



Office of the Provincial President

July 8, 2022

Dear Minister King;

Maarsii. Thank you for agreeing to serve as the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) 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, Provincial Métis Council (PMC) members, 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 works for them.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Closing the Housing and Infrastructure Gap. Our government is committed to closing the existing housing and infrastructure gaps between Métis citizens and non-Indigenous Canadians in Saskatchewan. We are also committed to closing the gaps between the northern regions and the rest 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 targets citizens and communities that are considered the most vulnerable and have the most significant 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 2018-2028 is \$125M, with further funding expected from the *Métis Housing Sub-Accord* funding from federal budget 2022.

MN-S also signed an agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada in March 2021 for \$5M over ten years, with further funding expected from federal budget 2022.

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. To date, our government has committed \$12,750,000 until 2024 to the program.

As of March 31, 2022, 320 registered Métis citizens have been supported to purchase their first homes.

- **Emergency Home Repairs and Renovation Program**

To focus on the need for adequate, affordable, and sustainable housing, in 2019 our government announced the *Emergency Home Repairs and Renovation Program* to ensure Métis homeowners can address emergency home repairs. In 2021, the program was relaunched as the *Emergency Repair Program* to ensure the program is addressing health and safety needs. To date, MN-S has committed \$13,000,000 to the program until 2024.

As of March 31, 2022, over 600 registered Métis citizens have accessed or are in the process of accessing the program, which has exhausted all funds allocated until 2024.

- **Regional Housing Strategy**

To focus on the unique housing needs of the regions, in 2019, our government allocated \$1.5M per region to a maximum of eight regions and a maximum of \$12M. In 2020, the *Regional Housing Strategy* was announced.

Three regions have accessed the program, and \$8.3M remains uncommitted. Take-up of this program remains low, and further regional support or program augmentations are required to meet the needs of



citizens through this program.

- **Northern Housing Strategy**

Our government is committed to closing the existing housing gaps between northern, central, and southern regions of Saskatchewan. Multiple consultation meetings have occurred to date consisting of northern Regional Directors and northern housing experts on developing the *Comprehensive Northern Housing Strategy*.

Through the *Northern Housing Strategy Consultations and Community Consultations*, the most significant barrier to improving housing needs in the north is the requirement to follow federal lending legislation. The critical priority then lies in lending power within the north to improve access to mortgage loans to build new homes, purchase existing homes, and renovate existing ones.

To date, an increase in funding levels for the *Emergency Repair Program* to access up to \$40,000 for northern communities while homes in Central and Southern communities remain at \$25,000.

Our government is engaged with the federal government on developing alternative lending options designed to address the unique needs of Métis citizens in Northern Saskatchewan.

MN-S Homelessness Strategy

In partnership with Canada, our government aims to eliminate chronic homelessness and reduce episodic homelessness. Our government is focused on addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous and Métis citizens experiencing homelessness in Saskatchewan. In addition, we continue to uncover and address the realities of hidden homelessness which is more prominent in Métis than non-indigenous households.

In November 2021, two *Reaching Home Homelessness Strategy* agreements with Canada were transferred from the Provincial Métis Housing Corporation (PMHC) to MN-S to continue administering the *Indigenous Homelessness and Rural and Remote Homelessness* programs on behalf of the federal government following the dissolution of



PMHC. These two agreements total \$14M ending 2024 and follow directives designed by the federal government.

In September 2021, MN-S launched the *Métis Homelessness Strategy*, designed to assist the most vulnerable Métis citizens to exist human system services as the current multi-jurisdictional human services system is designed with barriers that are difficult for the most vulnerable Métis citizens to access. The *Métis Homelessness Strategy* is planned to merge with the Ma Faamii plans as regional plans are developed.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As Minister, you are responsible for the following areas:

- All aspects of the housing continuum, including homelessness.
- All aspects of the *Northern Housing Strategy*.
- Build and retain strong 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, and other community entities contracted by the Government of Canada to administer Canada's *Homelessness Strategy*.



PRIORITIES

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

- We want to close the housing gaps between non-Indigenous Canadians and Métis citizens in Saskatchewan and ensure that all Métis citizens have access to safe, appropriate and affordable living conditions. To accomplish this objective, over the next year:
 - Continue roll-out of the *Regional Housing Strategy*, ensuring it responds to each region's unique needs. Decisions must prioritize citizens with the highest need. This must include short and long-term sustainable housing plans with appropriate options for Métis women and children, especially those in single-parent households vulnerable to housing costs and availability and citizens facing domestic abuse.
 - Support the need for emergency housing responses by redeveloping a program designed to respond to housing emergencies that the most vulnerable citizens cannot address without our government's help.
 - Design and implement a comprehensive homeowner capacity development program designed to give citizens the tools to support housing stability and build personal assets reducing the risks of poverty for future generations.
 - Design and implement a comprehensive framework for addressing homelessness. This should include working with partners, Regions, other agencies, and service providers in urban centers. Furthermore, begin a discussion on bringing Canada's *Homelessness Strategy* urban programs under MN-S for administration past 2024 in order to achieve functional zero in Saskatchewan by 2028.
 - Lead the development of comprehensive northern, central, and southern housing strategies responsive to unique regional realities. This includes a strong focus on reducing the housing gaps in the North.
- Continue to support citizens to access services and programs in their regions. A Métis-focused service delivery model will best support our citizens. To work towards this objective, over the next year:
 - Work with the other Ministers in the delivery of Ma Faamii for



citizens to access services and support in an appropriate, effective, efficient, and distinctly Métis way.

- 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 of 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

