



Office of Aboriginal Affairs
Statement of Mandate
2013-2014

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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2013-2014 Statement of Mandate for the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Nova Scotia government works with the Mi'kmaq at local, provincial and national levels to increase economic opportunities and social inclusion. We have a positive and productive relationship that respects the rich culture and history of the Mi'kmaw people.

Building on the strong momentum from last summer's Premiers and National Aboriginal Organizations leaders meeting, and our strong partnerships with local Mi'kmaq leadership and communities, we will continue the dialogue on how to support economic development and improve quality of life for Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia. I believe Nova Scotia is a leader when it comes to strong relationships with First Nations communities, consistent with our efforts toward prosperity for all communities in Nova Scotia.

2013-2014 will be a year of preparation for the Office of Aboriginal Affairs as we begin work to the host of the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit. This event is targeted at ensuring Aboriginal women and girls are no longer victims of violence or caught in poverty.

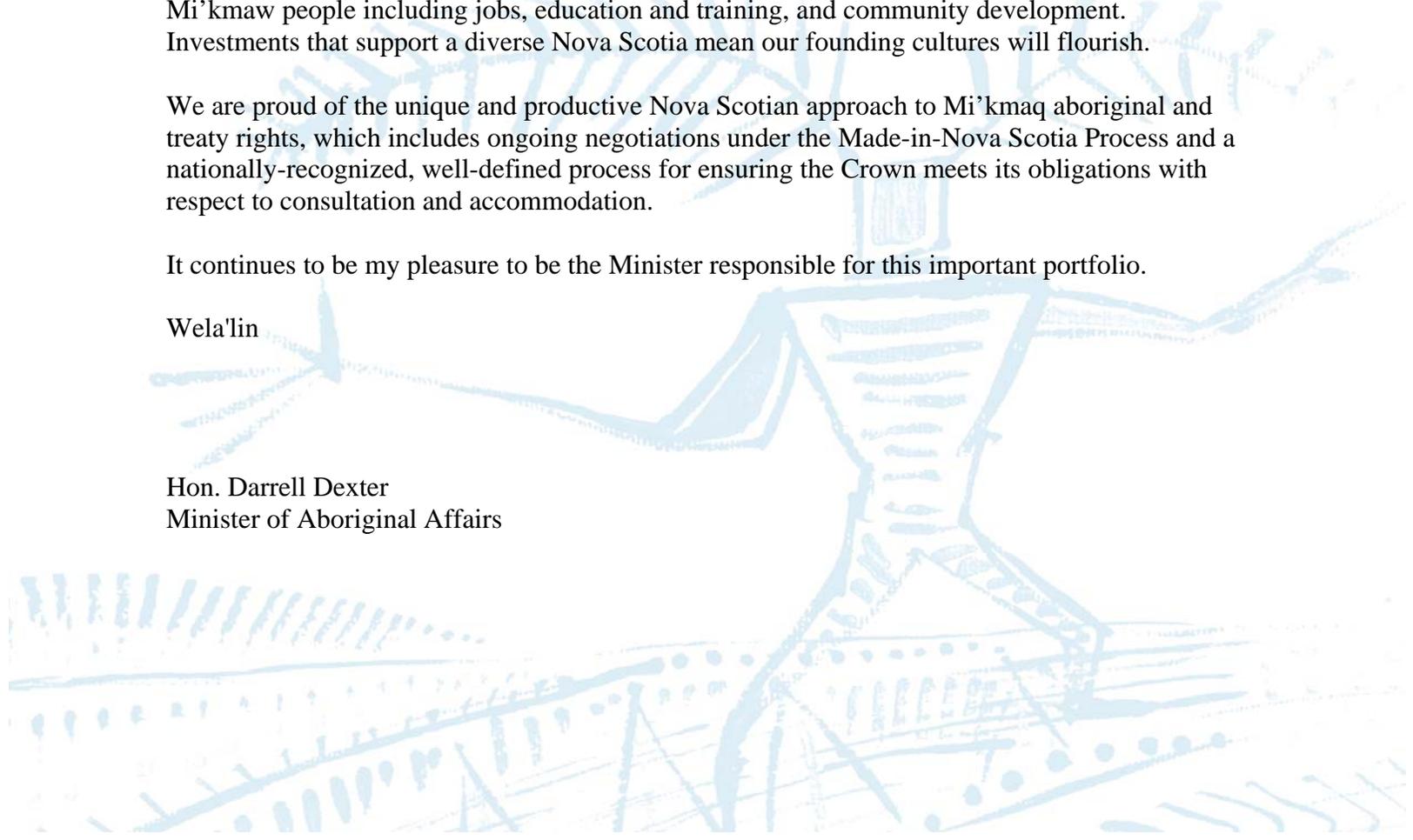
The Office of Aboriginal Affairs is taking concrete steps to improve the economic climate for Mi'kmaw people including jobs, education and training, and community development. Investments that support a diverse Nova Scotia mean our founding cultures will flourish.

