

PLATFORM 2020



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A MESSAGE FROM LEADER MACKENZIE THOMASON

History shows us what we need to do to get out of the economic disaster we are in. Invest in people. We got out of the great depression with government investment and new social programs, and we can do it again. We need to put money into the local economy and minimize the impacts of the monopolies which harm us. We need to focus on the people of New Brunswick- because our strength comes from New Brunswickers. The NDP will start with a renewed focus and investment on important social, economic, and environmental issues that concern all New Brunswickers. New Brunswick needs a party that believes in making lives better for all of our citizens, regardless of age, education, circumstance, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

The pandemic has taught us both perseverance and resiliency; we, like many, were surprised by this unwanted, unnecessary, and expensive election that was forced on New Brunswickers. Unlike other parties, the NB NDP plans on putting people first before politics. We must invest in the working class and their families. That is why the New Brunswick NDP is running as “The Party With Heart”. You matter to us; you are our neighbour, our family, our union activists, our fellow human beings.

The NB NDP is in this race to show the province that there is a party for the working class, of the downtrodden, of the renter, of the homeless, and of the poor. Voters have the right to speak with Candidates while maintaining social distancing. Voters have the right to choose something different than those who have let down under-represented minorities, First Nations, LGBTQ+ persons, and countless others. Myself, along with one of the most diverse slate of candidates, are always ready to discuss any issue, regardless of controversy or political risk. We will always be there to listen, talk, and work on the issues that matter to New Brunswickers.

Yours in Solidarity,

Mackenzie Thomason

Leader

New Brunswick Democratic Party- The Party With Heart

MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR FAMILIES & WORKERS

Building a Better Province for Our Youth

The NDP is committed to building a New Brunswick where young people can see themselves having a prosperous future with good jobs and public services they can rely on.

For too long, the provincial government has dragged its heels on tackling the greatest challenges facing today and tomorrow's generations: the decline in quality full-time jobs and the rise of precarious work, stagnant wages and less retirement security, the rise of global emissions and climate change.

Throughout our platform you will find bold, progressive ideas that reflect the NDP's hope and optimism for the future of our province, including:

- Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers.
- Creating 24,000 before and after school childcare spaces for children ages 3 to 12.
- Extending prescription drug coverage to everyone through our plan for universal pharmacare.
- Introducing a carbon reduction program that puts a price on carbon and invests the funds into green energy and infrastructure projects, and rebates for low and middle income earners.
- Eliminating tuition fees at all NBCC/CCNB community colleges, and reducing undergraduate tuition at all public universities by 25%.
- Implementing pay equity and working to end gender-based violence.

Together we can build a New Brunswick where young people see their values reflected in the priorities of their government.

A FIFTEEN DOLLAR MINIMUM WAGE AND IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS

We must begin to talk about the growing gap between rich and poor in this province. Many people—young and old—are working two or three jobs just to stay ahead. There has been a large increase in precarious work that is part time, casual, low paid and de-skilled. These jobs often have no guarantee of hours or shifts, and no benefits like paid sick leave, prescription drug coverage, dental plans or private pensions.

Across Canada and here at home, businesses are increasingly relying on outsourcing, contracting out, franchising, and temporary agencies. This has led to less job security for New Brunswickers than ever before.

Wages for the lowest paid workers are not enough to allow these families to live above the poverty line and provide for themselves or their children. Far too many New Brunswickers are forced to live in poor housing, make difficult choices between feeding their kids or fixing their cars, and sacrifice their health because they can't afford to take unpaid sick days.

Low wages are bad for the economy too. Low incomes in New Brunswick depress economic activity and result in lower labour productivity, purchasing power and tax revenue.

Other provinces are moving to recognise the harm to all of society when income inequality is left unchecked. Ontario and Alberta have joined a North American-wide movement for a fifteen dollar minimum wage. It's time we do too

- **Over the course of our first term in office, an NDP government will raise the minimum wage for all workers in New Brunswick to \$15 per hour.** Increases will be staged over four years to give employers an opportunity to plan ahead.
- **Over the course of our first term in office, an NDP government will implement changes to Employment Standards that will improve working conditions for New Brunswick workers, including addressing precarious work.** These changes will be a priority as they go hand in hand with changes to the minimum wage.

