

**Province of British Columbia**  
**Strategic Plan Annual Report 2015-16**  
**July 2016**



## Strong Economy

### Fiscal responsibility

**Budget 2016** is the B.C. government's fourth-consecutive balanced budget and forecasts modest surpluses in all three years of the fiscal plan. Balanced Budget 2016 invests \$1.6 billion in new and increased spending over three years on core services, in addition to annual 3% increases to the Ministry of Health budget, almost \$500 million of which is funded by lower interest costs from paying down operating debt.

Government continues to exercise fiscal discipline to ensure B.C.'s budget remains balanced. Maintaining fiscal discipline is the first step toward a stronger economy and a **future free of operating debt**. Because of prudent fiscal management and commitment to balancing the books, surpluses forecast throughout the fiscal plan will continue to help reduce direct operating debt. By 2018-19, operating debt will be about \$2.7 billion, its lowest level since 1984-85. At this rate, the Province could completely eliminate operating debt by 2019-20, the first time since 1975-76.

Since November 2004, the Province has received seven credit rating upgrades, reflecting its stronger and more diversified economy and sound fiscal management. Following Budget 2016, the two major international credit rating agencies – Moody's and Standard & Poor's – affirmed B.C.'s **triple-A credit rating** stable outlook – their highest-possible rating.

Budget 2016 established the **B.C. Prosperity Fund** with an inaugural commitment of \$100 million from the forecast 2015-16 surplus. Government's priority for the new B.C. Prosperity Fund is to reduce taxpayer-supported debt. Government will allocate a minimum of 50% of cash flowing into the fund to debt retirement, and a minimum 25% will be saved to accumulate earnings. The remainder will be available for core government priorities in the future.

B.C. has been able to grow even as resource prices have slumped is because of its **diversified economy**. In 2001, nearly 70% of our merchandise exports went to the United States. Only 2.3% went to China. In 2015, China accounted for nearly 17% of our exports. Asian markets overall accounted for about 38%, with roughly 52% of exports going to the U.S. Diversification has been a key to building B.C.'s economy, expanding our exports, bringing in new investment, creating jobs and prosperity for British Columbians.

British Columbia recognizes the importance and global emergence of China's economy and the international use of the **Renminbi (RMB)**. B.C. was the first foreign government to issue bonds into the offshore Chinese RMB market in 2013, and the second foreign government to issue in China's domestic bond market in January 2016. These bond issues opened doors to new investors and raised the profile of British Columbia in the Asia-Pacific.

Negotiations under the **2014 Economic Stability Mandate** are nearly completed across B.C.'s public sector with more than 309,000 public-sector employees covered by ratified agreements. This represents about 99% of all unionized employees in B.C. If the Province's real GDP growth exceeds forecasts over

the terms of these agreements, the agreements provide for the sharing of some benefits of that growth with the B.C. public sector employees.

The first ever **Economic Stability Dividend** was activated in November 2015, when Statistics Canada data showed the B.C. economy grew by 3.2% in 2014, exceeding the independent Economic Forecast Council projection of 2.3%. This is the first of four potential Economic Stability Dividends.

**B.C. families generally have one of the lowest overall tax burdens** in Canada, including income taxes, consumption taxes, property taxes, health care premiums and payroll taxes. B.C. currently has the lowest provincial personal income taxes in Canada for individuals earning up to \$122,000 a year. Provincial personal income taxes for most taxpayers have been reduced by 37% or more since 2001, and today an additional 400,000 lower-income people no longer pay any B.C. income tax.

**Keeping business taxes low** is an essential part of maintaining a competitive tax environment to attract investment, create jobs and move B.C.'s economy forward. B.C.'s general corporate income tax rate is the lowest in Canada, having been cut by almost 35% since 2001, and the combined federal-provincial rate is among the lowest in G7 countries.

**Government announced changes to Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums** and enhanced premium assistance effective Jan. 1, 2017, which will help lower-income families, individuals and seniors with the cost of living. With these changes, the calculation of MSP premiums will no longer include children. The Province is also investing an additional \$70 million annually to enhance premium assistance, helping more lower-income families, seniors and individuals qualify for reduced rates. With these changes, an additional 335,000 people will see their premiums reduced, including 70,000 single-parent families. An additional 45,000 people will no longer pay MSP premiums at all. Once the changes have been implemented, nearly two million British Columbians will pay no premiums at all.

Budget 2016 introduced a number of measures designed to stimulate supply of new housing, assist purchasers, invest in affordable housing and improve our collective understanding of what drives growth in B.C.'s real estate market. The key to improving **housing affordability** over the long term is creating new supply. Government is acting to help the market respond to increasing demand for homes.

Budget 2016 introduced the **Newly Built Home Exemption**, which can save buyers up to \$13,000 in property transfer tax when purchasing a newly constructed or subdivided home worth up to \$750,000. The Newly Built Home Exemption is funded by increasing the property transfer tax rate to 3% from 2% on the portion of fair market value over \$2 million.

Budget 2016 expanded the **Home Renovation Tax Credit** to include persons with disabilities in addition to seniors. The refundable tax credit provides up to \$1,000 annually to help seniors and persons with disabilities with the cost of certain permanent home renovations that improve a home's accessibility or allow individuals to be more functional or mobile in their home.

Property transfer tax returns now require transferees to **provide citizenship information**. This will help the Province monitor the degree of foreign ownership and the use of bare trusts in B.C.'s real-estate

sector. The data will assist government in making evidence-based policy decisions around foreign investment in real estate.

Government also passed expense limits legislation to limit local governments' election expenses.

## **Small Business**

Government is supporting small businesses by expanding BizPal to 129 communities, including the Tsawwassen First Nation, the first Aboriginal community in the BizPaL program and making Mobile Business Licenses (MBL) available in 73 communities, including adding the Sechelt Indian Government District, the first Aboriginal community to participate in MBL.

We continued to implement the Small Business Accord and worked closely with the Small Business Roundtable to ensure entrepreneurs are aware of the tools and resources available to help them grow.

Small business was also encouraged by the launch of a welcome letter and business support package to all new business registrants, with more than 13,000 registrants (to March 31, 2016) having received the new package.

Government also continued to build support for small business growth and diversification in non-resource based sectors, such as technology (this sector has seen the fastest regional growth of any non-traditional sector, with more than 1,250 new technology businesses started in B.C. over the past five years).

In 2015, the British Columbia government launched Open for Business Awards, with award winners from Abbotsford, City of Langley, Sidney, Surrey and, for the first time, a First Nation community, the Tsawwassen First Nation.

## **Job Creation and Investment**

By 2024, British Columbia will see nearly one million job openings, and eight out of 10 of these openings will require post-secondary education.

This job creation is supported by The BC Jobs Plan. Our plan is built on the natural, strategic and financial advantages of British Columbia: our location as Canada's gateway to Asia, our multicultural population, our world-class infrastructure, our strong balance sheet and low-tax environment, our diverse economy and our highly skilled labour force.

The BC Jobs Plan is founded on three pillars:

- Working with employers and communities to enable job creation across British Columbia.
- Strengthening our infrastructure to get our goods to market.
- Expanding markets for B.C. products and services, particularly in Asia.

Government Launched B.C.'s Creative Economy Plan in Spring 2016, followed up by a series of related announcements that were made in the ensuing months.

## **Natural Resources**

### **Forestry**

Government has been working with senior forest industry executives for the last year on forest sector competitiveness focused in three key areas: healthy, resilient forests; diverse, globally competitive forest industry; and stable communities and First Nations.

