



August 8, 2023

Honourable Barb Ramsay
Minister of Social Development and Seniors
2nd Floor Jones
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Dear Minister Ramsay,

I am pleased to have you serve as the **Minister of Social Development and Seniors**.

On April 3, 2023, we were given a mandate by Islanders to continue to work towards building a brighter, bolder, and better future for our province. We made a commitment to work with Islanders, and for Islanders – and that motto should be the basis of how you conduct yourself in your actions as Minister. We must engage Islanders, have real conversations, and put the interest of Islanders at the heart of every decision we make as a government.

Over the last four years we have proven to Islanders that we can navigate many challenges. We must continue to show courage, strength and above all else, leadership when it comes to the challenges we are faced with. Change is sometimes difficult, but with your proven ability to stand up and meet challenges head-on, I'm confident that you will make the best decisions to move our province forward.

Our government has always led with positivity and has served with humility and kindness. I expect this to continue in our second mandate. We have shifted the political landscape in PEI to be more collaborative in nature. I have always said, it doesn't matter where good ideas come from – if it's a good idea, and it improves the lives of Islanders – we should consider it. I want you to have regular communication with your legislative colleagues on all sides of the Legislature to provide opportunities for input and feedback.

As Minister, you and your leadership team will play a critical role in contributing to the commitments we have made to Islanders. You are responsible for the conduct of the department you oversee and must be aware and adhere to the values of the public service in your interactions with the Islanders and the public service. Most importantly, you have Cabinet Colleagues that serve alongside of you; whenever and wherever possible, you should work collaboratively with them to break down silos and reduce barriers to accessing services by working together across Departments.

As Minister of **Social Development and Seniors**, you will:

- Conduct a review of the Access Ability Supports program to determine if it is supporting Islanders living with disabilities to access the supports they need to reach their full potential;
- Implement the new *Child, Youth and Family Service Act* to enhance the services provided to children, youth, and families to improve their safety and wellbeing. With a focus on the best interest of the child, enhancements will include: safety and permanency planning and expanded early intervention and preventative services;
- Continue to explore options to improve support for Islanders on social assistance to meet their basic needs and provide them with the tools to move towards independence;
- Aligning with the aggressive targets in the *Poverty Elimination Strategy Act*, create a new Poverty Elimination Strategy and provide the public with annual reports.
- Launch a Seniors Hearing Aid Rebate program with a maximum coverage of up to \$6,000 per individual;
- Continue with our Targeted Basic Income Guarantee pilot program and continue to advocate the federal government in pursuing a joint pilot program for a Basic Income Guarantee;
- Review and promote our foster parent program to ensure that children in need are being placed in the best care;
- Expand the Seniors Independence Initiative to provide up to \$2,500 in assistance for individuals with a household income of up to \$40,000 for a single person or \$50,000 for a couple;
- Through the Seniors' Secretariat, and in collaboration with other Departments, develop a 5-year Seniors Action Plan to help address the unique needs of PEI's aging population, promote their well-being and quality of life, and ensure that they have the support and resources they need to age in place. Recognizing the valuable contributions that seniors make to their communities, the Seniors Action Plan should be a comprehensive, collaborative, and evidence-based approach to promoting the health, well-being, and dignity of PEI's seniors;
- Stabilize the Senior Navigators program by hiring additional navigators and increasing accessibility to their services through measures such as establishing more locations for their services, introducing virtual consultations, and increasing outreach to frontline workers and volunteers to help identify and refer seniors who may benefit from the Seniors Navigator program.

While you accomplish your work, I ask that you assess the impacts of each policy decision by using evidence-based tools and frameworks to ensure we always consider the impacts on climate, gender, diversity, and vulnerable individuals before implementing a decision.

As we progress through our mandate, we will work together to identify further refinement and priorities of focus. We must be nimble as a government and be able to adapt to the realities of what Islanders are facing each and every day. To do this, I ask that you have regular outreach with key stakeholders connected to your department and the work that your department does. Along with the leadership in your department, I ask that you regularly communicate with stakeholders and community organizations.

I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of all Islanders.

Sincerely,



Hon. Dennis King

Premier of Prince Edward Island

CC. Teresa Hennebery, Deputy Minister – Department of Social Development and Seniors