

Premier Kathleen Wynne Announces Major Mid-Term Cabinet Shuffle

Senior Ministers continue to drive reforms while new faces will sell record in lead-up to 2018

Today's cabinet shuffle marks the first major cabinet changes made by Premier Kathleen Wynne since her Liberal majority win in 2014. In short, the shuffle serves to give the government a new look and feel through seven new ministers, while staying the course on the government's priority policy and reform initiatives, with more than 10 ministers keeping their posts.

The new larger cabinet (from 27 to 30), combines proven experience with new talent. Premier Wynne gave a nod to her most senior ministers who are either staying in their current portfolios or moving laterally to other major files, while bringing in seven new ministers, most of whom hold seats in competitive ridings.

Ironically it is only now, at the mid-point of her mandate, that Premier Wynne can put her own definitive stamp on the Ontario cabinet. Having inherited the leadership of an experienced executive council following the departure of Dalton McGuinty, Premier Wynne's post-election cabinet was composed exclusively of veterans in the senior cabinet posts, leaving room for new blood in only a few junior cabinet roles.

With last week's graceful, well-orchestrated announcements of the departures of several high-profile cabinet veterans, Premier Wynne cleared the path for a generational and gender shift within her cabinet, promoting MPPs whose time has come after distinguishing themselves over the first half of the mandate.

With much of the heavy lifting on the government's most ambitious and controversial files now in the rear view mirror, this new cabinet will gradually transition into promoting the Wynne's government's record - but not before each new minister seeks to put their own unique stamp on their portfolios. Likewise, those ministers who continue in their roles have received an endorsement from the Premier to continue driving reforms already underway.

Senior Cabinet Ministers – Who's Staying Put

The shuffle reinforces the government's priorities of reducing the deficit, creating jobs, and promoting environmental stewardship. Premier Wynne's most senior ministers will continue in their posts, as any significant changes would have reflected poorly on the government's key initiatives and priorities. This list includes Charles Sousa (Finance), Glen Murray (Environment and Climate Change), Eric Hoskins (Health and Long-Term Care), Brad Duguid (Economic Development and Growth), Steven Del Duca (Transportation) and Jeff Leal (Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs).

Who's Moving

The notable changes at the top includes Deb Matthews (Treasury Board to Advanced Education and Skills Development), Liz Sandals (Education to Treasury Board), Yasir Naqvi (Community Safety and Correctional Services to Attorney General) and Mitzie Hunter (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan to Education). Bill Mauro (formerly Natural Resources and Forestry) will become Minister of Municipal Affairs, a post he held prior to the 2014 provincial election.

Matthews, the Premier's most trusted and senior minister, leaves behind her line-by-line program review whose savings are expected to put the budget into balance, switching gears to head up the newly coined Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, where she will implement the government's high profile tuition initiatives in a signal of the government's plans to follow Justin Trudeau's example in courting the youth vote. She will also have responsibility for Digital Government.

A couple of ministers now have reduced responsibilities. Reza Moridi, who is highly respected within the research community, retains the Research, Innovation and Science element of his former portfolio (passing Training, Colleges and Universities to Matthews), while Tracy MacCharles retains responsibility for Women's Issues (ceding Children and Youth Services to Michael Coteau).

New Faces in Cabinet

The shuffle promoted seven backbenchers to the cabinet table, with the vast majority of the new appointees representing battleground ridings that will be in play during the 2018 provincial election: Laura Albanese of York-South Weston (Citizenship and Immigration), Chris Ballard of Newmarket-Aurora (Housing and Poverty Reduction Strategy), Kathryn McGarry of Cambridge (Natural Resources and Forestry), Eleanor McMahon of Burlington (Tourism, Culture and Sport), Indira Naidoo- Harris of Halton (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) and Glenn Thibeault of Sudbury (Energy).

The most senior appointments are Glenn Thibeault (Energy), the former NDP MP and NDP Caucus Chair who won his seat during the Sudbury by-election. He is regarded as a strong political communicator who will be responsible for explaining and promoting the benefits of key energy policies, including the Hydro One sale, to the Liberals' left-of-centre voting coalition. Chris Ballard (Housing and Poverty Reduction Strategy) will oversee the expected influx of federal dollars on the affordable housing file. He also represents a growth area as MPP for Newmarket-Aurora.

Laura Albanese (Citizenship and Immigration) and Indira Naidoo-Harris (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan), a rising star in the party, are both former OMNI reporters and are expected to play a greater role in the government's outreach to multicultural communities. This will be a key focus in the next election.

Snapshot of Cabinet "Demographics"

The new cabinet has expanded from 27 to 30. With the Liberals currently holding 57 seats in the Legislature, the cabinet represents over 50% of the Liberal caucus. Seven backbenchers were promoted into cabinet – in order to make room, several portfolios were divided up, while four veteran Liberals stepped down from their cabinet roles leading up to the shuffle.

The regional balance of cabinet largely remains the same, though notably, all Liberal MPPs from Northern Ontario sit in cabinet.

Jim Bradley (Chair of Cabinet, Minister without portfolio), Ted McMeekin (Municipal Affairs and Housing), Madeleine Meilleur (Attorney General), and Mario Sergio (Seniors) resigned their cabinet posts prior to the shuffle. Meilleur also stepped down as MPP, while the Toronto Star reports that Sergio will remain as an MPP for at least the next few months. McMeekin will stay on as an MPP, and Bradley

will become the Chief Government Whip, replacing Marie-France Lalonde who was promoted into cabinet.