FAMILY FOCUSED SCHOOL-BASED CHILDCARE

Many New Brunswick families struggle to find before and after school care that is affordable, accessible and conveniently located. Parents feel the burden when childcare costs are high or lack flexible hours. Many question whether they should leave the paid workforce, put their children in care in another language, or slash their family budgets to afford the high costs of childcare.

The NDP would introduce a before and after school care program in every New Brunswick public school wherever parental demand exists. Our **Family Focused School-Based Childcare Plan** will allow children aged 3 to 12 years old to stay in their own schools for before and after care that is provided from 6am to 6pm. Spaces would be available to everyone at a cost that families can afford.

Our plan:

- **The NDP's plan will create an expected 20,000 new before and after school childcare spaces and 4000 new pre-school spaces to meet current demands for additional care.**
- Childcare will be offered in school classrooms before the school day begins and after the school day ends, from 6 am to 6 pm, with flexible hours for shift workers, where demand exists.
- 4000 new pre-school spaces will be added in communities where there is unmet need.
- Children will have access to all school resources like gyms, libraries and playgrounds. A play-based program will include recreational activities, nutritious snacks, homework help, music and other programs.
- All childcare workers will be public servants and qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECE).
- The language of operation will be that of the school, with bilingual exposure a key emphasis.
- Childcare will be open to everyone and there will be no waiting lists. The cost to parents will be \$10 per child. Existing provincial and federal government subsidies will follow the child to the school-based program.
- 18,000 parents could return to the labour force or pursue educational opportunities.

UNIVERSAL PHARMACARE

One in five New Brunswickers have no prescription drug coverage, and over a quarter of Atlantic Canadians have admitted to rationing an existing prescription or not filling or renewing a prescription in the last 12 months because they could not afford it.

The NDP believes it's time to make medicine affordable for all New Brunswickers.

Canada's Parliamentary Budget Office estimates that \$503 million is spent on prescription drugs in New Brunswick each year—\$300 million by various private plan insurers and uninsured individuals, and \$203 million by the province. Income-based drug coverage plans—especially those with large deductibles—undermine access to essential medicines. They force people to pay out-of-pocket for routine medicines.

Not surprisingly, some people neglect to take preventative medication for conditions like heart attacks and strokes because they cannot afford the expense.

New Brunswickers who get sick and end up in emergency rooms because they cannot afford prescription drugs can lead to outcomes such as longer wait times for everyone else. In the end, we all pay the social cost of neglecting prevention. In fact, the lack of preventative healthcare treatment costs the Canadian government as much as \$9 billion every year. Experts predict that a single entry program will result in major cost savings and efficiencies, even in a province the size of New Brunswick.

Our plan:

- **The NDP fully supports a national single entry universal pharmacare plan** that is cost shared by federal and provincial governments. An NDP government will push hard on the national level for such a plan. In the mean time, we will implement a “Made in New Brunswick” universal pharmacare plan.
- **We will invest \$50 million to establish universal coverage**, including everyone in New Brunswick who is not covered by an existing insurance plan. All prescription drugs currently listed on the New Brunswick Drug Plan Formulary will be covered. All those currently covered by the New Brunswick Drug Plan and the New Brunswick Prescription Drug Program will not lose any coverage.
- **In our first year of government, we will study various funding options** that will allow New Brunswick to have a single entry universal pharmacare plan at a reasonable cost. We will examine the best way to pay for this program from three sources:
 - Workplaces: employers contribute
 - Individuals: employees, self-employed, retired and those who are not in the workforce
 - Provincial government: to provide half the cost

STRONGER LABOUR LAWS

The NDP is committed standing up for workers' rights and for fundamental reform of our province's labour laws. Alongside raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, we will also strengthen employment standards to ensure every worker is treated fairly.

Past Liberal and Conservative governments have fallen short in tackling precarious work challenges and the growing need to extend stronger labour rights to workers in New Brunswick.

To make life better for every worker in our province—not just those with unions—the NDP would implement basic rights like paid sick days and ban unfair practices like split-shifts. Our plan will help assure young people that they will be treated fairly in their workplaces.

For youth to stay, they must see a bright, progressive and green future for themselves right here in New Brunswick. This includes both raising the minimum wage and changing the labour laws to address precarious work and to ensure that they have good working conditions and are treated fairly.