We are proud of the unique and productive Nova Scotian approach to Mi'kmaq aboriginal and treaty rights, which includes ongoing negotiations under the Made-in-Nova Scotia Process and a nationally-recognized, well-defined process for ensuring the Crown meets its obligations with respect to consultation and accommodation.

It continues to be my pleasure to be the Minister responsible for this important portfolio.

Wela'lin

Hon. Darrell Dexter
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs



Message from the Deputy Minister

Looking forward to the new fiscal year, Aboriginal issues are at the forefront at national and local levels. The Idle No More movement, recent judicial decisions, and Aboriginal concerns with federal legislation have all contributed to raising our collective consciousness of First Nations' constitutional rights, and economic and social challenges.

In 2013-2014, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) will work with provincial partners to bring a more corporate approach within government to aboriginal affairs across Nova Scotia. In particular, OAA will ensure the interests of Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq are advanced through well-coordinated, and legally-supported, consultations and negotiations.

We will continue to lead the province's engagement with Nova Scotia's First Nations communities and organizations through the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum, the Made-in-Nova Scotia Negotiations Process, and the Terms of Reference for Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation.

A significant piece of work ahead of us for 2013-2014 will be the engagement and planning in preparation for the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit to be held in Nova Scotia. It will be an honour to host this event and be part of the fundamental shift required to improve the lives of Aboriginal women and girls in this country.

Across Nova Scotia and Canada, the Aboriginal landscape is dynamic, exciting and evolving. I look forward to a year of meaningful progress as we work together to improve economic and social outcomes for Mi'kmaq communities and for all of Nova Scotia.

Catherine Blewett
Deputy Minister, Aboriginal Affairs

Mandate, Mission and Vision

The *Mandate* of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) is to promote a coordinated approach within government on matters related to Aboriginal people, represent the interests of the Province in intergovernmental, multilateral initiatives and negotiations, and provide research, analysis and policy advice to government on Aboriginal issues.

It is the *Mission* of the OAA to lead Nova Scotia in Aboriginal Affairs by building mutual understanding, respect and a lasting relationship.

The *Vision* of the OAA is:

Partnership-Negotiation-Direction

On our journey toward fair and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal peoples, we strive to build an inclusive, informed and prosperous Nova Scotia.

Government Priorities

Government has set a clear path with four key priorities. This section outlines how OAA will support these priorities in the coming year.

1. Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means

Like all departments and agencies of government, OAA is reducing spending over the next year to help government get back to balance. A key measure to assist in meeting this target is the co-location of the agency with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. This co-location has resulted in on-going savings in salaries and benefits and operational efficiencies. In the coming year the OAA will work to identify more operational efficiencies.

