diagnostic imaging services, and the other will establish an electronic portal to allow efficiencies in the booking of orthopedic services for patients. Planning is under way with both projects, and substantial work will take place over the next year to develop and test the information management systems that are the heart of these two projects.

### **Electronic Health Initiatives**

Continued advancement of information management systems is critical to the growth and maintenance of Nova Scotia's health-care system. An investment will continue the rollout of the Primary Healthcare Information Management system to more doctors' offices across the province.



The province will make an investment over the next two years with the assistance of Canada Health Infoway to Nova Scotia's electronic health records system. The Secure Health Access Record, known as SHARE, will create an electronic health record for all Nova Scotians. The record will contain patients' up-to-date health information to support decision making and case management by health-care providers.

The components of this first phase include a secure health record storage and viewing system for patient information for timely access by doctors and other health-care workers. A client and provider registry will also be created to identify patients and health-care providers to link medical records from multiple systems. It will include patient information from the province's three lab systems, the diagnostic imaging system, and clinical records from provincial hospitals.

### **Chief Executive, Wait Time Improvements**

To coordinate all of the activity associated with wait times initiatives, the province will hire a Chief Executive of Wait Time Improvements. This new position will ensure the ongoing implementation of the wait times strategy, which includes improving elements such as quality, accountability, increasing capacity, responsiveness, and efficiency.

Additionally, the Chief Executive of Wait Time Improvements will be responsible for overseeing the wait times monitoring project. This will include working with district health authorities and the IWK to define, gather, and report wait time information for diagnostic and surgical services.

The Chief Executive of Wait Time Improvements will be supported by key staff at the Department of Health and will provide oversight to new wait time navigators, who will be established in all or select district health authorities across the province.

### **Continuing Care Strategy**

Wait times for home care and long-term care services continue to be addressed through the provincial Continuing Care Strategy.

As some of the more than 1,000 new long-term care beds open this year, Nova Scotians will begin to have improved access to more options for living well in a place they can call home.

Equally important to the investment in new infrastructure are investments in new and expanded services that will allow individuals in need of support to remain in their own homes and communities longer.

## **Mental Health and Addictions**

Good health includes mental well-being. That's why this year the province is continuing to invest in mental health services.

An additional \$2.8 million will support the expansion of mental health and addictions services across the province, with particular focus on services for children and youth. And \$550,000 will be invested to allow Capital Health and IWK to relocate mental health services into the community, making services easier to access and more convenient for clients.

## **Children and Youth**

A focus on healthy environments, sound public policy, and healthy choices will result in healthier youth who, as they age, will put less pressure on the health-care system with the burden of preventable chronic diseases than their parents and grandparents have.

Results are promising. Overall smoking rates are down from 30 per cent in 2001 to 22 per cent in 2007. And among youth, Nova Scotia has the lowest smoking rate in the country at 12 per cent, down from 31 per cent in 2000.

However, it will take longer to reverse some recent downward trends in youth physical activity. In 2008–2009, the province will enhance physical activity infrastructure support with an investment in a new rink revitalization program, and an additional investment in regional facilities development grants. As well, the Active Kids, Healthy Kids Strategy will be renewed and extended.

The province will also support the expansion of the current Healthy Living Tax Incentive for children and youth. All Nova Scotians will now be eligible for a tax break when they register for an approved activity that promotes and facilitates healthy physical activity.



# Business Plans 2008–2009

## **Department**

**Agriculture**

**Community Services**

**Economic Development**

**Education**

**Energy**

**Environment**

**Finance**

**Fisheries and Aquaculture**

**Health**

**Health Promotion  
and Protection**

**Justice**

**Labour and Workforce  
Development**

**Natural Resources**

**Seniors**

**Service Nova Scotia and  
Municipal Relations**

**Tourism, Culture and Heritage**

**Transportation and  
Infrastructure Renewal**

## **Public Service Entity**

**Aboriginal Affairs, Office of**

**Acadian Affairs, Office of**

**African Nova Scotian Affairs,  
Communications Nova Scotia**

**Conserve Nova Scotia**

**Emergency Management Office**

**Freedom of Information  
and Protection of Privacy  
Review Office**

**Gaelic Affairs, Office of  
Human Rights Commission  
Immigration, Office of**

**Intergovernmental Affairs**

**Ombudsman, Office of the**

**Public Prosecution Service**

**Public Service Commission**

## **Web Address**

[www.gov.ns.ca/agri/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/) (Click on Statistics & Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/coms/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/) (Click on Publications, Policies & Reports)

[www.gov.ns.ca/econ/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/econ/) (Click on Publications)

[www.ednet.ns.ca/](http://www.ednet.ns.ca/) (Click on Business Plans)

[www.gov.ns.ca/energy/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/) (Click on About the Department)

[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/) (Click on Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/finance/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance/) (Click on Publications and Reports)

[www.gov.ns.ca/fish/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/fish/) (Click on Statistics & Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/health/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/) (Click on Reports)

[www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/) (Click on Reports and Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/just/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/) (Click on Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/) (Click on Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/natr/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/) (Click on 2008–2009 Business Plan)