There are 12 women in cabinet (40%) – a notable increase over the previous Wynne Cabinet (8/27, or 30%), but slightly lower than the 42% set by the 1990 Rae and 2007 McGuinty governments.

The Summer Ahead

Over the next few weeks, the government is expected to release its new team of Parliamentary Assistants, along with the new mandate letters for each minister. With the Legislature not slated to return until September 12th, Ministers will use the long summer break to brief up on their new responsibilities.

The summer break is also a much-needed opportunity for Ministers' offices to staff up. While staff changes – new hires, movement between offices, staff leaving government – are always expected after a cabinet shuffle, many positions remained vacant after the staff exodus to Parliament Hill. Its difficult to predict the magnitude of staff changes but expect a lot of movement.

Ontario Cabinet – June 2016

Ministry	Minister
Premier, Intergovernmental Affairs	Kathleen Wynne
Deputy Premier	Deb Matthews
Finance	Charles Sousa
Treasury Board	Liz Sandals
Minister of Education	
Advanced Education and Skills Development	Deb Matthews
Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Jeff Leal
Attorney General	Yasir Naqvi
Children and Youth Services	Michael Coteau
Citizenship and Immigration	Laura Albanese
Community Safety and Correctional Services	David Oraziatti
Community and Social Services	Helena Jaczek
Economic Development and Growth	Brad Duguid
Education	Mitzie Hunter
Energy	Glenn Thibeault
Environment and Climate Change	Glen Murray
Government and Consumer Services	Marie-France Lalonde
Health and Long-Term Care	Eric Hoskins
Housing	Chris Ballard
Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	David Zimmer
Infrastructure	Bob Chiarelli
International Trade	Michael Chan
Labour	Kevin Flynn
Municipal Affairs	Bill Mauro
Natural Resources and Forestry	Kathryn McGarry
Northern Development and Mines	Michael Gravelle
Research, Innovation and Science	Reza Moridi
Tourism, Culture and Sport	Eleanor McMahon
Transportation	Steven Del Duca
Minister of Health	
Chair of Cabinet	Deb Matthews
Government House Leader	Yasir Naqvi
Accessibility	Tracy MacCharles
Anti-Racism	Michael Coteau
Digital Government	Deb Matthews
Francophone Affairs	Marie-France Lalonde
Poverty Reduction Strategy	Chris Ballard
Seniors Affairs	Dipika Damerla
Women's Issues	Tracy MacCharles
Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan)	
Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan)	Indira Naidoo-Harris

Overview of Cabinet Changes

Ministry	Minister	Former Minister
Premier, Intergovernmental Affairs	Kathleen Wynne	<i>no change</i>
Deputy Premier	Deb Matthews	<i>no change</i>
Finance	Charles Sousa	<i>no change</i>
Treasury Board	Liz Sandals	Deb Matthews
Advanced Education and Skills Development	Deb Matthews	Reza Moridi
Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Jeff Leal	<i>no change</i>
Attorney General	Yasir Naqvi	Madeleine Meilleur
Children and Youth Services	Michael Coteau	Tracy MacCharles
Citizenship and Immigration	Laura Albanese	Michael Chan (<i>ministry split</i>)
Community Safety and Correctional Services	David Oraziotti	Yasir Naqvi
Community and Social Services	Helena Jaczek	<i>no change</i>
Economic Development and Growth	Brad Duguid	<i>no change (new ministry name, ministry split)</i>
Education	Mitzie Hunter	Liz Sandals
Energy	Glenn Thibeault	Bob Chiarelli
Environment and Climate Change	Glen Murray	<i>no change</i>
Government and Consumer Services	Marie-France Lalonde	David Oraziotti
Health and Long-Term Care	Eric Hoskins	<i>no change</i>
Housing	Chris Ballard	Ted McMeekin (<i>ministry split</i>)
Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	David Zimmer	<i>no change (new ministry name)</i>
Infrastructure	Bob Chiarelli	Brad Duguid (<i>ministry split</i>)
International Trade	Michael Chan	<i>no change (ministry split)</i>
Labour	Kevin Flynn	<i>no change</i>
Municipal Affairs	Bill Mauro	Ted McMeekin (<i>ministry split</i>)
Natural Resources and Forestry	Kathryn McGarry	Bill Mauro
Northern Development and Mines	Michael Gravelle	<i>no change</i>
Research, Innovation and Science	Reza Moridi	<i>no change (new ministry name)</i>
Tourism, Culture and Sport	Eleanor McMahan	Michael Coteau
Transportation	Steven Del Duca	<i>no change</i>
Chair of Cabinet	Deb Matthews	Jim Bradley
Government House Leader	Yasir Naqvi	<i>no change</i>
Accessibility	Tracy MacCharles	<i>n/a - new role</i>
Anti-Racism	Michael Coteau	<i>n/a - new role</i>
Digital Government	Deb Matthews	<i>n/a - new role</i>
Francophone Affairs	Marie-France Lalonde	Madeleine Meilleur
Poverty Reduction Strategy	Chris Ballard	Deb Matthews
Seniors Affairs	Dipika Damerla	Mario Sergio
Women's Issues	Tracy MacCharles	<i>no change</i>
Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan)	Indira Naidoo-Harris	Mitzie Hunter

New Cabinet Ministers



Laura Albanese,
Citizenship and
Immigration



Chris Ballard,
Housing and
Poverty Reduction Strategy



Marie-France Lalonde,
Gov't and Consumer Services and
Francophone Affairs



Kathryn McGarry,
Natural Resources and
Forestry



Eleanor McMahon,
Tourism, Culture and Sport



Indira Naidoo-Harris,
Ontario Retirement Pension Plan



Glenn Thibeault,
Energy