Standing up For Workers without Unions

For too long, provincial governments have neglected the priorities of workers who do not have collective bargaining power. The government must address the working lives of the majority of New Brunswickers who do not have union contracts.

A NDP government will conduct a comprehensive review of employment standards with clear objectives:

- Introduce a \$15 an hour minimum wage.
- Improve the working lives and working conditions all New Brunswick workers including:
 - Introduce paid sick days for all employees.
 - End unfair employer practices, including split shifts, call-ins without pay and never knowing when you are scheduled to work.
 - Increase the coverage of employment standard legislation to dependent contractors and others excluded by the current definition of employee.
 - Introduce common employer provisions to make franchisors responsible for the working conditions of employees of franchisees.
 - Increase the provincial government's capacity to enforce employment standards.
 - Prohibit employers from requiring doctors' sick notes.
 - Increase the provincial government's capacity to enforce employment standards.

Better Access to Unions

We must make it easier for unions to represent workers.

An NDP government will conduct a comprehensive review of collective bargaining laws and enact long-needed changes to the Industrial Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act, including:

- Common employer designation for franchise operations protection.
- Expanded successor rights and protections for contractors in the service industry.
- Anti-scab protection to defend union jobs.
- Empower the Labour Relations Board to extend sectoral bargaining—as done in the construction industry—to all sectors of the economy.

Better Work Safe Protections

- To strengthen workplace safety, the NDP would review WorkSafeNB's mandate to ensure that a culture of safety is properly enforced in all work places.
- And we would improve access to injured worker benefits by ending the three-day waiting period.
- Our plan would invest \$225,000 to hire five more employment standard officers. These officers will focus on enforcing the provincial rules and regulations.

Fair Taxation

Many New Brunswickers support investments in new social programs, including measures to ensure we live in a more equitable society—but only if they feel that the tax system is fair. Today it is not.

It is time for New Brunswick to implement a more progressive income tax and undertake a comprehensive review of our property tax system.

An NDP government will:

- Create a Property Tax Commission to review how property taxes are collected. We will consult the public and other stakeholders, and we are committed to asking the tough questions:
- What is a reasonable and fair share of provincial revenue to be derived from the tax of people's homes?
- What is a reasonable and fair share for industry to pay on commercial property?
- Is it fair for commercial properties and apartment buildings to pay double?
- Should increases in assessments be tied to the real estate market conditions as it is now, or is there a better way?
- How do we ensure the assessment process is free from political interference?
- What is the most fair or equitable way to distribute property tax revenue to municipalities?

An NDP government will change the current tax system as follows:

- Reverse the government's decision to cut taxes for the top 1% of income earners.
- Adopt a 16% corporate tax rate—the same as in PEI and Nova Scotia.
- Bring back the Large Corporation Capital Tax, which was eliminated by the Graham government.
- Increase the Financial Corporation Capital Tax ('Bank Tax') by 2%.
- Review royalty rates and update industrial policies to ensure the people of New Brunswick are getting a fair return on our natural resources.
- End the energy buyback program through NB Power, which effectively subsidizes large industrial users for using their own electricity.
- End special tax treatment for industry on forest properties, farmland, petroleum sites and other facilities.
- Review the government's forestry stumpage policy and implement a new royalty structure in year two of government.

GROWING THE ECONOMY AND PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

A Cleaner Future

We are proud to call New Brunswick home, but we must take care of it for future generations. Working hand in hand with Indigenous peoples, our province can be a leader in transitioning to renewable energy, while protecting the environment and conserving our natural resources.

It is time for our province to show leadership and take action to address climate change and preserve our environment. We must ensure our natural resources are responsibly managed in the long-term interests of New Brunswickers and in ways that are sustainable and respectful of the environment.

Carbon Reduction Plan

- The NDP will introduce a **Carbon Reduction Fund** to help the province transition to green energy through the introduction of a \$30 per ton carbon reduction program to reach \$50 per ton after four years.
- One-third of the funds generated would be returned to low and middle-income earners in the form of a rebate.
- One-third would be invested in green energy projects, such as infrastructure upgrades related to wind, solar, tidal, hydro, nuclear, and geothermal energy.
- The remaining third would be invested in green infrastructure programs such as electrified public transit and a province-wide electric vehicle charging network.

