

Minister of Indigenous Services Mandate Letter

Office of the
Prime Minister



Cabinet du
Premier ministre

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A2

Dear Dr. Philpott:

I am honoured that you have agreed to serve Canadians as Minister of Indigenous Services.

We promised Canadians real change – in both what we do and how we do it. Canadians sent a clear message in the last election, and our platform offered a new, ambitious plan for a strong and growing middle class. Canadians expect us to fulfill our commitments, and it is my expectation that you will do your part in delivering on those promises to Canadians.

We made a commitment to grow our economy, strengthen the middle class, and help those working hard to join it. We committed to provide more direct help to those who need it by giving less to those who do not. We committed to public investment to spur economic growth, job creation, and broad-based prosperity. We committed to a responsible, transparent fiscal plan for challenging economic times.

I expect Canadians to hold us accountable for delivering these commitments, and I expect all ministers to do their part – individually and collectively – to improve economic opportunity and security for Canadians.

It is my expectation that we will deliver real results and professional government to Canadians. To ensure that we have a strong focus on results, I will expect Cabinet committees and individual ministers to: track and report on the progress of our commitments; assess the effectiveness of our work; and align our resources with priorities, in order to get the results we want and Canadians deserve.

If we are to tackle the real challenges we face as a country – from a struggling middle class to the threat of climate change – Canadians need to have faith in their government’s honesty and willingness to listen. I expect that our work will be informed by performance measurement, evidence, and feedback from Canadians. We will direct resources to initiatives that have the greatest positive impact on the lives of Canadians, and that allow us to meet our commitments to them. I expect you to report regularly on your progress toward fulfilling our commitments and to help develop effective measures that assess the impact of the organizations for which you are answerable.

I made a personal commitment to bring new leadership and a new tone to Ottawa. We made a commitment to Canadians to pursue our goals with a renewed sense of collaboration. Improved partnerships with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments are essential to deliver the real, positive change that we promised Canadians. No relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples. It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

We have also committed to set a higher bar for openness and transparency in government. It is time to shine more light on government to ensure it remains focused on the people it serves. Government and its information should be open by default. If we want Canadians to trust their government, we need a government that trusts Canadians. It is important that

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we acknowledge mistakes when we make them. Canadians do not expect us to be perfect – they expect us to be honest, open, and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.

Our platform guides our government. Over the course of our four-year mandate, I expect us to deliver on our commitments. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we fulfill our promises, while living within our fiscal plan. Other issues will arise or will be brought to our attention by Canadians, stakeholders, and the public service. It is my expectation that you will engage constructively and thoughtfully and add priorities to your agenda when appropriate.

As Minister, you will be held accountable for our commitment to bring a different style of leadership to government. This will include: close collaboration with your colleagues; meaningful engagement with Opposition Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Committees and the public service; constructive dialogue with Canadians, civil society, and stakeholders, including business, organized labour, the broader public sector, and the not-for-profit and charitable sectors; and identifying ways to find solutions and avoid escalating conflicts unnecessarily. As well, members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, indeed all journalists in Canada and abroad, are professionals who, by asking necessary questions, contribute in an important way to the democratic process. Your professionalism and engagement with them is essential.

Canadians expect us, in our work, to reflect the values we all embrace: inclusion, honesty, hard work, fiscal prudence, and generosity of spirit. We will be a government that governs for all Canadians, and I expect you, in your work, to bring Canadians together.

You are expected to do your part to fulfill our government's commitment to transparent, merit-based appointments, to help ensure gender parity and that Indigenous Peoples and minority groups are better reflected in positions of leadership.

As you are aware, I recently announced our government's intention to dissolve the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and to replace it with two distinct, though complementary, departments, each with its own minister. I expect that you and your colleague, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, will collaborate closely to advance the Government's ambitious agenda.

As Minister of Indigenous Services, your overarching goal will be to ensure a consistent, high quality, and distinctions-based approach to the delivery of services to Indigenous Peoples. I expect you to continue the progress that has been made on improving the delivery of services to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. You should adopt a rigorous results and delivery approach. This work will require delivering real and improved results in the short term, improving outcomes over the longer term, and supporting the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to modernize our institutional structures and governance so that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples can build capacity that supports implementation of their vision of self-determination.

In particular, I will expect you to work with your colleagues and through established legislative, regulatory, and Cabinet processes to deliver on your top priorities:

- Identify the best models for delivering improved services to Indigenous Peoples and improve accountability to Indigenous Peoples for the quality of services delivered, including:
 - work to leverage the ingenuity and understanding of Indigenous Peoples as well as experts from the private sector, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments and international experts on service delivery. I expect you to assess how Indigenous Peoples experience the delivery of government services on a day-to-

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day basis and identify ways to improve delivery that are holistic, community-based, and put the needs of the person first; and

