

Ministerial Mandate Letters – September 2014

Background

On Thursday, Premier Kathleen Wynne publicly released the mandate letters given to all Cabinet Ministers. This marks the first time that Ontario has released the letters, and makes Ontario the fourth province to do so.

These letters, tailored for each Minister, contain a list of priorities to be completed over the course of the government's 4-year mandate. These priorities include introducing or reviewing government programs, bringing forward legislation, and meeting budgetary targets.

While the release of these mandate letters provides the public with greater insight into the Ontario Government's priorities, they do not represent an exhaustive list of commitments. It can be anticipated that the government will proceed with additional commitments, and will respond to new issues as they emerge.

Analysis

The mandate letters clearly build upon the direction and commitments set out in the 2014 Ontario Budget and the 2014 Ontario Liberal Plan, and reflect a clear focus on better coordination across ministries by requiring Ministers to work with specified Cabinet colleagues on complex issues.

Despite the current fiscal challenge, the mandate letters explicitly state the Province's intention to govern from the "activist centre". In this regard, the mandate letters task the respective Ministers with a significant number of policy reviews, as well as developing comprehensive strategies for many challenging policy issues. Achieving this degree of transformative change, while balancing the complex issues affecting stakeholders, will be an ambitious task. The government will ultimately be judged on how they deliver on these commitments and objectives.

The government's Speech from the Throne identified four overarching thematic priorities: job creation, investment in talent and skills, infrastructure-building and creating a dynamic business climate. The same considerations are clearly identified across all mandate letters, and these values are highlighted as being integral to the successful completion of each Minister's assigned priorities.

As part of the fulfillment of their mandates, Ministers are expected to deliver savings to support the government's priority objective of balancing the budget by 2017-18. In particular, agencies will be a particular focus as the government seeks to reduce their number by 30% by March 2015 and identify further cost savings.

Highlights

There are an extensive number of new and previously announced commitments in the mandate letters. The chart below includes a number of new and revised commitments of particular interest. For a comprehensive overview of the content of the mandate letters, we have attached a summary chart.

The complete letters can be accessed at <http://www.ontario.ca/government/mandate-letters>.

Ministry	New Commitments
Aboriginal Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new treaty strategy. Commitment to fulfill duty to consult. Improve drinking water on reserves.
Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an action plan to meaningfully reduce neonicotinoid (“neo-nic”) use for the 2015 growing season. Amend the <i>Crop Insurance Act</i> to enable the province to offer insurance for other agriculture products like bees and livestock. Work with the sector to identify and develop new insurance plans.
Economic Development, Employment & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to develop new accessibility standards in the health or education sectors.
Environment & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new climate change strategy. Require Cabinet/Treasury Board to analyze all new policies/legislation/regulations for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission impacts.
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow new beer retailing opportunities.
Health & Long-Term Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review LHINs, CCACs and Public Health Units for patient outcomes and value-for-money. Explore expanded scopes of practice for providers and more models for collaborative care. Explore long-term options to provide health benefits to lower-income Ontarians. Develop strategy to bring stability to personal support worker (PSW) workforce.
Intergovernmental Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce legislation to adjust Ontario’s electoral boundaries. Create a Premiers’ Productivity and Innovation Council.
Municipal Affairs and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the scope and effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), and recommend reforms. Accelerate the review of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. Review the <i>Municipal Elections Act</i>, and permit the use of ranked ballots for the 2018 municipal elections.
Training, Colleges & Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a special advisor to review the College of Trades.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles (“driverless cars”). Examine the merits of supporting short-line rail operations in Ontario.

Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs

Ministry	Existing Commitments	New Commitments
Aboriginal Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund (2014 Budget) • Create the Urban Aboriginal Action Plan (2014 Platform) • Create the Remote Electrification Readiness Program (2014 Budget) • Ensure that Aboriginal peoples share in the benefits of natural resources and are engaged in resource-related economic development by advancing the province's local/sectoral approach to resource benefits sharing. • Ensure benefits sharing and a regional approach on the Ring of Fire • Continuing to resolve land claims in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move forward with a new Treaty Strategy • Working with ministers to ensure that Ontario continues to meet its duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate Aboriginal communities.
Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Premier's Agri-Food Challenge, which calls on the province's agri-food industry to double its growth rate and create 120,000 jobs by the year 2020 (Premier's Agri-Food Summit, Oct. 2013) • Working with industry partners to address how the ministry can more effectively support clients as they deal with regulatory burdens (Budget 2014) • Pollinator Health Strategy aimed at improving the health of bees and other pollinators (2014 Election) • Working with other ministers and partners to explore opportunities to develop the agriculture sector in the North. This approach should prioritize opportunities on private land. (2014 Platform) (new: prioritizing private land) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an action plan to reduce neonicotinoid use for the 2015 growing season and reduce the use of seed treated with neonicotinoid insecticides for the 2016 growing season (Minister made general statements in Summer 2014) • Amending the <i>Crop Insurance Act</i> to enable the province to offer insurance for a broader range of agricultural products, such as bees and livestock. Also work with the agricultural sector to identify and develop new insurance plans.
Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) (Budget 2014) 	
Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the Healthy Kids Strategy and lead the Healthy Kids Ministers' Working Group • Work on posting calorie counts, smoke-free Ontario, 60 minutes of physical activity per school day • Implement the enhanced Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for continued changes in the funding of long-term care homes to reflect the care that people need and receive. • Develop a strategy on community wellness and a culture of health, including ways to provide more culturally appropriate care.
Attorney General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise income eligibility threshold for Legal Aid (Budget 2014) • Re-introduce anti-SLAPP legislation (previous legislative session) • Continue to implement Iacobucci Report, increase First Nations representation on juries • Continue with family law reform (2008 ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with MMAH to review scope & effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board, recommend reforms

**Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs**

<p>Children and Youth Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to work with children’s aid societies to lead the ongoing transformation of the child welfare system • Continuing building on the successes of the Youth Action Plan, including taking action on handgun violence • Improve addictions programming for children and youth • Continuing to support the Premier’s Council on Youth Opportunities, the Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy and the new Poverty Reduction Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the launch and implementation of an Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy • Implementing a provincewide Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative
<p>Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduce the Ontario Immigration Act, enshrining the government's vision for immigration (Feb. 2014) • Continue to implement Ontario's Immigration Strategy (Fall 2012) • Expand the Provincial Nominee Program (2014 Platform) • Continue to implement the Going Global Trade Strategy (2014 Platform) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining opportunities to develop and implement Ontario's first Volunteersim Strategy, which would provide an ongoing framework for our government's support for volunteers • Establish a ministerial working group (with Min of MEDEI) to maximize int'l trade and foreign investment opportunities • Developing a strategy that leverages Ontario's diversity to ensure better international trade and investment opportunities
<p>Community and Social Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive long-term transformation of the social assistance system (Lankin/Sheikh and others) • Transform the delivery of adult developmental services , providing choice through direct funding and within the existing transfer payment agencies. Work with developmental service agencies to modernize service delivery. (Budget 2014) • Develop a policy on community hubs (Platform 2014) 	
<p>Community Safety and Correctional Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the implementation of a new, fairer, more transparent OPP billing model (2013-14) • Continuing to develop measures to keep guns out of Ontario and handguns off our streets • Moving forward with plans for longer-term transformation of the correctional system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with stakeholders, municipalities and other minsiters to control the rising cost of policing • Working with the federal government and First Nations communities to address the sustainability of First Nations policing • Engaging with stakeholder and ministry partners to review issues that intersect between policing and civil liberties to bring forward change • Working with ministry partners and stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive review of the province's emergency management systems • Engaging in a co-ordinated approach and working with community partners, stakeholders and other ministers, consider mental health and substance abuse issues when delivering frontline services (draw on Iacobucci report - Police Encounters with People in Crisis)

**Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs**

<p>Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create partnerships with business through regional economic development and the \$2.5B Jobs and Prosperity Fund (2014 Budget) • Develop strategies for key-growth sectors, including agri-food and cleantech (2014 Budget) • Create a new Natural Gas Access Loan and Natural Gas Economic Development Grant (2014 Platform) • Continue to implement the Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy (Budget 2013) • Lead the development of the province's long-term infrastructure plan • Launch the new permanent Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (\$100M/yr - Budget 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a ministerial working group (with Min of CIIT) to maximize int'l trade and foreign investment opportunities • Explore options to develop new accessibility standards in the health or education sector. • Working with Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Premier), create a new Premiers' Productivity and Innovation Council • Align infrastructure investment with economic goals, asset management growth, and environmental priorities
<p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing the implementation of the Child Care Modernization Act • Modernize and expand teacher education into a two-year program, starting in Sept. 2015 • Investing \$150 million over three years in technology and learning tools (2014 Budget) • Respecting the collective bargaining process - any wage increases must be absorbed by employers within Ontario's existing fiscal plan • Providing \$11 billion over ten years in capital grants to school boards (Budget 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using some empty school space across the province for community resources as part of community hub strategy

**Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs**

<p>Energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the 2013 Long-Term Energy Plan • Remove Debt Retirement Charge from residential electricity bills • Implement a new stream of the Industrial Electricity Incentive program • Continue to lead government's commitment to renewable energy, with the aim of having 20,000 MW of renewable energy online by 2025 • Working with the ministry's agencies and with municipal partners to ensure that municipalities participate meaningfully and effectively in the decision-making process for the placement of renewable energy projects, including wind and natural gas. • Working with other ministries and agencies to ensure that First Nation and Métis communities are consulted on any energy activity that could adversely affect their Aboriginal or treaty rights. • Developing and implementing a new residential electricity assistance program to help make electricity more affordable, particularly for low-income families (Budget 2014) • Collaborating, including across borders, on the development of a strategy to ensure a clean, reliable and sustainable energy supply (the development of a Canadian Energy Strategy with other provinces and territories) 	
<p>Environment and Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduce Great Lakes Protection Act (previous legislative session) • New alternative fuels rules (Ontario Liberal Plan, 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Climate Change Strategy with an outlook to 2050, plan to achieve 2020 GHG emission targets • Require Cabinet/TB to analyze all proposed gov't policies, legs/regs and public infrastructure investment for GHG emission impacts related to strategy • Review legislative/regulatory framework to ensure a comprehensive approach to holding polluters responsible • Provide Ontarians with better information about carcinogenic substances and toxins (election commitment)
<p>Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance the budget by 2017-18 • Auto insurance reform to reduce auto insurance rates (Budget 2013) • Advise on maximizing value of gov't-owned assets: LCBO, OPG, Hydro One (Budget 2014) • Creation of Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) (Budget 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow new beer retailing opportunities

Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs

Government and Consumer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to focus on integrating and transforming government services Undertake consultations and bring forward a Consumer Bill of Rights (2014 Platform) • Introduce legislation to modernize the Condominium Act and create mandatory qualifications for condominium managers. • Bring forward legislation to enable the implementation of the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to expand or promote shared services — first to agencies and then to the broader public sector • Improve procurement processes, tools and technology.
Health and Long-Term Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put patients at the centre - right care, right time, right place (Health Action Plan) • Ensure changes to care delivery are evidence-based (Health Action Plan) • Bring forward a plan to ensure that every Ontarian who wants one has a primary care provider. (Platform 2014) • Collaborate with hospitals, bring forward a plan to reduce or cap hospital parking rates for frequent visitors. (Platform 2014) • Establish the patient ombudsman (prior legislation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore appropriate expanded scope of practice for providers and more models for collaborative care. • Develop strategy to bring stability to PSW workforce • Explore opportunities to optimize quality and value in community laboratories and the broader laboratory sector. • Review LHINs, CCACs and Public Health Units for patient outcomes and value-for-money • Expand access to health benefits for children in low-income families, and explore long-term options for a sustainable program that provides health benefits to lower-income Ontarians.
Intergovernmental Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce legislation to adjust Ontario’s electoral boundaries. • Create a Premiers’ Productivity and Innovation Council. 	
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue transformation of Ontario's workplace safety system (Bill 160, 2011) • Work with WSIB to examine possible changes to benefits delivery while balancing long-term sustainability of the system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Ontario's employment and labour standards • Develop a wage gap strategy to close the pay gap between men and women • Strengthen protection for migrant workers • Engage with companies with strong mental health supports for employees to learn of their experience, and work to expand employer-provided services in Ontario

**Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs**

Municipal Affairs and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement (August 2014) • Planning Act & Development Charges Act reforms (Consultation 2013/14; Ontario Liberal Plan, 2014) • Growth Plan & Greenbelt Plan Reviews - including protecting farmland and partnering with municipalities to grow the Greenbelt (statutory; Ontario Liberal Plan, 2014) • Amend the Building Code to allow Six-Storey, Wood Frame construction (September, 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy by 2015-16 (accelerating the review) • Work with MAG to review scope & effectiveness of the Ontario Municipal Board, recommend reforms • Municipal Elections Act Review, must include permitting the use of ranked ballot • Review of the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program, using lessons from recent disasters like 2013 Ice Storm
Natural Resources and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-introduce Invasive Species Act (previous legislative session) • Implementation of the Far North Act (2010) • Recommend legislative & regulatory reforms to the Aggregate Resources Act (ARA Review) • Implementation of the Endangered Species Act (2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Ontario's wetland strategy to stop net loss of wetlands (2014 Election)
Northern Development and Mines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinating and leading the development of the Ring of Fire to create opportunities in Northern Ontario's resource and mineral sector (ongoing) • Establish a Ring of Fire development corporation within 60 days of the Speech from the Throne (2014 Election) • Transforming the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission and keep in public hands that remaining ONTC business lines (2014 Election) • Conducting a five-year review of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario in 2016 to assess progress and achievements to date (statutory) 	
Pan/Parapan American Games Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Organizing Committee (TO2015), relevant ministers and other partners to develop and implement strategies for community engagement and inclusion. Working closely with relevant ministers, TO2015 and other partners to effectively co-ordinate operational and other matters for the Games. 	
Seniors Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully deliver the Seniors Community Grant Program • Continue to strengthen and promote the role of elderly persons centres • Continue to implement Retirement Homes Act 	

**Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs**

<p>Tourism, Culture and Sport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to partner with key stakeholders in both the public and private sectors to revitalize Ontario Place (Urban Park, Waterfront Trail open to the public in 2016) (2014 Election, Summer 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing a refreshed Ontario Trails Strategy, including the introduction of trails legislation Continue to work with stakeholders to build on the Entertainment and Creative Cluster strategy and develop an Arts Policy Framework
<p>Training, Colleges and Universities Research and Innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Experience Ontario, a program to give recent high school graduates work experience (Platform 2014) Help improve the sustainability of university pension plans. Manage Ontario Research Fund (\$250M over three years) Establish new start-up hubs and bring forward initiatives to increase levels of venture capital and crowdfunding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Ontario Online is able to offer courses for credit beginning in 2015 Reallocate funding to the most effective employment and training programs Convene the next summit on Talent and Skills in the New Economy in early 2015 Appoint a Special Advisor to review the College of Trade's application process, scopes of practice and enforcement Extend the Youth Jobs strategy (with MEDEI) after Youth Employment Fund ends Explore developing a High Performance Computing and Big Data Strategy Develop a public-facing website that highlights the outcomes, both successful and unsuccessful, of all government investments in innovation.
<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$29 billion transit and transportation infrastructure investment (Budget 2014) HOV toll lanes (Budget 2013) Completion of existing transit projects - ex. Eglinton Crosstown, Union-Pearson Express, Ottawa LRT, Kitchener-Waterloo LRT Completion of existing highway projects - ex. 407 East, Herb Gray Parkway, Highway 427 extension, Highway 69 between Parry Sound - Sudbury Implementation of Ontario Cycling Strategy (2013) Transformation of GO commuter rail into Regional Express Rail over the next decade, creating a network of 15-minute, two way electrified service (Budget 2014) Develop a seamless transit fare system across the GTHA Undertake environmental assessments for future high-speed rail connecting Toronto, KW, London and Windsor (Spring 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine merits of supporting short-line rail operations in Ontario Establish a regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles ("driverless cars")

Ontario Cabinet Mandate Letters 2014
Summary Prepared by Counsel Public Affairs

Treasury Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance the budget by 2017-18• Reduce number of classified agencies by 30% from 2011 baseline of 246 (Budget 2014)• Leading the Poverty Reduction Strategy, including long-term goal of ending homelessness (September, 2014)	
-----------------------	---	--