Investments in green infrastructure

- We will re-introduce the popular **Energy Efficiency Savings Program** with an emphasis on targeting low-income households.
- We will create a **Green Innovation Fund** for local researchers and engineers to develop “Made in New Brunswick” green technology within our public governmental and academic institutions.
- We will respect New Brunswickers by ensuring the price of electricity remains the same or is lowered so that hydro is affordable for working families and small businesses.

The combined effect of our Carbon Reduction Plan and investments in green infrastructure will have a strong impact on New Brunswick’s transition to a less carbon-intensive economy.

Conserving our land and forests

- To protect our forests and other important natural areas, an NDP government will set a land conservation target of at least 17%.
- We will protect our forests by ending glyphosate spraying, protecting older growth forests, and implementing the best forestry practices from around the world.
- We will defend our rich agricultural lands by developing regulations that prevent the stripping of agricultural land for residential purposes.

Protecting our water, shores and coastline

- We will increase the 30 metre set-back from navigable water ways and wetlands. And we will legislate stronger protections for all provincial waterways.
- We will enforce or strengthen existing protections for fresh water wetlands and flood zones, and make flood zone charts and other information widely available to help protect New Brunswickers from catastrophic weather events like flooding.

GENERATING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Our province needs good stable jobs to keep our youth here, to create a more just and sustainable society, and to develop the tax base needed to deliver strong public services.

The NDP has a bold plan to increase income and wages, and to combat inequality. We will gradually implement a \$15 minimum wage over four years, which will lead to more disposable income for individuals and more tax revenues as economic multipliers kick in and more people participate in the workforce.

An NDP government's *Industrial and Economic Growth Strategy* will be based on six pillars:

1. **Create a Public Investment Bank** that fosters broad-based, equitable and regionally diverse economic growth with a focus on closing the 'capital gap' for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the creation of a Public Investment Bank. Our investment of \$130 million will be paid for by eliminating funding for Opportunities NB and regional development programs.
2. **Pursue an industrial strategy** that encourages investments in value-added jobs, exports and supply chains across New Brunswick.
3. **Create 'green collar' jobs** based on large public investments in the renewable energy economy and energy efficiency home retrofitting.
4. **Invest in research and development, training, and infrastructure** to foster productivity growth and prepare for our future high-tech, innovation-based economy.
5. **Invest in better public services** that will make life more affordable for New Brunswickers. Our plans for \$15 an hour minimum wage, childcare, home care, and free or reduced tuition will help build a skilled workforce and increase our labour participation rates.
6. **Developing a new northern and rural strategy** that better serves these communities' needs.

SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

As part of our overall strategy for generating economic growth, the NDP is committed to focusing on the priorities of Northern communities.

Investing in infrastructure

Roads and highways are important trade corridors that connect our province's northern and rural communities. But successive Liberal and Conservative governments have neglected to adequately invest in northern infrastructure priorities. As a result, Northerners are being shut out from sharing in our province's prosperity.

For too long, the northeast region of New Brunswick has not received its fair share of highway construction funds. There are serious problems getting goods to and from the industries in the Peninsula—including fisheries, lumber, blueberries and peat moss. Trucking costs are more than they should be because the highway infrastructure is inadequate.

An NDP government will:

- **Prioritize the completion of a limited access highway from Janeville to Bertrand** by allocating highway construction funds from the existing annual capital budget to complete the \$82-million portion of the project. This was called for by the mayors of the Peninsula back in 2015.
- **Upgrade of the Road to Resources** from St Quentin to Bathurst from a chip seal to a paved road.

Industrial development

- Through its Public Investment Bank, an NDP government will invest in the creation of a **galvanising plant** located in northern New Brunswick to service the many small and medium iron and sheet metal fabrication plants. Currently galvanising involves costly transport to and from Montreal. A locally owned and operated zinc coating plant would add a key missing ingredient to the current industrial infrastructure of the North

- As part of our forestry and rural development policy, we will **strengthen the Woodlot Owners Marketing Board**'s ability to address the bargaining imbalance between the large forestry companies and private woodlot owners in the North and other rural communities. We will re-open the Forestry Act(*) to ensure fair access to Crown Land. We will also implement sustainable logging practices and eliminate clear cutting and glyphosate spraying.
- We will put renewed emphasis on supporting secondary manufacturing and services by investing in the traditional industries of the North—farming, fishing and forestry.
- We will make significant improvements to tourism and invest in the Arts.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Many rural New Brunswickers feel a sense of despair that the provincial government has turned its back on them. It's time for that to change. We need to give rural communities the support they deserve so they can thrive again.