- ensure that we are working with Indigenous Peoples to measure progress and improve service delivery on an ongoing basis. Please work across government and with the Privy Council Office's Central Innovation Hub to co-create new and meaningful partnership models with Indigenous communities and civil society partners.
- As we move towards greater Indigenous self-government, continue to oversee the provision of existing services to Indigenous Peoples, and particularly First Nations under the *Indian Act*, including the provision of community infrastructure, emergency management, water, education, moneys and trusts, and registration.
- Ensure the successful delivery of the significant investments made in Indigenous services through Budget 2016 and Budget 2017. This includes new and repaired housing, ensuring First Nations children on reserve receive a quality education, and eliminating all long-term boil water advisories by 2021 as a key measure in ensuring First Nations people on reserve have access to clean drinking water.
- Support the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs' consultations as we adopt machinery of government changes to renew the relationship with Indigenous Peoples. This will include the dissolution of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, and the creation of two new departments. This work should increase our capacity to function on a distinctions basis, ensure we implement agreements with Indigenous Peoples, and identify those services across the Government of Canada that are best delivered by a Department of Indigenous Services. Please provide recommendations to me, under my prerogative for the machinery of government, on the division of responsibilities between you and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs and your respective departments.
 - So that we can swiftly benefit from the engagement of Indigenous Peoples, public service leadership, public sector unions, and external expertise on this specific change, I have asked the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to prioritize her consultation efforts in relation to the anticipated transfer of responsibility for the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch from the Minister of Health to yourself. You should support her in these important efforts.
- You will be a member of the Working Group of Ministers on the Review of Laws and Policies Related to Indigenous Peoples, chaired by the Minister of Justice. Drawing on the *Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples*, and in full partnership and consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, the Working Group is developing recognition of rights framework and ensuring the Crown is fully executing its legal, constitutional, and international human rights obligations and commitments, including constitutionally protected treaty rights.
- Lead work to create systemic change in how the federal government delivers health services to Indigenous Peoples in collaboration with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. Specifically, I would ask that you take an approach to service delivery that is patient-centred, focused on community wellness, links effectively to provincial and territorial health care systems, and that considers the connection between health care and the social determinants of health. You should also work with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to develop governance models that bring control and jurisdiction back to Indigenous communities.
- Develop and implement an improved response to the provision of child welfare and health care under Jordan's Principle that focuses on the best interests of the child. This will require a holistic approach to the delivery of services that focuses on prevention, family preservation and well-being, and community wellness. It should

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include responding to immediate pressures to deliver health, child, and family services while working with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs on self-governance frameworks.

- Work in collaboration with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and in consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, as well as provinces and territories, to improve essential physical infrastructure for Indigenous communities, including improving housing outcomes.
- Work with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to support the implementation of a distinct Indigenous framework as part of the National Early Learning and Childcare Framework that will take into consideration the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children as a step towards delivering affordable, high-quality, flexible, and fully inclusive child care.
- Continue work with the Minister of Status of Women to support the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development in ensuring that no one fleeing domestic violence is left without a place to turn by continuing to grow and maintain Canada's network of shelters and transition houses.
- Implement Budget 2017 enhancements to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, and work with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour as well as Indigenous partners to undertake a review of all current federal programs that support Indigenous students choosing to pursue post-secondary education. The purpose of the review is to ensure these programs meet the needs of individual students while supporting completion of a post-secondary credential.
- Work with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to promote economic development and create jobs for Indigenous Peoples.
- Support the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities to leverage investments in Indigenous youth and sport and ensure promotion of culturally relevant sport as an important means to strengthen Indigenous identity and cultural pride.

These priorities draw heavily from our election platform commitments.

I expect you to work closely with your Deputy Minister and his or her senior officials to ensure that the ongoing work of your department is undertaken in a professional manner and that decisions are made in the public interest. Your Deputy Minister will brief you on issues your department may be facing that may require decisions to be made quickly. It is my expectation that you will apply our values and principles to these decisions, so that issues facing your department are dealt with in a timely and responsible manner, and in a way that is consistent with the overall direction of our government.

Our ability, as a government, to successfully implement our platform depends on our ability to thoughtfully consider the professional, non-partisan advice of public servants. Each and every time a government employee comes to work, they do so in service to Canada, with a goal of improving our country and the lives of all Canadians. I expect you to establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister, whose role, and the role of public servants under his or her direction, is to support you in the performance of your responsibilities.

We have committed to an open, honest government that is accountable to Canadians, lives up to the highest ethical standards, and applies the utmost care and prudence in the handling of public funds. I expect you to embody these values in your work and observe the highest ethical standards in everything you do. When dealing with our Cabinet colleagues, Parliament, stakeholders, or the public, it is important that your behaviour and decisions meet Canadians' well-founded expectations of our government. I want Canadians to look on their own government with pride and trust.

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As Minister, you must ensure that you are aware of and fully compliant with the *Conflict of Interest Act* and Treasury Board policies and guidelines. *Open and Accountable Government* has been developed to assist you as you undertake your responsibilities. I ask that you carefully read it and ensure that your staff does so as well. I draw your attention in particular to the Ethical Guidelines set out in Annex A of that document, which apply to you and your staff. As noted in the Guidelines, you must uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality, and both the performance of your official duties and the arrangement of your private affairs should bear the closest public scrutiny. This is an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law. Please also review the areas of *Open and Accountable Government* that we have expanded or strengthened, including the guidance on non-partisan use of departmental communications resources and the new code of conduct for exempt staff.

I know I can count on you to fulfill the important responsibilities entrusted in you. In turn, please know that you can count on me to support you every day in your role as Minister.

I am deeply grateful to have this opportunity to serve with you as we build an even greater country. Together, we will work tirelessly to honour the trust Canadians have given us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin Trudeau', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada