



# *Helping People Make Ends Meet*

Budget 2011 builds on the province's plan for change by helping families, students, and seniors make ends meet.

## *Fixing Canada's Weakest Student Assistance System*

Making post-secondary education more affordable is one of the most effective ways to support students and their families. By investing \$42.5 million this year to fix our student assistance system, the government will

- Keep Nova Scotians' tuition below the national average by investing \$30 million in student bursaries to replace the expired Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Trust. This new, provincially funded commitment will provide a tuition reduction of \$1,283 for Nova Scotia students studying in the province.
- Create the first "debt cap" in the province's history, providing Nova Scotia students with a reduction of up to 36 per cent in total debt under the new \$28,560 maximum debt cap. For students and parents, that means a drop of up to \$16,320 in the maximum amount of debt a student may carry.
- Offer up to \$612 per year in additional grants, through an increase in the loan-to-grant ratio from 20 to 30 per cent.
- Double the in-study earnings exemption on student loans—from \$50 per week to \$100 per week.
- Increase the amount allowed for the purchase of books by 50 per cent, from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
- Protect students by capping tuition increases at 3 per cent.
- Continue the successful Graduate Retention Rebate, which provides a tax credit of up to \$15,000 to university graduates, and \$7,500 for community college graduates, over six years.

# *Helping Families and Seniors Make Ends Meet*

Government will provide targeted support to help approximately 75,000 Nova Scotia seniors, and others who live with low incomes, make ends meet.

In the past two years, government created the Affordable Living Tax Credit and the Poverty Reduction Tax Credit, and removed the provincial portion of the HST from home energy, children's clothing and footwear, diapers, and feminine hygiene products.

Last year government committed to refund the full amount of provincial income tax to 18,000 seniors who received the Guaranteed Income Supplement. This year government will put \$9.2 million back into the hands of seniors.

Budget 2011 goes even further. Through investments made in this budget, government will do the following:

- Support people to enter and stay in the workforce, by
  - investing \$3.7 million annually so people on income assistance, including people with disabilities, will keep more of their earned income
  - allowing income assistance recipients to keep \$150 per month of employment income, in addition to the 30 per cent income exemption already in place
  - doubling the flat-rate income exemption for persons with disabilities to \$300, in addition to the 30 per cent income exemption already in place
- Increase income assistance personal allowances by \$15 per month as of July 1, 2011, enabling approximately 31,000 adults to better provide for themselves and their families.
- Increase the Basic Personal Amount—the money people can earn before they have to start paying taxes—by \$250.
- Introduce fair drug pricing legislation to help reduce drug costs for Nova Scotians who depend on Pharmacare, and provide an additional \$3 million in Pharmacare funding.
- Index the new Affordable Living and Poverty Reduction tax credits to help low-income Nova Scotians make ends meet.

This government will undertake additional measures to make life better for families, and to help them make ends meet.