The newly-created \$85 million Forest Enhancement Society will complement existing programs and focus its efforts on:

- Wildfire risk reduction: Fuel management activities, such as thinning, pruning and removing woody debris from forests (especially those impacted by the mountain pine beetle infestation) to reduce wildfire risks in key areas.
- Forest rehabilitation: Clearing stands damaged by wildfire (or at high risk from wildfire) and reforesting them.
- Wildlife habitat restoration: Designing fuel management and forest rehabilitation activities to promote desired wildlife habitat characteristics.
- FireSmart program: Raising awareness among local governments and rural property owners about steps they can take to protect their homes from wildfire.

The Great Bear Rainforest is an iconic, globally significant area that is home to a quarter of the world's coastal temperate rainforest. After 20 years of collaboration between the provincial government, First Nations, environmental groups and forest companies, agreement on how to implement ecosystem-based managed has been achieved. Under a new land use order, 85% of the forests are fully protected, while the remaining 15% provide economic opportunities for First Nations, and certainty for the forest industry.

A \$75 million Rural Dividend Fund has been created and will provide \$25 million a year for three years so rural communities can foster jobs, diversify their economies and grow.

Meeting a goal of reducing red tape for British Columbia, hunting services are moving online. For the first time, more than 160,000 limited entry hunting applications were processed online. Other services moving online in the future include hunting licences.

## **Economic Growth**

### **Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas**

LNG will bring unprecedented economic benefit to British Columbia, including incredible growth to the Northwest.

The development of important natural gas projects creates jobs, supports local businesses and sustains economic activity in communities.

The Government of British Columbia cares very much about the success of communities in the Northwest. We recognize the important contributions their citizens make to the provincial economy.

The Northwest Community Readiness initiative has been working to bring additional capacity to a number of local governments in the Northwest – specifically Prince Rupert, Port Edward, Terrace, Kitimat, the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine and the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District.

This has included over \$1 million in grant funding for various supports to these local governments.

Recent successes such as the Agreement-in-Principle on taxation between the District of Port Edward and Pacific NorthWest LNG, demonstrates that focused collaboration will advance final investment decisions to deliver direct benefits to communities.

We continue to support our strong partnership with local governments and communities in the north.

British Columbia's total natural gas potential surpasses 3,400 trillion cubic feet (tcf). If industry was able to extract 20% of B.C.'s total resource over the long-term, future development and liquefied natural gas (LNG) export operations could be sustainable for more than 160 years.

To date, the Province estimates that more than \$20 billion has been invested by industry to further B.C.'s LNG opportunity.

There are approximately 20 LNG export proposals at various stages of development. FortisBC is also expanding their Tilbury facility which currently supports domestic energy demands.

The Province has issued environmental assessment certificates for four LNG facilities. Four pipeline proposals supporting LNG have also received a certificate.

There are 18 export licences approved by the National Energy Board.

## **Mining**

British Columbia is a national leader in mining and mineral production. We are the Canada's single largest exporter of coal, the largest producer of copper and the only producer of molybdenum. We also produce significant amounts of gold, silver, lead, zinc and more than 30 industrial minerals.

Mining takes up a very small portion of British Columbia's land base – less than 1% – but it has a tremendous positive effect on our economy. In 2014, B.C. produced more than \$2 billion worth of copper and more than \$460 million worth of gold. More than 30,000 British Columbians are employed in

mining, mineral exploration and related sectors, with average annual salary and benefits of more than \$100,000 per year.

Globally, the mining and mineral exploration industry has been experiencing a significant downturn. B.C. has not been immune. However, even in today's challenging context, B.C. has an excellent story to tell. Today, we have double the number of people employed in mining since 2001. British Columbia had 21% of Canadian exploration investment in 2015, compared to just 6% in 2001. And, in 2015, B.C. saw \$272 million spent on mineral exploration, more than 11 times higher than the amount spent in 2001.

## **Energy**

British Columbia's population and diverse economy are growing, and the demand for power is expected to increase by 40% over the next 20 years. That's why our government approved the Site C Clean Energy Project in December 2014. Construction is well-underway and the project is on time and on budget. The largest infrastructure project in B.C.'s history, Site C will provide the province with the most affordable, reliable clean power for more than 100 years. During the first 50 years of Site C's project life, ratepayers will save an average of \$650 million to \$900 million each year.

And, to ensure key sectors in the BC Jobs Plan continue to have the clean, renewable electricity they need to prosper and grow, BC Hydro is investing, on average, \$2.4 billion per year to expand, upgrade and maintain the province's electricity generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure.

## **Agrifoods**

British Columbia's agrifoods sector is growing. We've seen over \$1.8 billion in sector growth in the last four years, reaching \$12.3 billion in 2014, the highest ever (\$10.5 billion in 2010).

The British Columbia government is helping to build the domestic and export markets for B.C. foods. The \$8-million Buy Local program has helped B.C. companies find new customers locally, while a network of 13 international trade offices, B.C. trade missions, and innovation and market development funding have all played roles in growing B.C.'s exports, which at \$3 billion in 2014 set a record of their own.

The BC Agrifoods and Seafood Strategic Growth Plan identifies the next steps in our goal to grow the B.C. agrifoods industry to a \$15 billion-a-year industry by 2020.

The new strategic plan addresses three key challenges and opportunities facing the Province:

- Achieving economic growth
- Adapting to climate change, and
- Maintaining food-supply security.

This will drive the future of the BC agrifood and seafood sector.

Agriculture Technology (Agritech) represents significant opportunities for the sector as it can help maximize productivity, minimize inputs and create greater value from B.C.'s farmland and coast.

The Ministry of Agriculture is supporting the development and commercialization of innovative Agritech in a number of ways:

- The governments of British Columbia and Canada partnered in a \$13.4-million program that supports new product development and commercialization.
- The Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program (CBCAIP) provides funding to support industry-led, late-stage research, pilot and pre-commercial demonstration projects that lead to the commercialization and/or adoption of innovative products, processes, practices and technologies in B.C.

The ministry's annual operating budget has grown by 20% since 2012-13 to almost \$80 million and focuses on B.C. producing high-quality, high-value products, building domestic and international markets and providing a sustainable land base for food production.

### **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) / Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)**

The B.C. government is committed to an ALR that works for farmers. Our goals are clear:

- Help farmers grow their businesses and earn a better living;
- Support farming families in continuing to produce food on our fertile land; and
- Ensure the commission has the modern tools necessary to continue making independent land decisions with the best interests of agriculture in mind.

We recognize the ALC needs resources to fulfill their mandate, and they will be receiving an extra \$1 million a year in operating funding, bringing their annual budget to \$4.5 million through to 2017-18.

The government is also supporting improved service levels for British Columbians through ALC accountability measures that offer applicants a full refund if they do not receive a decision on their application within 90 business days.

### **New Agriculture Regulations**

We established Regulations under the ALC Act in 2015 to provide opportunities for farmers to earn new dollars in both the local and export markets. The new regulations preserve farmland and encourage agriculture and will help farming families earn higher incomes, preparing for the transition of farms from one generation to another.

These changes were guided by extensive consultations with farming groups and local governments. The regulations will help farmers grow their businesses and earn a better living, and support farming families so they can continue to produce food.

### **Animal Welfare**

Balanced Budget 2015 committed \$5 million to the BC SPCA. This funding supports an eight-year facilities plan that will replace or renovate aging BC SPCA facilities in 10 B.C. communities, including Vancouver, Nanaimo, Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George, Dawson Creek and the Kootenays.

