



This page was published under a previous government and is available for archival and research purposes.

## Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Attorney General

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Yasir Naqvi  
Attorney General  
Ministry of the Attorney General  
720 Bay Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2S9

Dear Attorney General:

Welcome to your role as Attorney General. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with

all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives. Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and we have achieved the following key results:

- Raised the eligibility threshold for legal aid assistance so that an additional 400,000 low-income Ontarians are eligible for legal aid services as of April 1, 2016.
- Passed the *Protection of Public Participation Act, 2015* to protect freedom of speech on matters of public interest.
- Created the Attorney General's Justice Roundtable, a forum in which leaders from the justice community come together with a common interest in promoting access to justice, finding efficiencies and improving the services of Ontario's court system.
- Modernized the delivery of government services through the adoption of digital technology, including:
  - Introducing an online platform for filing claims in Small Claims Court.
  - Launching the Online Child Support Calculation Service to provide parents with more options to establish or recalculate child support.
  - Changing the law, through the Legislative Assembly, to allow real estate documents to be signed electronically.
- Supported Ontario's Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan by:
  - Removing barriers for victims of sexual violence to start a civil action or make a compensation claim by eliminating the two-year limitation period on such claims.
  - Launching a pilot project to provide independent legal advice to survivors of sexual assault.
  - Creating a Crown Mentorship Program and Sexual Violence Advisory Group to provide expert guidance and advice to Crowns on all aspects of sexual violence prosecutions, as well as providing increased education and training to crown attorneys, police, justice partners and our community partners.
- Passed the *Horse Racing Licence Act, 2015* to support the integration of horse racing into Ontario's gaming strategy by transferring the Ontario Racing Commission role to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.
- Launched the Automobile Accident Benefits Service on April 1, 2016, at the Licence Appeal Tribunal to help people who have been injured in a motor vehicle accident resolve claims disputes with insurance companies more efficiently and effectively.
- The legislature passed the *Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015* to adjust Ontario's provincial boundaries to ensure that Ontarians are represented fairly and effectively by recognizing our population shifts and growth.

As the Attorney General, you are responsible for the administration of justice, ensuring a fair and accessible justice system, and helping build safe and prosperous communities across the province. Equally important is that access to our system of justice must be guaranteed to everyone in our criminal, civil and family courts — and our adjudicative tribunals.

As Chief Law Officer of the Crown, you have a unique role in providing independent legal advice to Cabinet, with a special responsibility as the guardian of the rule of law. You are responsible for ensuring Cabinet is properly advised on the constitutionality and legal risks of all government initiatives. You and your ministry staff will also continue to provide legal advice to all ministries, and to conduct litigation on behalf of the government.

You are also mandated to oversee a large and diverse group of provincial agencies, boards and commissions that report to the Ministry of the Attorney General. It is essential that you work in a constructive and collaborative fashion with each of these bodies to ensure strong fiscal management, modern and accessible service delivery, and protection of the public interest.

Your mandate is to work collaboratively across government and with stakeholders and you will focus on the following priority actions:

## **A Modern Judicial System**

### **Leading Ontario's Approach to the Legalization of Recreational Marijuana**

- In anticipation of the legalization of marijuana for recreational use by the federal government in 2017, lead the development of a regulatory framework that focuses on the promotion of public health and safety, including road safety, the protection of young people and high risk users and harm reduction. You will develop the framework in close collaboration with partner ministries, including the ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Finance, Transportation, Children and Youth Services, and Community Safety and Correctional Services.
- You will also advocate for Ontario's interests with the federal government and work closely with the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to consult with Ontario's First Nations communities.

### **Modernizing the *Construction Lien Act***

- Introduce legislation in spring 2017 to modernize the *Construction Lien Act* in order to strengthen the province's construction sector and support the government's economic plan for Ontario.

### **Reforming the Ontario Municipal Board**

- Work with the Minister of Municipal Affairs on a review of the scope and effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Work with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and stakeholders to recommend reforms to improve the OMB's role within the broader land use planning system and introduce legislation by spring 2017.

## **Digital Innovation**

- Building on recent successes, continue to expand innovative online service delivery in the justice system and at ministry agencies, boards and commissions in order to provide Ontarians with services that are more accessible, responsive and easy to use. This includes the introduction of eFiling for civil and family matters and auto insurance disputes, online dispute resolution for appropriate court and tribunal proceedings, and online Special Occasion Permits for the sale and service of alcohol.
- Continue to modernize and streamline court services with a view to deliver efficient digital and front-line court services. Modernization efforts could include reforms to the *Provincial Offences Act*, delivering services online and implementing an enhanced triage process for family courts.

### **Modernizing the Justice System**

- Work with justice partners, including the federal Minister of Justice, to put forward a proposal for unified family court expansion in Ontario.
- Implement the Serious Fraud Office in conjunction with the ministers of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Finance.

## **A Fair and Accessible Justice System**

### **Criminal Justice Reform – Bail and Remand**

- Develop and initiate implementation of a targeted strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Ontario's criminal justice system in the area of bail and remand (i.e. pre-trial custody) while maintaining public safety. Working in close collaboration with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and justice system stakeholders, the strategy should establish clear, measurable outcomes and provide for regular and ongoing public reporting to Ontarians.

## **Fair and Inclusive Parentage Laws**

- Introduce legislation in September 2016 to ensure that Ontario's parentage laws are fair, inclusive and in keeping with the needs of all Ontario families.
- Drawing upon the work already done by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, you will consult with stakeholders, including advocates and the legal community, to inform your work to modernize and bring better clarity to the definition of parent in order to celebrate and reflect the diversity of Ontario families.
- The proposed legislation should provide legal certainty for parents and children regardless of the method of conception and should address the various forms of assisted human reproduction.

## **Strengthening Police Oversight in Ontario**

- Support the independent review being conducted by the Honourable Michael H. Tulloch to enhance the transparency and accountability of the province's three police oversight bodies.
- Following the receipt of Justice Tulloch's recommendations, you will move forward with a plan to strengthen Ontario's police oversight bodies in a way that complements the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services' forthcoming Strategy for a Safer Ontario.

## **Gun Crime**

- Work with our federal, provincial, territorial and municipal government partners to explore new opportunities to reduce gun crime in Ontario, in particular by considering additional measures to get handguns and assault weapons off the streets.

## **Strengthening the Relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Justice System**

- Take concrete steps to strengthen the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the justice system through the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, *The Journey Together: Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, respond to the Debwewin Committee's recommendations on the jury system and support the federal government's public inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to support ministry modernization efforts that promote fairness and access to our justice system by engaging stakeholders and leaders in the justice system.
- Continue to support the Seamless Access to Justice in French pilot project at the Ottawa courthouse.
- Support the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, the Minister of Community and Social Services, and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to review existing programs and services and create an updated domestic violence action plan.
- Work with the ministries of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Children and Youth Services, as well as other key partners, to help transform youth justice to provide earlier support and to reduce the incarceration of youth.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as

a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne  
Premier

Updated: August 9, 2019

Published: September 23, 2016

## Related

[Ministry website \(http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/\)](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/)

[Read all 2016 mandate letters \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/mandate-letters-2016\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/mandate-letters-2016)