



October 10, 2019

Tracy-Anne McPhee  
Minister of Education  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Dear Minister McPhee:

Our government is now in its third year of building a prosperous Yukon with strong environmental stewardship and supporting the wellbeing of Yukon people and their families.

I want to thank you for your dedication and commitment to our collective work of serving Yukoners and making their lives better.

As we enter the latter half of our mandate, this letter is to provide you with guidance in building on our achievements to date and implementing our commitments to Yukoners.

In coming into office, we were clear on our priorities. Our government has advanced collaborative and integrated care in the territory through initiatives such as the mental wellness hubs across the territory. Partnerships with schools, parents, educators and First Nations are stronger. The first university north of 60 is taking shape, increasing the opportunities for a range of post-secondary options for Yukon students closer to home. More lots and affordable housing solutions are available to meet an increased demand for places to live. We remain committed to building on this progress to help Yukoners lead healthy, productive lives and to support vibrant, sustainable communities throughout the territory.

Yukon's economy is flourishing. The largest gold mine in Yukon's history is beginning production and other mining projects are advancing. The number of visitors to our territory is growing; and there is a clear plan to build a vibrant, sustainable tourism industry over the next decade. Dynamic new start-up companies are expanding our knowledge sector. We will continue to work with these and other industries and Yukon businesses to ensure they have the supports, infrastructure and certainty they need to grow. At the same time, we will continue to take steps to ensure our economic goals are integrated with a commitment to environmental sustainability.

Clearly, the impacts of climate change represent the biggest challenge of our generation. The North is warming at a faster rate than the rest of Canada. It is time for governments to take definite actions. Our work on establishing greenhouse gas reduction targets and putting in place concrete measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change will be integrated with our efforts to build a green economy and an energy sector with a growing focus on renewable sources.

In making these and other commitments to Yukoners, we will continue to deliver results and report back to citizens. Our government has released two performance plans on our progress to date. These reports included performance measures and we are strengthening these measures by developing indicators of community wellbeing that reflect Yukon circumstances.

We have always recognized that what matters to people is not just what we do but how we do it. We promised to be open and transparent and listen to what Yukoners had to say. We have engaged Yukoners on what is important to them and what solutions they favoured – whether implementing the legalization of cannabis in the territory, designing Yukon's carbon rebate program or planning the future of our health care system or our parks and campgrounds. We have had, and will continue to have, conversations in communities across the territory because we believe local issues are best addressed through local solutions.

We will continue our positive approach to working with our government counterparts, whether these are First Nations and municipal governments here in Yukon or our governmental partners across the country and beyond. Through this approach, we have achieved progress on issues that are important to Yukoners and Yukon businesses. This includes securing significant flexibility in federal infrastructure programs that allows us to tailor projects to fit the territory's needs. We have transformed our relationship with Yukon's First Nations and will advance solutions to mutual interests through respectful, ongoing collaboration as partners. Reconciliation is, and will continue to be, an ongoing priority of our government.

As a ministerial team, we have provided leadership for a one-government approach working for the betterment of Yukon. In furthering our positive, respectful relationships with deputy ministers and the public service, we are fostering a culture of collaboration and cooperation across departments. This is critical to ensuring government policies, programs, services and practices are grounded in a strong appreciation of the needs of citizens and communities and are adaptable to changing circumstances. It means there is shared purpose in our collective work and a common understanding of the implications of decisions before they are taken. The non-partisan advice and expertise of our dedicated public service remain key to our collective responsibility to reach fair, evidence-based and balanced decisions.

We have made fiscally sound decisions when it comes to government priorities and budgeting. With the advice of our public service, we have increased our ability to forecast our budgetary needs more effectively, understanding that Yukoners expect to see what we plan to spend in a year in the main budget estimates tabled each spring.

The work of the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel will continue to inform decisions to increase the efficiency of government operations and to ensure taxpayers get value for the services they receive. Our ongoing commitment is to make balanced, well-considered decisions about government spending to support meaningful and effective investments in jobs, in people and in communities across the territory.