In July 2015, The B.C. government adopted the National Dairy Code of Practice as generally-accepted management practices to improve the welfare of dairy cows in British Columbia. The Dairy Code of Practice outlines standards of care and practices for owners and employees on dairy farms across Canada. It includes an array of applicable areas, such as animal handling, feed and water, housing, health and welfare management, and husbandry practices. The code of practice ensures dairy cows in B.C. are treated with care and respect, each and every day.

The B.C. government has followed through on its commitment to enhance the protection of cats and dogs in British Columbia with a new regulation that improves the quality of care, management and the humane treatment of cats and dogs in commercial breeding establishments.

The order in council (OIC) provides a new regulation under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act that recognizes the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's codes of practice for both kennel and cattery operations as generally accepted practices of animal management for commercial breeders and boarders of cats and dogs in British Columbia.

## **Knowledge-based Sectors**

### **Technology, Clean Technology and a Green Economy**

The #BCTECH Strategy is a key component of the B.C. Jobs Plan – and key to building a competitive, diversified, export-oriented economy.

Following consultation with the sector, we identified three areas requiring attention:

- Access to capital for promising companies
- Talent development and
- Market access.

The strategy includes an investment of \$100-million to give entrepreneurs and tech start-ups access to the capital they need to help build a strong and thriving economy and generate jobs for British Columbians.

The technology sector directly employs more than 86,000 people and wages for those jobs are 60% higher than British Columbia's industrial average.

B.C.'s technology sector is growing faster than the overall economy. In 2013, it grew at a rate of 4.7%, a higher rate than the 3.2% growth observed in the provincial economy.

B.C.'s 9,000 technology companies generated \$23.3 billion in revenue in 2013.

New technology companies are emerging at increasing rates throughout the province. In 2013, there were more than 700 new technology companies in B.C., an increase of 8% over the previous year.

The technology sector includes five sub-sectors:

**Clean technology** is a quickly developing sub sector, crossing over into many traditional industries and creating more efficient, effective and sustainable practices.

There are 6,400 jobs at 202 clean-tech companies, producing \$1.7 billion in annual revenue. In 2014, KPMG released a B.C. Technology Report Card, indicating B.C. is on the leading edge of clean technology solutions, with more than 200 clean technology firms, many of which are gaining global recognition for their leadership.

The global market for clean technology and services is expected to grow to \$3 trillion by 2020. In 2014, KPMG released a B.C. Technology Report Card, which indicates the **Information and Communication** subsector is comprised of about 4,000 companies, including some of the earliest tech enterprises in the province. Telus Corp., Epic Semiconductors, Houle Electric, Sierra Wireless and D-Wave Systems Inc. are examples of companies headquartered in B.C.

The **Life Sciences** subsector in B.C. is one of the strongest in Canada, including more than 600 firms engaged in drugs and pharmaceuticals development, research testing and medical labs, medical devices and equipment, and agricultural feedstock and chemicals.

B.C.'s life sciences industry is particularly strong in the early research and development stages, supported by academic institutions and a strong health-care sector.

Local academic institutions generate some of the highest patent levels in the country and have a history of incubating commercially viable concepts.

The **digital media** subsector has seen strong growth in B.C. and is currently comprised of more than 1,100 companies employing more than 16,000 people.

Digital media generates total revenue of \$3 billion annually. The subsector features companies offering wireless devices, web and social media, gaming, mobile apps, radio and TV broadcasting, and motion picture production.

In fact, B.C. is home to a strong and internationally recognized gaming cluster, featuring a high concentration of specialized talent.

**Engineering** is one of the most developed and mature subsectors, representing a significant number of firms and a strong pool of talent with the province. There are 3,990 engineering firms in the province. The subsector features companies engaged in engineering activities, research and development, consulting services, surveying and mapping services, and robotics.

As part of our #BCTECH Strategy, we are committed to providing high-speed Internet access to 100% British Columbians by 2021.

Today, 95% of British Columbians have access to high-speed Internet, making B.C. one of the most connected jurisdictions in the world. We are 96% of the way to our target for additional cellular coverage along highways; and 363 schools have had their Internet connections upgraded to high-speed fibre-optic cables.

The Province of British Columbia is creating a \$100-million venture capital fund as it builds the foundation for a comprehensive technology strategy aimed at stimulating growth in the fast-moving sector, creating jobs and strengthening a diverse economy.

The BC Tech Fund will help promising tech companies in B.C.'s tech sector by creating an avenue for capital funding, enabling them to take the next step towards joining the ranks of other job-creating tech companies.

The BC Tech Fund will be in operation by fall 2016 following an open procurement process to secure a private-sector fund manager to administer it.

### **International Trade**

In December 2015, the Province released its new Asia trade strategy, *Raising our Game in Asia: The BC Jobs Plan Trade Strategy*, which has three pillars: expanding B.C.'s export capability; growing B.C.'s sectors through investment; and strengthening economic relationships in Asia

As part of the strategy, two new trade and investment representative offices in the Philippines and Indonesia were also announced bringing the number of B.C.'s overseas offices to 13.

Announced in February 2015, HQ Vancouver is a three-year, \$6.6-million project that encourages major international companies to come to B.C. and use Vancouver as their head office location. It's a joint project between the Province, the federal government and the Business Council of British Columbia.

### **Trade Missions**

Trade missions are a critical part of British Columbia's strategy to diversify its international trading partners and secure new investment, propelling economic activity and job creation throughout the province.

Minister of International Trade Teresa Wat led a trade mission to China and Indonesia March 27 to April 9, 2015 to promote B.C.'s information and communications technology (ICT) and digital media sectors.

Premier Christy Clark and Wat led a trade mission to China Oct. 30 to Nov 7, 2015 with Wat continuing on to Vietnam until Nov. 11.

The mission was centered on celebrating B.C.'s cultural ties with Guangdong, highlighted by the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of B.C.'s sister-province agreement with Guangdong. Forty-five announcements and signings took place across a variety of sectors, demonstrating the diversification that is taking place in B.C.'s relationship with China. Preliminary estimates show that this mission's activities could bring an estimated \$1.4 billion in trade and investment into our economy.

## **Multiculturalism**

Our role in government is to create an environment in British Columbia where an inclusive and diverse population supports our shared communities.

Since 2005, we have strengthened and funded community-based approaches to anti-racism using the Organizing Against Racism and Hate (OARH) network to challenge and prevent racism.

In 2015, we announced \$240,000 in Organizing Against Racism and Hate program funding for partnership projects that target anti-racism. Examples of eligible projects include art, theatre, community dialogue events and a host of other forms of community engagement.

In January 2016, we announced an additional \$262,898 in funding to support community-based anti-racism projects throughout the province.

Also, the British Columbia Multiculturalism Grant program provides grants provincewide in support of cultural diversity and anti-racism. On Oct. 20, 2015, government provided \$300,000 through the multiculturalism grant program to support organizations whose activities promote British Columbia's rich multicultural heritage and nurture empathy and inclusion.

## **Chinese Legacy Projects**

On May 15, 2014, the premier delivered a formal apology on behalf of all members of the legislature to Chinese Canadians for historical wrongs committed by past government.

In 2015-16, the Legacy Initiatives Advisory Council (LIAC), established by government following the apology, continued working to facilitate meaningful engagement with the Chinese Canadian community and support government in the successful implementation of the Chinese legacy projects.

