



Dear Minister Cook,

Maarsii. Thank you for continuing to serve the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) as Minister of Finance.

This mandate letter describes the progress made to date under your portfolio and your responsibilities and priorities moving forward. It also outlines how I expect you to conduct yourself as a Minister and work with other Ministers, members of the Provincial Métis Council (PMC), and fellow citizens. As accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of good government, I am making these letters public, so all citizens are informed of how their government is working for them.

PROGRESS TO DATE

When our government took office, MN-S funding from Canada had been frozen for three years, owing to internal governance issues, court battles, and the closure of our office. Since 2016, Ernst-Young had been doing the administration, financial and accounting functions of our government. This was a major impediment to governing effectively and being able to quickly and flexibly respond to the needs of Métis citizens.

In June 2017, we reached an agreement with Canada to reinstate federal funding and negotiated a long-term sustainable funding agreement. We were also able to successfully remove the hold on our accounts that was due to nonreporting by previous management. To support our government, we have built up a modern financial infrastructure to ensure all finance is done in-house and under the control of MN-S. This has included installing our own server, accounting software, banking services, budgeting at the program level, and developing policies, processes and internal controls. We also have the capacity and capability to do program-wise accounting and reporting.

We have also increased transparency about the financial health of our government. Every fiscal year (April 1st to March 31st), financial statements are audited by independent Chartered Professional Accountants, and their report is posted online. In addition, at each Métis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA), the Minister of Finance, supported by the Chief Financial Officer, makes a presentation on the year-to-date financial report and gets approval on the budget. We were proud that at the Spring 2019 MNLA, our government reported a budget surplus for the prior fiscal year, demonstrating an ability to govern effectively. We are also proud that we have now received three good or unqualified opinion audits: for 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19.



MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- Finances of the MN-S, including banking, budgeting and accounting.
- Serve as Chair of the Finance Committee.
- Relationships with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Chartered Professional Accounting firms, the Government of Saskatchewan's Ministry of Government Relations.

PRIORITIES

I expect you to work constructively with your colleagues, members of the PMC, and citizens to deliver on the following priorities:

- Continue to strengthen the financial infrastructure of the government, including implementing budget planning and control software. Continue to improve the reporting system with strengthened controls and ensure that we continue to receive good and unqualified audits for our government.
- We want to ensure the Regions have the financial capacity to support the roll-out of programs and services. To achieve this objective, over the next year:
 - Provide training to all 12 Regions to enhance financial capacity.
 - Ensure all regional audits are done in good time.
- Support the Ministers of Women and Gender Equality and Justice in the development of a plan to address the situation of violence against Métis women, female Elders, girls, and LGBTQIP2SAA persons in Saskatchewan.



EXPECTATIONS FOR MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

All Members of the Executive must act with honesty and uphold the highest ethical standards in their personal and professional lives. Métis citizens' confidence and trust in the integrity of government is essential. Our Executive Handbook was updated in November 2019 by the PMC. It affirms that all Ministers must adhere to strict standards of conduct guided by the principles of integrity, accountability, responsibility, leadership, respect and openness. I encourage you to routinely consult the Executive Handbook and use it as a guiding resource in your work.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities listed above, there is also an obligation to support and advance the overall priorities of this government. Confidentiality, solidarity and collective responsibility are critical to good governance and must be the foundation of how we work together. Our Executive Handbook outlines the meaning of solidarity. Ministers may disagree and state their personal opinions during private meetings. At the same time, to the public, they must present a unified front on all decisions and support all decisions made by their fellow Ministers. Collectively, Ministers are accountable for these decisions, even if they do not personally agree with them.

All Ministers must work collaboratively with each other and all members of the PMC to establish good communication. We will ensure policies and programs reflect the needs and aspirations of Métis citizens. The unique challenges that rural and urban citizens face are considerations in decision-making. Every attempt should be made to consult with and obtain the views of Members of the PMC, local Presidents, community members, Métis women, youth, LGBTQIP2SAA persons, Elders, and other experts.

As we strengthen our working partnerships with First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan, you are expected to conduct yourself in a respectful and cooperative manner. Delivering success for our citizens requires good working partnerships with external partners and being solutions-oriented.

Our government has zero-tolerance for unethical behaviour. All Ministers are obligated to question any request or decision that they think may be unethical or unlawful. Rules and the proper protocol for addressing alleged breaches can be found in section 7.0 of the Executive Handbook.



As we rebuild our Nation, we know we have a lot of work to do. Part of this journey must include recognizing the devastating impact colonialism and land dispossession have had on our communities, kinship, and governance. Lateral violence is endemic across the Métis Nation. We need to understand how we are going to discard colonial attitudes and re-invigorate Métis laws and ways of living together. In particular, we need to critically examine how we will reinstate the vital role Métis women, girls and two-spirit persons traditionally played in our societies. This work must include addressing and ending systemic violence against Métis women, girls and LGBTQIP2SAA persons. We must also continue to ensure equal representation of women in all levels of our government, and that these perspectives and needs be reflected in decision-making.

Our people have fought for over a century for recognition, respect, and our rightful place as a self-determining people. Over the past three years, we have made substantial progress towards realizing the visions of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. From signing the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement with Canada, investing in housing, education and economic development, making real progress on the negotiation of the North-West land claim, and strengthening our internal governance, we have made momentous strides in a relatively short time. This year, our communities have faced a significant challenge to our health and safety: COVID-19. We came together to support citizens, deliver PPE and provide critical support for housing, childcare, and Métis businesses. While we must remain vigilant to ensure everyone's safety, we should all be proud of how we have supported each other during such unprecedented times.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve the MN-S and its citizens. I am here to support you in your role as Minister. Together, we will continue to carry the torch of those great leaders who came before us. We can, and we will, succeed in fully realizing the vision of a strong, self-determining, accountable government for all of us as Métis people in this province.

Sincerely,



President Glen McCallum