As the Minister of Education, your principal responsibility is ensuring our education system at all levels provides positive outcomes for students and advances Yukon's social, economic and community goals. Our educational system is designed to work in the best interest of the child. It includes supporting early childhood development efforts so that children make an effective transition into their school years and ensuring our school curriculum reflects Yukon society, including First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being. It includes supporting post-secondary education as Yukon University becomes a reality supporting lifelong learning in the territory.

In particular, I expect you to work with partners in the education system and the broader community to:

- Respond to the Auditor General's recommendations to improve educational programs, services and outcomes for Yukon students, in collaboration with First Nations and educational partners
- Complete a strategic framework for early childhood development, initially focused on rural Yukon communities, in collaboration with the Minister of Health and Social Services
- Support early childhood development by implementing early kindergarten in all rural schools and investigating its feasibility for Whitehorse schools
- Work with First Nations to increase their involvement in education and schools by:
  - Concluding, implementing and funding education agreements with First Nations that allow them to set their priorities for their children
  - Implementing and funding the Joint Education Action Plan
  - Continuing discussions through the Yukon Forum and the Chiefs' Committee on Education on educational priorities
- Work with the Kluane First Nation and the Ross River Dena Council to plan schools that meet their communities' needs
- Complete the French first language secondary school in Whitehorse, in partnership with the Commission Scolaire Francophone du Yukon
- Work with the Minister of Highways and Public Works to plan new schools in Whitehorse, beginning with a new school in the Whistle Bend subdivision
- Support the transition of Yukon College to Yukon University, including legislation that sets clear objectives for university governance and provides for a range of post-secondary programs
- Work with the Minister of Economic Development to take advantage of increased funding and flexibility on initiatives to meet Yukon's labour market needs

As Minister of Justice, you are responsible for ensuring that our justice and correctional systems take an approach that balances the need for safe communities with the rehabilitation of offenders. This includes taking action to address the underlying causes that contribute to incarceration. As the territory's chief legal advisor, you have a key leadership role in supporting our ongoing efforts to modernize Yukon laws so they reflect current needs and realities and codify best practices and procedures.

In this role, I expect you to work with your colleagues and community partners to:

- Implement the recommendations resulting from the 2018 inspection report of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, including changes to the rules on segregating inmates
- Work with your ministerial colleagues and communities to develop community safety plans that build on existing partnerships and successes with the Kwanlin Dün and Selkirk First Nations
- Work with the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Advisory Council to develop a comprehensive Yukon action plan that addresses the calls for justice in the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Support expanded training for Gladue report writing to provide the courts with culturally relevant information for sentencing First Nations offenders
- Explore the use of land-based programming as a means to increase the successful transition of past offenders into Yukon society, in collaboration with the Minister of Health and Social Services
- Negotiate administration of justice agreements with Yukon First Nations that have identified these as priorities
- Work with First Nations to support their use of Yukon's land registry system to register their Settlement Lands, as has successfully been accomplished with Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- Work with the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and the Minister of Health and Social Services to complete the implementation of the Sexualized Assault Response Team (SART) and to take other actions to improve services for victims of violence and sexualized assault
- Support the effective enforcement of cannabis laws through work with the RCMP and amendments to the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*
- Work with the Minister responsible for the Yukon Cannabis Corporation and the Minister of Health and Social Services to develop Yukon rules for the safe distribution and sale of edible cannabis products based on federal regulation

In my first letter to you as Minister, I set out my expectations with respect to the principle of ministerial accountability and the responsibilities you have to work in the public interest. This included the obligation to meet the highest standards of ethical behaviour. These expectations remain unchanged.

As Premier, I appreciate the strong sense of purpose and the diligence you have brought to your ministerial duties over the past two years. You have my continued support – and gratitude – as we work together to fulfil our commitments to Yukoners.

I know I can count on you to work with courage and compassion in meeting our ongoing responsibility to the people we serve and building a better Yukon for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Silver', with a large loop at the end.

Sandy Silver  
Premier