Some examples of the work includes:

- In April 2015, in partnership with the University of Victoria, the British Columbia Museums Association and B.C. museums, government announced that a digital inventory of Chinese Canadian artifacts in regional museums throughout the province would be created to help preserve our cultural history.
- The B.C. government was a proud contributor to the Royal BC Museum Gold Rush project held from May to November, 2015, highlighting Chinese mining pioneers: government contributed \$200,000, \$100,000 of which came from the Chinese Historical Wrongs Legacy Funding.
- In September 2015, government reached a major milestone in the Chinese Legacy Initiative when, together with Open School BC and the Royal BC Museum, we introduced Bamboo Shoots: Chinese Canadian Legacies in BC, a comprehensive curriculum supplement for Grade 5 and Grade 10 students. The materials focus on the historical contributions of Chinese Canadians and the impact of the injustices they faced when coming to Canada.

## Transportation

The British Columbia government launched and began implementing priority actions from B.C. on the Move, the Province's 10-year transportation plan:

- Approximately \$800 million was invested during the first year of the plan, with \$2.5 billion committed through the plan's first three years.
- \$300 million was committed to highway, bridge and side road improvement projects in the first year of B.C. on the Move, with over 110 projects tendered.
- The \$1.43 billion Evergreen Line project is 85% complete with station construction in the finishing stages, station plaza construction underway and train testing taking place on the new tracks. The new rapid transit project is slated to open in early 2017.
- More than 20 rest areas on highways throughout B.C. were upgraded.
- \$30 million was invested into the province's new Road Safety Program, with over 70 safety improvements completed in the program's first year.
- \$6 million was committed to cycling infrastructure improvements, in addition to building the \$7-million Stanley Park Causeway pedestrian and cyclist safety improvement project.
- Work began on a planned \$17.4 million investment in improvements and upgrades to Belleville Ferry Terminal in Victoria.
- Committed \$6.45 million to build a bus priority lane on Highway 1 (Douglas Street) in Saanich.
- Proceeded with consultation and design of the \$85-million McKenzie Interchange project in Saanich that will reduce traffic congestion at the No. 1 bottleneck on Vancouver Island.
- Began consultation and design of the \$36-million Mountain Highway Interchange, the first phase of the \$150-million Highway 1–Lower Lynn interchanges project designed to improve traffic flow and safety on the Trans-Canada Highway through North Vancouver.
- Continued to advance four-laning projects on Highway 1 between Kamloops and the Alberta border: announced funding with partners for new four-laning projects near Chase and Illecillewaet, completed two phases totalling more than 10 kilometres of four-laning, began construction on a new section at Hoffman's Bluff, continued construction at Malakwa Bridge, along with planning and design of other projects.
- \$6 million committed to improvements at 10 regional airports through the new BC Air Access Program.
- Government also made changes to improve safety in the party bus industry, added resources to the Office of the Independent Container Trucking Commissioner to improve industry oversight and introduced new "keep right, let others pass" legislation.

The Project Definition Report was released for the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project. The \$3.5 billion project will see a new 10-lane bridge built on the existing Highway 99 corridor, replacing the aging and congested tunnel. The bridge will be built to modern seismic standards and improve highway safety, reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to unnecessary idling and save rush-hour commuters up to 30 minutes a day. Construction will begin in 2017.

A \$15-million Malahat safety improvement project was completed, bringing the divided portion of highway to more than half the length of this corridor.

## **Road Safety**

On May 9, 2016, the Province announced new distracted driving penalties including significantly higher fines, more penalty points, and earlier interventions for repeat offenders – and possible driving prohibitions – encouraging drivers to put their electronic devices away and help reach the goal of having the safest roads in North America by 2020.

New regulations were announced in February 2016 requiring drivers with certain serious prohibitions for drinking and drug-affected driving to participate in mandatory remedial programs designed to prevent this high-risk and irresponsible behaviour from reoccurring.

## **Education and Skills Training**

Our government is working to ensure that British Columbians are first in line for the nearly one million job openings forecast in B.C.

The goal is to maximize the potential of our existing workforce and our young workforce of the future. To do this, in April 2014, the B.C. government launched The Skills for Jobs Blueprint: Re-engineering Education and Training.

It sets out the fundamental changes and shifts we must undertake to make the most effective use of our existing resources and future investments in education and training. The blueprint lays out three objectives to make education and training more effective and more relevant to the needs of industry and today's workforce.

These objectives are:

### **1. A head-start to hands-on learning in our schools.**

Students in elementary, middle or high school will get a better, earlier head-start to hands-on learning so they will be ready for the workforce, or more advanced training, when they graduate.

### **2. A shift in education and training to better match with jobs in demand.**

For students in a college, university, or an institute, or those thinking about attending, government is matching training with in-demand jobs and maximizing the spaces available to provide the programs that students need to compete successfully in the workforce.

### **3. A stronger partnership with industry and labour to deliver training and apprenticeships.**

For those looking to move into the worksite, or upward, we're building stronger partnerships with community, industry and labour to better connect people with the on-the-job and classroom training they will need to boost their skills or achieve certification.

Accomplishments in the Blueprint so far include:

- The opening of two new multi-million dollar trades training facilities on Vancouver Island and in the Okanagan.
- Opening Camosun College's new Centre for Trades, Education and Innovation.
- Opening Nicola Valley Institute of Technology's new trades training building.
- Announcing funding for Selkirk Silver King campus revitalization.
- Launching the Aboriginal Skills Training Development Program in 2015 to invest up to \$30 million over three years to fill training gaps for First Nations who want to participate in the emerging LNG sector. In the first year of programming, more than 1,000 Aboriginal people have received training.
- Launching Skills Exploration 10-12 to give high school students the opportunity to explore a variety of trades while they earn credit towards graduation.
- Through the Industry Training Authority (ITA), hiring 15 apprenticeship advisors throughout the province.
- Developing interactive resources like Find Your Fit, the Apprentice Job Match Tool and My Blueprint Builder that are getting more British Columbians, particularly youth, interested in and aware of in-demand occupations.
- In order to enhance and strengthen our trades training system, the McDonald report was submitted in February 2014. Some highlights of the work done by the Industry Training Authority since then include:
  - Reconstituting the ITA board of directors and appointing the CEO.
  - Completing the ITA 90-day transition plan.
  - Establishing 11 sector-advisory groups.
  - Hiring five industry relations managers to engage industry on apprenticeship and skills training.
  - Hiring a manager of apprenticeship completions.
  - Implementing the Apprentices on Public Projects policy
  - Passing amendments to the Industry Training Authority Act that enables the ITA to lead and deliver trades training in B.C. more effectively
  - Hiring 15 apprenticeship advisors, including six with an Aboriginal focus

Government has funded \$14.6 million for 3,730 critical trades training seats in post-secondary institutions throughout the province.

Government is working to expand program eligibility for grants that lead to in-demand jobs, including those in the high-tech sector, for British Columbians.

In 2015-16, we provided the Skills Training Access Grant to 30 school districts and nine independent schools, totalling \$170,000. These \$5,000 grants support students who want to pursue skills and trades training and career development.

In December 2015, the Province launched the Shoulder Tapper program with the Northern Development Initiative Trust, providing \$5 million to 15 districts. The program enlists career coordinators or recruitment specialists who work closely with students to help them connect with trades and technical training, as well as on-the-job experience. In March 2016, we extended the program to 27 more school districts, totalling an additional \$650,000.