An NDP government will:

- Create a **Blueberry Marketing Board** to ensure a fair price for blueberries and cranberries.
- Pass legislation to empower the **Woodlot Owners' Marketing Board** to redress the bargaining imbalance between the large forestry companies and private woodlot owners and re-open the Forestry Act.
- Declare a **moratorium on rural school closures** until a more community-inclusive policy can be developed in consultation with rural communities.
- **Support value-added exports** from our primary industries of agriculture, forestry and fishing with assistance from the NDP's proposed Public Investment Bank.
- Require all public institutions—including hospitals, schools and correctional centres—to adopt a "**Buy in New Brunswick**" food policy.

FARMING & FOOD SECURITY

New Brunswick's family farmers work hard and deserve to have a government that's on their side. Our agricultural sector is a key economic driver and employs over 13,000 New Brunswickers. But our family farms face complex challenges trying to succeed in today's markets.

At the same time, our province has a growing problem with food insecurity that must be addressed by our next provincial government. New Brunswick produces only 10% of the food we eat. Yet we have a talented agricultural sector and many workers who are looking for new opportunities.

To support farmers and their families, the NDP will:

- Put an end to the practice of large landowners buying up agricultural land and leasing it back to farmers.
- Make more land available to farmers, and put a stop to land speculation. We will enforce and enhance the Farm Land Identification Program by deferring property tax on farm land.
- Recognize and support women farmers by increasing women's participation in farm management and ownership and (co-)operating their own farms.
- Provide agriculture programs in schools for farmers to upgrade their skills. We will also develop agriculture education policy for schools and colleges to encourage and support new and young farmers.
- Return subsidies for lime transportation.
- Increase access to rural services, agricultural support and other rural infrastructure.

To drive growth and innovation in our agricultural sector, we will:

- Leverage the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal five-year investment to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector in New Brunswick.
- Provide incentives for value added processing to New Brunswick-grown produce to create jobs and accelerate value-added transformation of our economy.
- Use research and statistics to make evidence-based decisions for agricultural policy. Build technical capacity for growing food and other crops in New Brunswick soil and climate conditions.
- Enhance business skills for entrant and current farmers to help them get started and to help them grow their businesses and get fair prices, ensuring the vitality and sustainability of the family farm.

Our plan will also create new opportunities for local food producers to meet more of New Brunswickers' food and produce needs:

- End dumping of American fresh produce during local season.
- Support and promote year-round local markets.
- Develop initiatives for local food programs in schools, hospitals and other provincial programs.
- Identify wholesale and retail opportunities for New Brunswick products including institutional contracts and large retail chains. Work with farmers and retailers to remove barriers to entry.
- Offer support for federally inspected abattoirs in New Brunswick where none exist.

And to support farmers as entrepreneurs and small business owners, the NDP will:

- Provide mentorship programs for young farmers to learn best farm practices from experienced

farmers.

- Help farmers connect with other businesses to form key partnerships with value-added processors.
- Provide incubation sessions for sharing ideas and fostering mutual support and creative business development.
- Better connect services like veterinarians and engineers to the farming community.
- Help provide streamlined channels to market using latest technical advancements.
- Support farmers in using best practices—such as regenerative agriculture—to build healthy soil, regenerate eco-systems and fight climate change.

INVESTING IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Care for Seniors

Many seniors require assistance in order to stay independent, and the need for assistance tends to increase with age. But there are serious problems with the delivery of social services to seniors, disabled adults, children and youth in need, and victims of domestic violence in our province.