2. Make health care better for you and your family

OAA will continue to work with our Mi'kmaw partners, other provincial departments and the federal government to improve health outcomes for Mi'kmaw people in Nova Scotia through the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum. The current health priorities are Mental Health and Addictions, Continuing Care, Cultural Safety and Training, Relationships and Collaboration, and Youth. These priority areas are being addressed through initiatives pertaining to Mi'kmaw physical activity and recreation and the continuation of the Eskasoni Crisis Line. Specific examples include the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative; Doctors Nova Scotia to strengthen healthy eating and lifestyle choices; continued participation and support of Aboriginal Track and Field Championships; and development and support of a Mi'kmaq Lacrosse program in Nova Scotia.

3. Make life more affordable and break the cycle of poverty

Although OAA does not have programs that specifically provide assistance to low and middle income families, the office works closely with departments and agencies to ensure programs are accessible and meet the needs of First Nations.

OAA works through a variety of forums and with a number of organizations to improve socio-economic outcomes for the Aboriginal community. For example, the Tripartite Forum's Economic Development, Education and Social committees work across governments (Federal and Provincial) and with the Mi'kmaq on initiatives to break the poverty cycle and close the gap in the quality of life between Mi'kmaq communities and the rest of Nova Scotia. As well, the Province will continue supporting the Native Council of Nova Scotia in implementing strategies that support making life more affordable for Aboriginal peoples living off reserve.

2013-2014 will be a year of preparation for OAA as we begin the work to host the 4th National Aboriginal Women's Summit, scheduled for the fall of 2014. This event is targeted at developing concrete actions to ensure Aboriginal women and girls are no longer victims of violence.

OAA supports the Halifax Aboriginal People's Network (HAPN), a community-driven volunteer-based urban Aboriginal network. This network is designed to address local needs and priorities identified by members of the urban Aboriginal community.

4. Create good jobs and grow the economy

Mi'kmaq communities have the youngest and fastest growing population in the province with half the population under age 25. Government understands the need to work closely with Mi'kmaq communities and organizations to improve employment and economic outcomes. To that end, OAA is pursuing a number of priority actions to support this work.

We are working closely with the departments of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and Economic and Rural Development and Tourism (ERDT) to support and maximize training and skills development opportunities for Mi'kmaq youth. OAA, LAE and ERDT recently formed a core working team to develop economic development and workforce projects with the Aboriginal community to capitalize on opportunities emerging from the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy. We also support the Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office, whose efforts will provide training for 400 and employment for more than 200 Mi'kmaq in the Province.

The Province, through its support of a Mi'kmaq Major Resource and Energy Fund and the development of a Mi'kmaq Renewable Energy Strategy, has helped create a foundation for future economic opportunity for the Mi'kmaq in the renewable energy sector. OAA intends to build on these efforts with a specific focus on addressing access to capital for Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities.

We will continue to work closely with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to support economic development in individual Mi'kmaw communities through First Nation gaming agreements. These agreements provide approximately \$45 million annually to Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. Proceeds from the gaming agreements are used to support social and economic initiatives and community infrastructure.

The Consultation Terms of Reference signed in August of 2010 provides a framework for a streamlined consultation process that formally integrates Mi'kmaw interests and concerns in government decision-making. OAA's consultation unit will continue to facilitate economic development opportunities by linking First Nations with business interests in Nova Scotia.



Performance Measures

Aboriginal and Intergovernmental Relations				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2013-2014 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
Improved relations between the Government of Nova Scotia and Aboriginal communities and organizations.	Increase in the percentage of departments and agencies who are satisfied with their working relationship with Aboriginal communities and organizations.	Inter-departmental Survey 2010 – 91% were satisfied/somewhat satisfied 2005 - 80% were satisfied/somewhat satisfied	To increase the % of respondents who are satisfied/somewhat satisfied to 95%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing identification and coordination of cross-departmental Aboriginal issues. • Continuation of strategic advice and policy analysis to departments and agencies. • Working with departments and agencies to apply national strategies to provincial approaches.
The interests of Nova Scotians in inter-governmental, tripartite, and bilateral initiatives and negotiations are effectively represented.	Increase in the percentage of government departments and agencies who agree that OAA effectively represents Nova Scotians' interests.	Inter-departmental Survey 2010 - 92% strongly agree/agree 2005 – 96% strongly agree/agree	To increase the % of respondents who strongly agree/agree to 96%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing participation and coordination of provincial role in the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum and the Made-in-Nova Scotia Negotiation Process. • Ongoing participation and involvement in national (Aboriginal Affairs Working Group) and regional initiatives.