In April 2016, we announced \$8 million for pre-apprenticeship programs that will help over 5,000 young British Columbians connect with trades training. The Industry Training Authority delivers youth apprenticeship programs in partnership with school districts to help youth start their apprenticeship training and earn high school credits at the same time.

Government provided \$1.3 million to support outreach to more employers and increase employer and student awareness of the benefits of co-operative education.

Our government has made extensive investments in British Columbia's K-12, post-secondary and skills and training programs over the past decade. These investments are helping to ensure British Columbians are best positioned and first in line to benefit from the opportunities being created.

In 2015-16, our government's funding to school districts was a record \$5.1 billion, a 32% increase since 2000-01, despite a drop in student enrolment of more than 70,000 students.

Over the next three years, government will spend \$1.7 billion to replace aging school facilities, build more student spaces in growing communities and improve seismic safety.

Since 2011, we have invested more than \$1.4 billion in new and improved schools, including more than \$500 million in seismic upgrades.

Current major capital projects underway include Argyle Secondary seismic replacement, New Westminster replacement, and the creation of up to 2,700 new student spaces in Surrey.

We are also significantly engaging with British Columbians to modernize our education system in ways that put students at the centre of learning, reflecting input from education experts and post-secondary institutions about the skills our students need to succeed.

Now entering year two of a three-year process, our government will continue to modernize our curriculum with an emphasis on interdisciplinary, project-based, and hands-on learning opportunities for all students. Students will be more engaged in their education – learning the basics while they pursue their interests and passions as a part of their classroom experience.

New Kindergarten to Grade 9 curriculum will be fully implemented in classrooms in fall 2016. Draft curriculum for grades 10 to 12 is ready for teachers to use in classrooms in the 2016-17 school year and will be fully implemented in 2017-18.

We are proud to say this government reached a fully funded, six-year agreement with the BCTF.

This means hundreds of millions of additional dollars will flow into the K-12 system over the life of the agreement.

We have invested more than \$1.8 billion to support post-secondary education in 2015-16 and we have boosted funding to operate our post-secondary institutions by 41.6 % since 2001-02.

Government has invested more than \$2.6 billion in capital and infrastructure projects at public post-secondary institutions in B.C. since 2001-02, including more than 1,650 capital projects throughout the province.

Students in British Columbia pay just one-third of the actual costs of their education. Tuition

in B.C. is the fourth-lowest in Canada, with increases capped at 2% annually. Our investments have helped make British Columbia the home of world-class universities.

To encourage access and participation in post-secondary education and training, our government maintains a number of programs, including targeted grants that provide supports to students and their families, such as funding for disability-support programs.

The \$1,200 B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant launched in August 2015. Already, more than 24,000 applications have been received. As part of Budget 2016, the eligibility window was extended to children born in 2006 or later.

The Aboriginal population in B.C. is growing at more than triple the rate of the non-Aboriginal population, with 46% under the age of 25. Ensuring they have access to post-secondary education and training is crucial to meeting current and future labour market demands.

In support of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan, government has invested \$13.4 million in 2015-16 to help Aboriginal people succeed in education and training programs in B.C.

Students now have access to more than 150 open textbooks through the Open Textbook Project, providing them with more affordable learning resources.

In 2015-16, our government launched the Single Parent Employment Initiative, a program that helps single parents on income or disability assistance secure employment opportunities and build a better future for themselves and their children. The program provides single parents with wrap-around supports that include:

- Up to 12 months of funded training for in-demand jobs or paid work experience placements;
- Continued income assistance while participating in an approved training program;
- Full child-care costs, while participating in the program and throughout the first year of employment;

- Health supplement coverage for a full year after they leave income assistance for employment; and
- Transportation costs to and from school.

As of March 31, 2016, more than 2,400 single parents have accessed the program and the numbers continue to grow.

A key program for helping people get the supports they need to gain a foothold in today's job market is Community and Employer Partnerships, which are featured in B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint. Through partnerships with employers, industry and communities, the province invests \$8 million each year in classroom and on-the-job training, research projects and labour-market studies, which help communities determine labour needs. In 2015-16, more than 52 projects have been funded, benefiting more than 361 job seekers throughout the province.

## **Tourism:**

Tourism is one of our fastest growing industries. With the strategic marketing of our revitalized Super Natural B.C. brand, combined with more airline flights bringing visitors to our province, British Columbia's tourism sector is thriving and is a key economic driver in our growing economy.

People come here to enjoy the natural environment, warm people, diversity of cultures, places and experiences, and for the spectacular beauty. More than 4.9 million international visitors came to B.C. in 2015 – more visitors than residents in the province.

Here are some tourism accomplishments:

- In 2014 tourism generated \$14.6 billion in revenues
- \$7.1 billion contributed to B.C.'s economy
- Tourism supported 127,500 jobs
- \$4.3 billion in tourism wages and salaries in 2014, up 4.5% over 2013.
- B.C. is a leader in Aboriginal cultural tourism, creating 6,930 direct and indirect jobs in 2014
- There are more than 19,200 tourism-related businesses in B.C.
- More than 4.9 million visitors came to B.C. in 2014
- The Resort Municipality Initiative distributed \$10.5 million this past year to 14 resort communities, enabling them to improve the quality of tourism in their towns through infrastructure enhancements and other strategies. Due to its success, government has extended the timeline of this program through 2017.

- A new provincial hosting program and strategy, to make B.C. the destination of choice for sport and cultural events. In 2015 B.C. hosted the Canada Winter Games, the largest multi-sport event ever held in northern B.C., with more than 15,000 participants and visitors.
- B.C. surpassed the goal of 300 Aboriginal tourism businesses, two years ahead of schedule, with 2,900 full time equivalent employees.

## **Skilled Workforce: Migration**

- In the final quarter of 2015, 3,700 more people moved to B.C. than left.
- That brings the total interprovincial migration for 2015 to nearly 17,000 more people moving to B.C. than leaving.
- The Conference Board of Canada predicts this trend to continue as they estimate 20,000 more Canadians will choose to move to B.C. in 2016.
- We know that interprovincial migration generally follows the economic cycle of the province and B.C.'s strong and diverse economy continues to attract people to our province's job opportunities.

## **First Nations**

### **Treaties**

The governments of British Columbia, Canada and Tla'amin First Nation have ushered in a new era with the finalization and effective date of the Tla'amin Final Treaty and celebrated new Incremental Treaty Agreements with the Haisla First Nation near Kitimat and four NsTQ nations in the Cariboo region.

Four treaty Agreements-in-Principle were signed with eight First Nations (Te'mexw Treaty Association, Wuikinuxv, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum).

The Tla'amin treaty came into effect, the fourth modern treaty brought into effect in B.C. and ushering in a new era for the Tla'amin people.

Incremental treaty agreements were signed with the Haisla Nation near Kitimat and the four Northern Sushwap nations in the Cariboo to provide land in advance of final treaty agreements.

The Forestry Fund Agreement was signed with 'Namgis First Nation, which provides for timber harvesting within proposed treaty settlement lands on Vancouver Island, to the benefit of forestry jobs and certainty on the land base, while safeguarding the interests of the First Nation.

### **Reconciliation**

Each jurisdiction takes its own approach to reconciliation and our approach reflects the current and unique circumstances of First Nations in British Columbia. We are making great progress every day and

have reached more than 100 economic and reconciliation agreements with nations across the province since the start of 2015. The Province contributes to meaningful reconciliation in important areas, such as health, education, post-secondary and skills training, revenue and benefit sharing and economic opportunities. We are focused on strengthening our relationships with First Nations and working together towards positive economic and social change in First Nation communities.