To improve home care services for seniors in need, an NDP government will:

- End privatization in our health care system. We will return the Extra Mural Program and Tele-Care to the province to be run as public institutions, and we will do the same with Ambulance New Brunswick.
- We will dedicate all new federal home care funding for expanding the Extra Mural Program, which provides medical needs and home services supports to seniors and other New Brunswickers in need of care. This will allow more patients to receive health care services in their own homes.
- We will create a new government agency, Home Care Services, to provide affordable home support services for seniors and others requiring support in their home. All personal support workers will be public servants. Where necessary we will transition by integrating existing non-profit services and staff into the new public agency.
 - We will expand Tele-Care to provide advocacy and referral services for New Brunswickers who need assistance navigating our health care and social services.
 - We will study the best way to create a Community Care public agency to replace the hundreds of agencies that currently exist. This would improve accountability and transparency, create uniform standards, and allow home care workers to become public servants.
 - We will ensure pay equity legislation applies to New Brunswick's health care sector. Alongside a \$15 an hour minimum wage, our plan will finally raise wages for those providing home care and community care services.

To improve nursing home care, an NDP government will:

- Keep nursing homes under the purview of community and church-based non-profit groups.
- Stop the shift toward for-profit nursing homes. All new nursing homes will be under the community non-profit umbrella.
- Ensure better resident care by revisiting the skill mix ratios currently under review.
- Move towards a resident-to-caregiver ratio of 3.5 hours of care per day.

Stronger Public Health Care

The key focus of an NDP government will be to implement our universal pharmacare program and our plans for better home care and long term care. Evidence-based studies show that a universal pharmacare program will reduce demands on doctors' offices, clinics, hospitals and emergency rooms. Making it easier for seniors and disabled persons to live longer in their own homes will significantly reduce overall costs to our health care system.

The NDP believes in a strong public health care system that meets the principles of universal access and public ownership as set out in the Canada Health Act.

An NDP government will:

- Create a comprehensive plan for New Brunswick's health care system that is developed in consultation with all key stakeholders, including the public.
- Implement universal pharmacare and better home care for seniors.
- End all privatization in health care by restoring the Extra Mural program, Tele Health and Ambulance NB to public ownership and control.
- Establish a new program in ERs to address non-urgent patient needs.
- Lower specialist wait times and aim to meet the Canadian average by the year 2030.
- Improve access to mental health services.
- Accelerate the move of primary care into community-based clinics. Clinics will have set geographic and demographic patient loads, and could be led by nurse practitioners where appropriate.
- Support an increased role for nurse practitioners, paramedics and midwives in our health care system.
- Support risk reduction programs to combat addictions, including safe injection sites.
- Publicly fund the sexual health clinic 554 in Fredericton.

To recruit more doctors, nurses and health care practitioners, we will:

- Hire 20 new family physicians, and recruit new physicians trained in New Brunswick.
- Hire 100 new nurse practitioners over the next four years
- Work with provincial universities and community colleges to ensure we are educating enough registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, doctors, specialists and all other health care professionals.
- Expand the medical program at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John to address our province's shortage of doctors and specialists.

Education & Schools

Our education system is falling short in meeting the needs of our children. Instead of investing in a stronger public education system, previous governments have made unwarranted cuts and have failed to address low literacy rates in New Brunswick.

Our children deserve better. As do our province's thousands of hardworking teachers, education assistants, professional educators, office administrators, bus drivers, custodians and all the support people working in our schools.

It will take a concerted effort with strong leadership across government to ensure that every child has the best possible chance of success. The whole child must be nurtured before they can learn. Barriers to learning such as hunger, health care, and stresses at home like family violence must be addressed before a child can reach their potential.

An NDP government will:

- Adopt best practises from around the world to raise provincial literacy rates through methods such as team teaching, differentiated instruction, self-directed learning and individualized education plans—all of which address the needs of the whole child.
- Work to address students' mental health needs by reviewing resources and supports available in high schools across the province.
- Immediately reinstate the support professional positions cut from our schools such as psychologists, occupational therapists, public health nurses, behavioural specialists and social workers.
- Adjust classroom sizes to meet the specific needs of students and those from low-income neighbourhoods, and start hiring more teachers and educational assistants so this can be accomplished.
- Expand before and after school childcare in every school in the province.
- Reintroduce life skills courses in intermediate and secondary schools in areas like culinary arts, shop, auto repairs, financial management, physical fitness and other essential skills.

New Deal for University and Community College Students

Today higher education is becoming more and more difficult for students in obtain New Brunswick. Tuition fees in universities have risen by 20% since 2010 to the point where New Brunswick students now have the highest average debt load in the Country and they pay the highest interest rates on that debt. Even with the introduction of the Tuition Access Bursary, the province is actually spending \$20 million dollars less today on student financial assistance than it was before 2010.

