



Office of the Provincial President

August 17, 2021

Dear Minister Gervais,

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

This mandate letter describes the progress made to date in this 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

Over the past century, Métis people have bravely answered the call to military service to defend Canada and its allies. Despite serving our Nation and Canada with pride during the Second World War, Métis Veterans were discriminated against in their pre and post-war experiences by not receiving similar benefits as other non-Indigenous Veterans.

As part of our working partnership with Canada, in September 2019, the Government of Canada formally apologized to Métis Veterans and announced \$30 million to compensate Métis Veterans across Canada and support commemorative initiatives. As part of this funding, \$20,000 is being allocated to each veteran for their wartime and post-war experiences. Further funding is being made available for commemorative events and monuments at the community level and Saskatchewan will participate in these activities.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- Advocating for the needs of Métis Veterans and planning commemorative initiatives.
- Aboriginal Veterans Day, with support from the Minister of Culture and Heritage.
- Relationships with Veterans organizations and Legions across Saskatchewan and Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada.



PRIORITIES

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

- We want to honour and commemorate the sacrifice and bravery of Métis Veterans, their families and communities, and the role they played in our history and continue to play today. To achieve this objective, over the next year:
 - Engage with Métis families and Veterans about how the legacy fund to compensate Veterans should be rolled out, and what commemorative activities and monuments should be included.
 - With support from the Minister of Language, Culture and Heritage, seek approval from the PMC to hold an annual Métis-specific Veterans Day. Pending approval, plan and hold the first-ever Métis Veterans Day in Saskatchewan.
- Connect with the Métis National Council towards ensuring MN-S participation in the planning, input and dispersal of federal funds for Métis Veteran Legacy Fund payments and commemoration;
- 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 2SLGBTQQIA+ 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, 2SLGBTQQIA+ 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 2SLGBTQQIA+ 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.

Much respect,



Glen McCallum
President