B.C. contributed \$300,000 towards Reconciliation Canada efforts to advance the public dialogue in our province on the importance of reconciliation with First Nations and Aboriginal people.

### **Tsilhqot'in Accord**

British Columbia takes the Tsilhqot'in title decision seriously and we've made progress since the court ruling. The decision factors into all of work as we strengthen the ways B.C. can help reconcile title, rights and First Nation interests.

In 2015-16, the Province and the Tsilhqot'in Nation achieved a major milestone: a five-year framework agreement that lays out the next path and priorities for continuing to enliven the 2014 Supreme Court of Canada decision.

## **Protecting Our Environment**

B.C. is recognized as having one of the largest protected areas systems in North America. Thirty-seven per cent of B.C.'s land base is under some type of conservation designation – ranging from wildlife habitat areas and old growth management areas to parks and protected areas. B.C.'s provincial parks receive over 21 million visits each year. In 2015, more than 158,000 reservations were made through Discover Camping – an increase of almost 19% from 2014. In 2015 alone, more than \$13-million was invested into facility and capital projects in parks across B.C.

### **Climate plan**

Since the introduction of our Climate Action Plan in 2008, B.C. has been recognized as a world leader in the fight against climate change. At the centre of our Climate Action Plan is North America's first and most comprehensive carbon tax. B.C.'s carbon tax continues to be recognized as one of the most powerful examples of carbon pricing. Premier Christy Clark was invited to the World Bank-International Monetary Fund spring 2015 meetings in Washington, D.C. to speak to G20 finance ministers about B.C.'s carbon tax, the first time a Canadian premier has been invited to speak at the forum. In December 2015, Premier Christy Clark and Minister of Environment Mary Polak joined leaders from around the world at the UN climate change conference (COP 21) in Paris, France. To ensure B.C. remains a global climate leader, we are moving our climate agenda forward through the development of a new Climate Leadership Plan that will be unveiled in June 2016.

### **Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act (GIRCA)**

As another example of our international leadership on climate action, on Jan. 1, 2016, the Province's new Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act (GGIRCA) came into force, ensuring LNG

facilities in B.C. will have an emissions cap making them the cleanest in the world. Enacting the Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act brings about clarity and consolidates many important pieces of our GHG legislation. The act upholds commitments we made to industry and enables First Nations and others to develop offsets under the new system, while supporting our new #BCTECH Strategy.

## **Water Act**

Following years of consultations with First Nations, outdoor and recreational groups, on Feb. 29, 2016, the British Columbia's Water Sustainability Act came into force, refreshing the century-old law with new legislation. The law replaced one that had been on the books since 1909, a time when B.C.'s population was just 350,000. The act responds to current and future pressures on fresh water including groundwater, and positions British Columbia as a leader in water stewardship.

## **Invasive Mussels**

In May 2015, the Province launched the enhanced invasive mussel defence program, including six mobile decontamination units, 12 trained auxiliary conservation officers who perform roadside watercraft inspections and decontaminations, as well as expanded monitoring for zebra and quagga mussels and increasing education and outreach activities. In 2015, more than 3,200 boats were inspected. Thanks to the enhanced invasive mussel defence program, the first decontamination and quarantine orders were issued under the provincial controlled alien species regulation to vessel owners to ensure B.C. waters remain protected from invasive mussels.

## **Red Tape Deduction**

Government has made significant strides in reducing red tape throughout the province, including in the following areas:

- Developed a more rigorous Regulatory Reform Policy framework, including a more robust Regulatory Impact Assessment Checklist to support ministries in developing efficient legislation, regulations, policies and tools that respond to the needs of citizens and businesses, especially small businesses.
- Through a continued focus on developing Lean capacity within ministries, government has achieved estimated savings of \$27 million from complex Lean projects in fiscal year 2015/16. These savings are associated with efficiencies found through business process improvements, which have resulted in more streamlined access to services for British Columbians and a more efficient use of taxpayer monies.
- Held a six-week online public engagement that drew more than 5,900 participants and resulted in more than 400 ideas on reducing red tape.
- Committed to more than 60 actions to reduce red tape and improve service delivery based on ideas from British Columbians out of this engagement.

- Launched a suggestion button on the Province’s homepage so British Columbians can share their ideas to help cut red tape all year long.
- Announced that the first Wednesday in March each year would be officially known as Red Tape Reduction Day, enshrining our commitment to regulatory reform and improving the lives of British Columbians.
- Repealed more than 30 regulatory requirements on the inaugural red tape reduction day, lowering the overall regulatory count by over 200.
- For the fifth year in a row, we’ve been recognized as the national leaders for our regulatory reform efforts by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

## **Liquor**

Government is continuing to improve customer choice and convenience by updating the province’s liquor laws to better reflect British Columbia’s modern society. We have implemented more than half of the 73 recommendations from the liquor policy review, including the introduction of B.C. wine in grocery stores, permitting liquor sales at artisan markets and extending hotel room service for liquor to 24/7. We have also reduced liquor red tape to help small businesses be even more flexible and provide their customers a better experience, through changes such as the elimination of lounge restrictions in restaurants and allowing manufacturers to offer liquor not produced on site

## **Secure Tomorrow**

### **Housing**

Since 2001, the B.C. government has invested \$4.4 billion to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals, seniors and families.

In February 2016, the Province announced capital funding of \$355 million over the next five years for construction and renovation of more than 2,000 units of affordable housing

The B.C. government has added nearly 25,000 new units of affordable housing since 2001 and more than 22,000 are complete.

More than 102,500 B.C. households benefit from a diverse range of provincial housing programs.

### **Supporting Vulnerable Families**

Over the last year, government has moved forward on significant policy changes that remove barriers and help people find a path toward greater independence and community inclusion.

Government responded to families who told us they want more opportunities to financially support their loved ones and ensure a secure future for them. Asset limits for people on disability assistance increased from \$5,000 to \$100,000 for an individual and from \$10,000 to \$200,000 for a couple. And for

the first time in B.C., persons with disabilities will be able to receive cash gifts with no effect on their eligibility for assistance.

In September 2015, British Columbia became the first province to fully exempt child support payments for families on income and disability assistance, which allows families to keep their support payments without any impact on their monthly benefits.

We also doubled earning exemptions from \$200 to \$400 per month for all families with children and from \$300 to \$500 per month for families who have a child with a disability.

In February 2016, government announced that we would invest an additional \$170 million over the next three years to extend transportation supports to everyone on disability assistance with the persons with disabilities designation and provide a modest monthly rate increase. This change will come into effect on Sept. 1, 2016, benefitting more than 100,000 people in our province.

These changes were a direct result of consultations held across the province in 2014 that culminated in Accessibility 2024, the government's 10-year plan to make B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities. The Accessibility Secretariat just released its two-year progress report highlighting the accomplishments of all the partners under Accessibility 2024 since its launch.

The fiscal year started strongly in April with the launch of the new B.C. Early Childhood Tax Benefit to help parents with the costs of raising young children. The benefit provides \$146 million annually – up to \$55 a month per child – to approximately 180,000 families with children under the age of six.

In June 2015, government invested \$8.2 million to support the creation of 1,488 new licensed child-care spaces in 14 B.C. communities. These new spaces build on the 1,006 spaces the Province funded through the first major capital funding phase and are in addition to the approximately 111,000 spaces that government currently supports throughout B.C.