Coordination and Policy Advice				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2013-2014 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
Effective coordination and strategic advice provided to departments and agencies.	Departments and agencies satisfaction with advice and support provided by OAA.	Quantitative and qualitative results from a short series of focus groups engaging provincial partners in OAA-related initiatives.	Improve on the satisfaction level of focus group as compared to baseline data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set baseline data with preliminary focus groups in April/May, 2013. • Provide research and policy advice that is timely, accurate, strategic and useful.

Negotiations				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2013-2014 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
Enhanced clarity on Mi'kmaq rights, title and treaty-related issues; improved and stable relations; and reduced social and economic disparity for the Mi'kmaq.	All parties remain committed to the 2007 Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia Framework Agreement and to making progress, including interim arrangements on priority negotiation topics.	Work plans and progress reports.	Continued tripartite negotiations with the Mi'kmaq and Canada towards a mutually beneficial agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Table meetings with federal and Mi'kmaq negotiation teams. • Ongoing work in key Treaty-related areas.

Consultation				
Outcome	Measure	Data	2013-2014 Target	Strategies to Achieve Target
The provincial government has consistent and effective mechanisms for consulting with the Mi'kmaq and coordinating with the federal government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation Terms of Reference. • Canada-NS MOU on Consultation Cooperation. • New consultation policy. • Department-specific guidelines for consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation Terms of Reference formally signed in August 2010. • Interim consultation policy developed in 2007. • Canada-NS MOU on Consultation Cooperation signed in October 2012. • Consultation guidelines drafted by Nova Scotia Environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement annual work plan of the Canada-NS MOU on Consultation Cooperation. • Approve the new consultation policy. • Develop operational guidelines for consultation with key departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project charter will be implemented for the policy development. • OAA Consultation will work closely with departments to develop their consultation guidelines.
Provincial departments rely on advice from OAA Consultation and are effectively supported in their consultations with the Mi'kmaq.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments receive timely and consistent consultation advice. • Consultation advisors assist departments in maintaining their consultation records. • Legal risk associated with consultation is managed effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey data (to be collected in early 2013) • 59 active consultations in 2011 • 108 active consultations in 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey data reflects positively on the role of OAA Consultation. • Performance indicators will be defined and used to develop an annual performance report. • The provincial government meets it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In early 2013, a baseline survey of client departments will be completed to measure timeliness and consistency of consultation support from OAA. • Annual surveys will be completed for ongoing

			legal obligations to consult.	<p>measurement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key departments are assigned a consultation advisor. • Consultation advisors utilize common tools when advising departments. • Consultation advisors maintain complete consultation records.
<p>Provincial government employees and the public understand why government consults with the Mi'kmaq and how to conduct that consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial employees receive Aboriginal consultation training. • Hosting a learning seminar with public participation. • Learning resources are available to provincial employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2012 - 47 ○ 2011 - 91 ○ 2010 - 31 ○ 2009 - 62 • Learning Seminar participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2012 - 165 ○ 2011 - 154 ○ 2010 - 242 ○ 2009 - 185 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 training sessions (25-30 provincial employees per session). • Plan Learning Seminar for May 2014. • Develop resources and make them available to provincial employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions will occur approximately every 3 months. • The Learning Seminar is planned for May 2014.

Budget Context

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS			
	2012-2013 Estimate	2012-2013 Forecast	2013-2014 Estimate
Program and Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Total Program Expenses:			
Aboriginal Affairs	\$4,094	\$3,571	\$3,343
Total Program Expenses	\$4,094	\$3,571	\$3,343
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	16.3	15.2	15.3