If we are going to invest in our future and keep our youth here, we must do more. It is time to start taking bold steps towards universality in Post-Secondary Education. It's time to start making post secondary education a public right.

An NDP government will in our first year in government:

- Eliminate tuition fees at all NBCC/CCNB community colleges;
- Reduce undergraduate tuition for all New Brunswick publicly funded universities by 25%;

- Eliminate interest charges on all existing and future student loans for New Brunswick residents;
- Increase up-front financial assistance for Graduate Students by expanding eligibility under the Tuition-Access Bursary and allow graduate students to access tuition relief for the middle class under the Tuition Relief for Middle Class program (TRMC);
- Introduce a Graduate Student Scholarship Program;
- Invest in dedicated mental health services on campus;
- Ensure on campus harassment and sexual assault prevention policies exist in all colleges and universities with capacity for investigation, education and enforcement;
- Ensure fair funding for St Thomas University.

Housing & Homelessness

All New Brunswickers should have access to affordable housing. But we are facing a housing crisis, and our province is not adequately addressing housing and homelessness challenges. Many families are spending well over 30% of their income on shelter, and there is a growing number of homeless people.

Ignoring housing and homelessness is more costly than addressing them. Providing access to affordable housing is key so that additional supports and services can be offered. In the long run, investments in affordable housing and ending homelessness will reduce pressure on public services like health care and will reduce costs for government.

An NDP government will:

- Adopt a 'Housing First' strategy to end homelessness, and expand municipal powers over social housing.
- Give cities the powers and resources they need to enforce housing standards.
- Prioritize public management of social housing, and curb subsidies and grants for landlords who provide sub-standard housing.
- Research the impacts of introducing rent control legislation so that people aren't faced with unfair rent increases.
- Review the mandate of the Office of the Rentalsman with the goal of providing better services to New Brunswick's tenants and landlords.

BUILDING FAIR, PROSPEROUS & VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Better Income Assistance

As a way to fight against income inequality we must provide more income for those on provincial income assistance.

Since 2009, the percentage of New Brunswickers with income below the poverty line has increased by 1.5% while it has decreased by 5.6% in the Atlantic Provinces and by 4.7% nationally. As of 2015, 100,000 New Brunswickers had income lower than the poverty threshold.

36% of New Brunswickers make below \$15 an hour, the majority of whom are women.

The 2016 Census revealed that New Brunswick has the lowest household incomes in the country.

It doesn't have to be this way. New Brunswick's social assistance rates are one of the lowest in the country, and barely cover half the poverty line.

We believe that it's time to lift New Brunswickers out of poverty, fix social assistance to help people return to work and not keep them in a poverty trap. That means increasing social assistance to better reflect the cost of living,

An NDP government will:

- Raise all social assistance rates immediately by 10%
- Index all rates to the cost of living
- the public education system, with the inclusion important and diverse New Brunswick artists and cultural literature into the education curriculum.
- A recognition of the distinct nature of both official languages and ensure equitable treatment of both linguistic communities in the implementation of all cultural policy.
- Support the AAAPNB in the implementation of the Stratégie globale renouvelée.

An NDP government in New Brunswick would introduce 'Status of the Artist' legislation which would include the following principles:

- **The right of artists to establish and freely join professional associations and trade unions.**
Our plan will encourage a fair system of collective bargaining with the same workplace rights as other workers in New Brunswick, including health and safety standards, employment benefits, and fair presumption of employment contracts with a special status for 'intermittent artists'.
- **The right of artists to be fairly integrated into the provincial tax system.** This would be accomplished by introducing professional expense and copyright income deductions, the spreading of average income over several tax years, and the exemption of final produced art from the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax.
- **The right of artistic freedom and freedom of speech for artists.**

The NDP will invest \$20 Million in new funding to expand the Arts and improve working conditions and improve learning experiences for Artists.

Women's Equality

As Leader, MacKenzie is keenly aware of the need for more women's voices in the Legislature and in government.

Our key planks address the economic wellbeing of women in this province:

- 36% of working people in New Brunswick earn less than \$15 an hour—the majority of whom are women. An NDP government will implement a \$15 an hour minimum wage.
- Working women and men need secure affordable childcare. Our before and after school childcare program will provide childcare in every school at \$10 per day per child from age 3 to 12. This will allow more women to participate in the workforce.
- Our home care plan will allow senior women to get nursing care and home support services in their own homes.