[www.gov.ns.ca/scs/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/scs/) (Click on Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/) (Click on Our Business Plan)

[www.gov.ns.ca/dtc/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/dtc/) (Click on 2008–2009 Business Plan)

[www.gov.ns.ca/tran/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/tran/) (Click on Publications)

## **Web Address**

[www.gov.ns.ca/abor/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/)  
(Click on Office of Aboriginal Affairs, then on What We Do)

*English:* [www.gov.ns.ca/acadian/e/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/acadian/e/) (Click on Publications)

*Français:* [www.gov.ns.ca/acadian/f/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/acadian/f/) (Cliquez sur Publications)

Office of [www.gov.ns.ca/ansa/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/ansa/) (Click on Business Plan 2008–09)

[www.gov.ns.ca/cmns](http://www.gov.ns.ca/cmns) (See under Recent Publications)

[www.conservens.ca](http://www.conservens.ca) (Click on Corporate Info)

[www.gov.ns.ca/emo/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/emo/) (Click on About EMO)

[www.foipop.ns.ca/](http://www.foipop.ns.ca/) (Click on Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/oga](http://www.gov.ns.ca/oga)

[www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights/) (Click on Publications)

[www.novascotiaimmigration.com](http://www.novascotiaimmigration.com)  
(Click on Publications & Resources, Corporate Documents)

[www.gov.ns.ca/iga/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/iga/) (Click on Publications)

[www.gov.ns.ca/ombu/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/ombu/)

[www.gov.ns.ca/pps/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/pps/) (Click on Business Plan)

[www.gov.ns.ca/psc/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/) (Click on Business Plan)

<b>Status of Women, Advisory Council on</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/staw/">www.gov.ns.ca/staw/</a> (Click on About Us, Reports and Business Plans)
<b>Sydney Tar Ponds Agency</b>	<a href="http://www.tarpondscleanup.ca">www.tarpondscleanup.ca</a> (Click on Agency, then hover on Agency)
<b>Treasury and Policy Board</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/</a> (Click on Business Plan 2008–09)
<b>Utility and Review Board, NS</b>	<a href="http://www.nsuarb.ca/">www.nsuarb.ca/</a> (Click on About Us, Plans & Reports)
<b>Voluntary Planning</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/vp/">www.gov.ns.ca/vp/</a> (Click on Publications)
<b>Crown Corporation</b>	<b>Web Address</b>
<b>Art Gallery of Nova Scotia</b>	<a href="http://www.agns.gov.ns.ca">www.agns.gov.ns.ca</a> (Click on About AGNS, Corporate Information, Annual Reports)
<b>Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission</b>	<a href="http://www.hdbc.ca">www.hdbc.ca</a> (Click on HDDB Quick Links, Business Information)
<b>Harbourside Commercial Park Inc.</b>	Included in the Crown Corporation Business Plans Report, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications</a>
<b>InNOVAcorp</b>	<a href="http://www.innovacorp.ca/">www.innovacorp.ca/</a> (Click on InNOVAcorp, Publications)
<b>Nova Scotia Business Incorporated</b>	<a href="http://www.novascotiabusiness.com/en/">www.novascotiabusiness.com/en/</a> (Click on About Us, Corporate Reports and Plans)
<b>Nova Scotia Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/ci/">www.gov.ns.ca/agri/ci/</a>
<b>Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/farmlb/">www.gov.ns.ca/agri/farmlb/</a> (Click on Business Plan)
<b>Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation</b>	<a href="http://www.film.ns.ca">www.film.ns.ca</a> (Click on About Film Nova Scotia, Corporate)
<b>Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/fish/fishlb/">www.gov.ns.ca/fish/fishlb/</a> (Click on Business Plan 2008–09)
<b>Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation</b>	<a href="http://www.nsgc.ca/busPlans.php">www.nsgc.ca/busPlans.php</a>
<b>Nova Scotia Harness Racing Incorporated</b>	Included in the Crown Corporation Business Plans Report, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications</a>
<b>Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation</b>	Included in the Crown Corporation Business Plans Report, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications</a>
<b>Nova Scotia Lands Inc.</b>	Included in the Crown Corporation Business Plans Report, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications</a>
<b>Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation</b>	<a href="http://www.thenslc.com/">www.thenslc.com/</a> (Click on About NSLC, Business Plans)
<b>Nova Scotia Municipal Finance Corporation</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsmfc">www.gov.ns.ca/nsmfc</a> (Click on Business Plan)
<b>Nova Scotia Power Finance Corporation</b>	Included in the Crown Corporation Business Plans Report, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications</a>
<b>Sydney Steel Corporation</b>	Included in the Crown Corporation Business Plans Report, <a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications">www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/publications</a>
<b>Trade Centre Limited</b>	<a href="http://www.tradecentrelimited.com/">www.tradecentrelimited.com/</a> (Click on About TCL, Corporate Policies & Reports)
<b>Waterfront Development Corporation Limited</b>	<a href="http://www.wdcl.ca/">www.wdcl.ca/</a> (Click on Corporate Profile)