These new spaces are part of government's commitment, under the B.C. Early Years Strategy, to create up to 13,000 new child-care spaces by 2020.

In November 2015, government announced the third intake for child-care major capital, committing to support the creation of approximately 1,700 child-care spaces by March 2017.

In March 2016, we announced that child support payments would no longer impact eligibility for parents who are already receiving or applying for child care subsidies, starting April 1, 2016, putting money back in the pockets of the families that need it most.

These changes had an immediate impact for approximately 900 existing families, either by making them newly eligible to receive subsidies, or by increasing the amount of subsidy they receive.

In February 2016, government expanded the network of B.C. Early Years Centres by adding 21 more centres to bring the total to 47 BC Early Years Centres throughout the province.

BC Early Years Centres are tailored to meet the needs of each local community and allow parents with children, aged zero to six years, to access services, such as child drop-in playgroup programs, StrongStart BC programs, public health clinics, advice and referrals and parent education workshops, all under one roof.

The new centres are in a diverse mix of urban, rural and Aboriginal communities and were chosen by the Provincial Office for the Early Years with support from the ministries of Children and Family Development, Education, Health and health authorities, including the First Nations Health Authority.

Each new centre will receive \$52,000 annually from the Provincial Office for the Early Years.

Government continues to enhance mental health supports and services for children and youth through several initiatives around the province, including:

- FRIENDS, an evidence-based in-school prevention program that teaches children how to cope with worry and stress. More than 10,000 teachers/educators have been trained to deliver the FRIENDS program.
- Expanding the number of child and youth mental health intake clinics across the province. These clinics offer a more efficient intake process, designed to reduce wait times for children and their families for initial assessment of their service needs. Currently, there are 78 walk-in intake clinics across B.C. Results to date have been encouraging – with a reduction in average wait times for intake from days to hours. It is important to note that this process doesn't change the government's approach to how we respond to urgent requests. Our first priority is providing access to the necessary services when and where they are needed.
- Tele-health videoconferencing has been implemented in several northern communities in B.C. to connect children and youth to psychiatrists in Vancouver. This has resulted in shorter wait times for families who might otherwise have to travel or wait for a psychiatrist to visit their community.

An online service map makes it easier for families to find information about the child and youth mental health and substance use services in their community. Since its launch in February 2015, the map has helped approximately 6,900 children, youth and families to find the services they need, when they need them.

In May, 2015, government provided \$315,000 to support the establishment of a youth and young adult mentorship program delivered through Covenant House Vancouver.

Government also established the Learning Fund for Young Adults. Young people born Jan. 1, 2007 or later, and who have been in government care for at least a year, will be able to access the fund to support their vocational training and post-secondary pursuits after they reach the age of 17. The first disbursements from the fund will begin in 2024.

Last summer, we invested \$500,000 to launch AgedOut.com, an online warehouse of information, resources and services for young adults and a learning tool to help them feel empowered as they leave care.

We invested a further \$250,000 to support and expand the YWCA's Strive program, a 14-week program that complements the resources available on AgedOut.com by offering young people hands-on guidance in life skills like financial literacy, time management, decision-making and problem solving that are key to living independently.

Agreements with Young Adults can provide financial and social supports to former youth in continuing care or on Youth Agreements up to the age of 24.

In October 2015, we established a new rapid response team serving high-risk youth in the Downtown Eastside. A service-provider awareness campaign and a review of all children and youth in care or receiving services in the Downtown Eastside are also part of government's response to issues outlined in the Representative for Children and Youth's report, Paige's Story.

In 2014, our government set a goal to place 600 children and youth in adoptive homes over a two-year period. That adoption target was exceeded with 644 placed in forever homes. Fiscal year 2015-16 was one of the most successful in B.C.'s history for the placement of B.C. children and youth in care with the highest annual adoption count since the Adoptions Act came into effect in 1997.

## **Policing**

On April 15, 2016, the Province announced an additional, \$23 million-plus to build on the gains made by the Guns and Gangs Strategy. The funding will bolster public safety in Surrey and across the province in communities that have seen recent spikes in violent and public gang activity through a three-pillar approach.

The expanded strategy focuses on supporting effective enforcement and prosecution, furthering community safety and public engagement and exploring new legislation and sanctions targeting illegal guns and gang violence, illegal profits and property.

As part of the expansion of the Guns and Gangs Strategy, the Province is adding two more 10-person teams to Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit British Columbia, increasing its annual investment in this integrated anti-gang organization by \$3.5 million in 2016 and another \$6 million over the next two years.

Major integrated units have been established which investigate crimes such as homicides, criminal organizations and gangs, Internet luring and identity theft, sexual predators, and, provide a rapid, integrated response to emergencies with the emergency response team.

More than \$60 million a year has been provided to the RCMP for CFSEU-BC and anti-gang initiatives. This supports front-line efforts to keep young people out of gangs and remove gangsters, their associates and illegal weapons from our streets.

On April 11, 2016, the Government of B.C. and the province's anti-gang agency announced plans to join forces to form a coordinated investigation unit designed to crack down on illegal gaming and money-laundering in B.C.'s gaming facilities.

### **Civil Forfeiture**

In March 2016, the Province announced nearly \$7.2 million in grants from civil and criminal forfeiture proceeds to support more than 250 projects addressing crime prevention and victim support programs as well as police training and special equipment. This represents the largest-ever one-time grants investment in community crime prevention in B.C.

B.C.'s 10-year-old self-funding Civil Forfeiture Office, which continues to undermine the profit motive behind unlawful activity by taking away the tools and proceeds of crime, has returned approximately \$27 million from successful forfeiture actions to crime prevention programs and victim compensation, including \$1.5 million for victim compensation. B.C. was one of the first two provinces to have this law. Today, eight provinces have operating civil forfeiture legislation.

More than \$70 million annually has been targeted for services that assist victims of crime and women and children impacted by violence.

In June 2016, civil forfeiture proceeds (\$7,500) funded two-day workshops for police and other first responders who deal with deadly fentanyl and its trafficking and use.

### **Corrections**

BC Corrections has now completed phase one of its historic \$185-million capital expansion plan to add 340 cells, which includes:

- 216 cells at Surrey Pretrial Services Centre (opened in February 2014).
- 104 cells at Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (opened in October 2012).
- A 20-cell expansion for women at Prince George Regional Correctional Centre (opened in December 2010).

Our government signed a historic agreement with the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) on March 20, 2013 to build the Okanagan Correctional Centre (OCC) on OIB land. It's the first such partnership between BC Corrections and a First Nation in British Columbia. The OCC will build on phase one of BC Corrections' capital expansion plan.

OCC is generating significant economic benefits for South Okanagan, including up to 500 direct and 500 indirect jobs during the construction phase, as well as approximately 240 new, full-time correctional positions when the centre opens.

To date, BC Corrections has hired nearly 220 additional staff during the first phase of its expansion plan – bringing the total of new staff hired since 2007 to 440.

On Jan. 1, 2016, B.C. launched a new electronic monitoring system using GPS technology aimed at high-risk offenders.

### **Victims Services**

B.C. has provided more than \$70 million annually for prevention and intervention services for victims of crime and women and children impacted by violence. This includes:

- \$12.4 million for more than 160 victim service programs across B.C.;
- \$16.5 million for violence against women counselling and outreach programs:
  - 94 Stopping the Violence counselling programs;
  - 86 Children Who Witness Abuse counselling programs;
  - 55 Outreach Services programs; and
  - 11 Multicultural Outreach Services programs;
- \$12.3 million for Crime Victim Assistance Program; and
- \$32 million annually to support 850 spaces in Transition Houses and Safe Homes.

