



Office of the Provincial President

August 17, 2021

Dear Minister Carriere;

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

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

Closing the Housing and Infrastructure Gap: Our government is committed to closing the housing and infrastructure gaps that exist between Métis citizens and non-Indigenous Canadians in Saskatchewan. We are also committed to closing the gaps that exist within the Northern Regions of the province.

We are focused on improving housing and infrastructure outcomes and addressing needs across the continuum to ensure adequate, affordable, and sustainable housing and infrastructure for Métis citizens. This work is targeting citizens and communities that are considered the most vulnerable and have the highest infrastructure gaps.

Through our strengthened working partnership with Canada, the Governing Members of the Métis National Council signed an agreement with Minister Carolyn Bennett in July 2018 for \$500M over ten years. The MN-S allocation for 2018-2021 is \$36.8M with further funding expected from the Métis Housing Sub-Accord funding for 2022 – 2028.

Our government is also working with Canada on infrastructure funding opportunities and will be working on developing an infrastructure strategy once an agreement has been reached.

To close the housing gap, our government acted immediately by designing and implementing:

- **MN-S First Time Home Buyers Program**

First-time home buyers are often challenged with saving sufficient funds that financial institutions require for a down payment. Recognizing this impediment to homeownership, in July 2019 our government announced the First Time Home Buyers Program to provide



eligible Métis citizens with up to \$15,000 towards a down payment and up to \$2,500 on closing costs. This program was administered by SMEDCO for the first two years and is now administered directly from the MN-S Housing Department.

- **Emergency Home Repairs and Renovation Program**

Necessary home repairs and renovations can be costly for homeowners. To respond to this need, in 2019 our government created the Emergency Home Repairs and Renovation Program to ensure Métis homeowners can address emergency home repairs.

- **Regional Housing Strategy**

Our government is working closely with all 12 Regions to assess housing needs and create a housing strategy. PMC approved a \$1,500,000 regional allocation to a maximum of 10 Regions.

A provincial housing needs assessment has been completed, consultations were made with Métis housing experts and funding agencies to create an accountable, non-political and sustainable system that will allocate funding for capital project planning and capital projects to each Region.

Take-up of this program is very low. Working with the regions, adjustments to the program will be needed to meet regional housing needs.

- **Northern Housing Strategy**

Our government is committed to closing the housing gaps that exist between Northern and Southern Regions of the province. Three meetings have occurred to date consisting of elected Northern Regional Directors on the development of a Comprehensive Northern Housing Strategy.

As of December 2021, the increase in funding levels for the Emergency Repair Program to access up to \$40,000 for Northern communities and \$25,000 for Central and Southern communities.

Discussions on improving mortgage loan opportunities in the North with Royal Bank of Canada is underway.

- **MN-S Homelessness Strategy**

Tackling homelessness is an essential component of closing the housing gap. Our government has entered into a four-year \$4.5 M agreement with the Government of Canada to fund homelessness projects and reduce the impacts of those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. This funding is part of the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Plan through the Distinction Based funding stream.



In the first two years of funding (2020-2022), our government will create a Framework with all 12 Regions to inform homelessness and housing solutions, focusing on multi-layer programs and services solutions tailored to the unique needs of each Region to stabilize housing situation while offering wrap-around case management and housing support in terms of training, emergency housing, rent and utility arrears and housing start-up costs. These programs will address crisis intervention, eviction prevention, landlord and tenant mediation, institutional transitioning and housing stabilization.

Supporting Citizens Through COVID-19

As part of our government's aggressive and proactive response to COVID-19, we provided emergency home support to assist with housing needs, including mortgage payments and rental costs. Self-identifying and Registered Métis households who are accepted by the Métis community were eligible for up to \$500 in support and \$950,000 were disbursed to support 3449 households during the first wave. Indirect financial supports for eviction prevention to cover mortgage, rental and utilities arrears are still underway.

In addition, MN-S provided housing supports related to COVID-19 to:

- The Lighthouse North Battleford;
- Duck Lake Seniors Home;
- La Loche Homelessness Trailers Project;
- Métis Urban Housing Association; and
- Prince Albert Steppingstone Shelter.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- All aspects of the housing continuum, including homelessness.
- All aspects of infrastructure strategy.
- Serve as Chair of the Provincial Métis Housing Corporation.
- Relationships with First Nations Government, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Employment and Social Development Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan's Ministry of Social Services, Industry Leaders, housing organizations and institutes in Saskatchewan, homeless organizations in Saskatchewan.

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 close the housing and infrastructure gaps between non-Indigenous Canadians and Métis citizens in Saskatchewan and ensure that all Métis citizens have access to safe living conditions. To accomplish this objective, over the next year:
 - Continue roll-out of the Regional Housing Strategy, ensuring that it is responding to the unique situations of each Region. Decisions must prioritize the highest needs and all Métis citizens and Elders must have access to safe living conditions. This must include short and long term sustainable housing options for Métis women, especially those in single parent households who are vulnerable to housing cost and availability, and female Elders facing domestic abuse.
 - Continue to bring all Métis Housing Services into MN-S to have all programs under one roof.
 - Design and implement a comprehensive framework for addressing homelessness. This should include working with partners, Regions, other agencies and service providers in urban centers.
 - Lead the development of a comprehensive Northern, Central and Southern housing strategies responsive to unique regional realities.
 - Develop an infrastructure framework for the long term self-government vision of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan that supports our ability to deliver on our core mandate to support citizens, families and communities, including specifically working with other Ministers to support the infrastructure needs of their Ministries to deliver on their visions.
- Continue to contribute to the MN-S COVID-19 response and recovery to help ensure the health and safety of all Métis citizens. Work closely with the Minister of Health and other relevant Ministers.
- Continue to support citizens to access services and programs in their Regions. A decentralized, Métis-focused service delivery model will best support our citizens. To work towards this objective, over the next year:
 - Work with the Ministers mentioned to deliver a pilot for the future construction and administration of a Métis Community Resource Centre (La Faamii) for citizens to access services and support in an effective and efficient manner.
 - 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.
 - Support programs to respond to current and future generational impacts to residential school and 60's scoop survivors.



- Support the Minister of Justice in the Constitutional Reform process to update and modernize our *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* and related legislation to ensure they are grounded on our Métis laws and that we create legislative frameworks that will continue to serve our citizens and Métis Nation as we move towards self-government.

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