In addition, the NDP is committed to:

- Achieving pay equity in the private sector. We will start by requiring a pay equity study and implementing pay equity in the community care sector.
- Ending gender-based violence in the community, workplaces and campuses through education, prevention and training.
- Reforming and improving the sexual education curriculum in public schools with the following goals: reduce teen pregnancy and STDs; increase awareness and reduce prejudice of gender and sexual diversity; teach the importance of sexual consent; provide tools to recognize and disclose abuse; and foster healthy relationships.
- Ensuring that our universal pharmacare plan covers important medications such as Mifegymiso and PrEP.
- Expanding professional development opportunities for police officers and judges to learn about the realities of sexual assault and implement formalized emergency response mechanisms that support survivors, based on legislation introduced in Alberta.

Combating Racism

The NDP is committed to ending all forms of racism and discriminatory practices.

- Through our province's education and justice systems, we will work to recognize and stop anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Indigenous racism and all other forms of systemic racism.
- We will declare New Brunswick to be a Sanctuary Province where people can access basic services without fear, regardless of their immigration status. This is the decent, humane thing to do.
- The NDP will expand oversight of our police and correctional facilities with an emphasis on moving towards a system that reduces recidivism through rehabilitation—rather than profiling and punishment.

LGBTQ+ Policy

The New Brunswick NDP stands in solidarity with members of the LGBTQ+ community. We are committed to advancing the rights and priorities of LGBTQ+ people and working together to build a more just and inclusive province.

The NDP's plan:

- Improve the sexual education curriculum in public schools, with a focus that includes teaching a greater understanding and respect for gender and sexual diversity.
- Commit to advancing trans-inclusive health care, and improving accessibility to services and medication.
- Make it easier to change gender identity markers on official government documents.
- End the requirement that educational institutions have gendered bathrooms.

First Nations Relationships

Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick continue to suffer from deep inequality and injustices. The NDP is committed to meaningful reconciliation, and to making our province more equal, just and inclusive. Working in partnership with Indigenous peoples, we will work to protect our environment, defend the vulnerable and reduce inequality.

We recognize and remember that New Brunswick is located in the traditional territory of the Wolastoqey (Maliseet), Mi'kmaq and Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy) Nations

An NDP government will work wherever possible to facilitate the health and wellness projects First Nations communities request to meet their needs.

The NDP will encourage and support First Nation entrepreneurship so that First Nation communities become more independent and self-sustaining.

The NDP will ensure that the “Jordan Principle”—that First Nations people are not disadvantaged by jurisdictional squabbles between the federal and provincial governments—is respected and First Nations in New Brunswick get the help they need.

In moving towards a fair and just approach to the use of lands called ‘Crown lands’ we must be guided by principles laid out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The NDP would develop legislation and policy with these facts in mind and with meaningful consultation with New Brunswick’s First Nations communities.

As a measure of good faith we will officially rename the Saint John River to its original name, the Wolastoq River, as recommended by the Wolastoq Grand Council as an important act towards fostering Reconciliation.

Support for Francophone Communities

We recognize and value the uniqueness of New Brunswick as Canada's only officially bilingual province in which French Acadian culture and many others make our lives rich and vibrant.

The New Brunswick NDP supports the aspirations of our unique linguistic communities. An NDP government will:

- Reaffirm our recognition of the distinct nature of both official languages and ensure equitable treatment of both linguistic communities in the implementation of policy.
- Reiterate our commitment to the Official Languages Act.
- Reaffirm our commitment to duality in education and health care.
- Re-examine the governance structure for health authorities to allow more local decision making where feasible and free them from political interference.
- Allow the issue of school bussing to be left to the direction of the Anglophone and Francophone school boards.

Housing Policy

An NDP government will:

- Adopt a 'Housing First' strategy to end homelessness and expand municipal powers over social housing.
- Give cities the powers and resources they need to enforce housing standards
- Emphasize public management of social housing, reduce practice of giving subsidies and grants to landlords who provide substandard housing.
- Research impacts of rent control legislation.
- Change the Rentalsman Office and laws to insure it works better for everyone