In 2014-15, Victim Service programs across British Columbia assisted more than 41,000 new clients and provided more than 458,000 hours of service.

In 2014-15, more than 33,000 people were referred to Violence Against Women Counselling and Outreach programs, which assist women and children impacted by violence.

### **Violence-Free BC**

Nearly \$7.2 million in civil forfeiture grants were announced March 2016 to provide funding to more than 250 organizations throughout B.C. to support anti-violence and crime prevention initiatives, with a priority focus on violence against women.

In March 2016, the Province unveiled an awareness campaign under the #SaySomething banner, focused on the issue of sexual assault. This expansion of #SaySomething – initially launched in 2015 with a focus on domestic violence – targets young adults and aims to change attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate sexual violence.

A one-stop online resource – [www.saysomethingbc.ca](http://www.saysomethingbc.ca) – was created to connect British Columbians with information, services and support about domestic violence. The website offers practical advice and strategies on how and when to safely seek help.

### **Missing Women Commission of Inquiry**

In British Columbia, work is now substantively completed or underway on all of the major themes of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry final report: compensation, improvements to policing, safety for vulnerable women, and supports for missing persons. This includes:

- Healing and Compensation, including a compensation fund for all children of the missing women
- Improvements to policing
- Support for vulnerable women
- Supports for missing persons
- Missing Persons Unit
- Missing persons legislation
- Increasing safety along Northern highways

### **Corporate Planning and Policy Office**

On Jan. 18, 2016, The Guide Dog and Service Dog Act came into effect. The act:

- Strengthens mobility rights and rights of access for certified guide and service dog teams, and for guide and service dog pups in training.
- Strengthens protection for residents of stratas
- Streamlines identification and the certification process.
- Improves public safety as only certified dogs are allowed in public places, on public transit.
- The Guide Dog and Service Dog Act is part of Accessibility 2014, BC's 10 Year Strategy to make British Columbia the most progressive Province in Canada for persons with disabilities

As of April 1, 2016 changes to the Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act came into effect to regulate the debt settlement industry. Debt settlement agents (different than debt poolers) will have new stricter guidelines including;

- All debt settlement agents require a provincial license
- No upfront fees to consumers. The debtor and creditor must agree on terms of repayment before any fees for service are to be paid to the debt settler.
- Limitations on what fees can be charged for service
- Contracts which include greater disclosure about the risks of this type of debt settlement
- Debt settlers will be forbidden by law from counselling a client about avoiding communication or repayment during the negotiation process.

In spring 2016, new rules for home inspectors were announced, to take effect Sept. 1, 2016, giving consumers increased confidence when they purchase a home. Changes include: enhanced home inspector licensing qualifications, strengthened home inspection reports, contracts and insurance requirements, and improved enforcement.

### **Legislation:**

## **Motor Dealer Act amendments**

On Feb. 18, 2016 the Province introduced changes to the Motor Dealer Act of B.C. to protect British Columbians' financial interests, and physical safety by adding more certainty for consumers when purchasing a vehicle and build on the professionalism of the sector.

The act will be administered through the Vehicle Sales Authority of British Columbia.

## **Healthy Citizens**

### **Supporting British Columbians:**

Budget 2016 announced changes to MSP and premium assistance effective Jan. 1, 2017, which will help lower-income families, individuals and seniors with the cost of living.

Government launched a four-year strategy to increase the volume of MRI services for British Columbians and ensure an accessible, sustainable medical imaging system. From November 2015, when the strategy was launched, to the end of the fiscal year in March 2016, health authorities performed more than 8,600 additional MRI scans. Health authorities will continue to add capacity year-over-year. By year four, the strategy will mean up to 65,000 additional scans per year are being performed in B.C.

British Columbia health authorities and physicians completed thousands of additional surgeries from June 2015 to March 2016, as part of a government strategy to improve access to surgery. More than 8,500 additional surgeries were made possible with \$25 million in funding made available to health authorities targeted to help increase surgical access throughout the province.

In 2015, PharmaCare began covering new generation treatments for hepatitis C and now covers three different drugs, with high cure rates of about 90%. PharmaCare has so far approved treatment coverage with these new medications for about 2,500 people (from March 2015 to February 2016).

The Nurses' Bargaining Association and the Health Employers' Association of BC negotiated an agreement that is consistent with government's Economic Stability Mandate, while working to enhance the health-care issues that matter most to British Columbian families. The agreement prioritizes patient needs and recognizes the value nurses provide to the health-care system. It will invest in training more specialty nurses such as OR and ER nurses, implementing measures to prevent violence against health-care workers and addressing nurse recruitment and retention issues in rural and remote areas of the province.

### **Healthy British Columbians:**

British Columbia was the only province to receive an overall A grade for health status in a 2015 Conference Board of Canada report. This grade is thanks to healthier lifestyles, lower daily smoking and heavy drinking rates, physical activity, and the lowest obesity rates.

B.C. introduced the new Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act which comes into effect Sept. 1, 2016. The act is designed to protect youth from the unknown effects of e-cigarette vapour by placing the same bans and restrictions as the province applies to tobacco.

### **Independent Seniors**

Amendments to the Community Care and Assisted Living Act now allow clients to access services that will allow them to stay independent for longer, as well as added protection for assisted living residents through additional oversight.

In 2016, the Aging Well website was launched to help people think about and plan for a healthy and independent future. As well, an updated BC Seniors' Guide provides older British Columbians with information on the wide range of services and supports available to them.

### **Rural Health Care**

To help patients get the care they need closer to home, 73 rural and remote B.C. communities will welcome community paramedics, who will provide basic health-care services within their scope of practice, and in partnership with local health-care providers.

B.C. introduced the Practice Ready Assessment BC program, which helps place qualified international medical graduates in rural and remote communities of need for three-year terms. Twenty-five new doctors began providing care to patients in communities of need in 2015-16 under this new program.

### **Tech Strategy for Improved Health**

Health research continues to be an important investment for government. Genome BC received \$34 million in government funding for new and ongoing health research projects that will improve patient care in the province. Government also provided \$50 million to the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research to support health research projects to advance the health of B.C. families. Research projects range from those looking for a cure for childhood diabetes, to ovarian cancer research, to helping patients in remote communities better manage chronic diseases at home.

By examining tumours, the Personalized Onco-Genomics (POG) program can identify potential individualized cancer treatments for metastatic cancer patients. Government gave \$3 million to the BC Cancer Foundation to support the POG program and other high-priority cancer research projects.

### **Major Health-Care Investments**

B.C.'s strong economy has allowed the provincial government to make significant investments in the health-care system to benefit British Columbians now and into the future. Approximately \$10 billion has been spent on health sector capital projects in British Columbia since 2001. By the end of 2018, the

Province will have invested approximately \$13 billion on capital projects.

Over the next three years, British Columbia's health-care system will benefit from investments, such as new medical equipment and modernized health facilities, as part of an approximately \$3 billion health sector capital plan. These investments in health-care infrastructure will benefit the health of all British Columbians, and will help create thousands of jobs in communities around the province.

Government announced two significant hospital projects in the Lower Mainland in 2015-16: the replacement of St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver and the redevelopment of Royal Columbian Hospital.

Kelowna's \$381-million Interior Heart and Surgical Centre opened to patients on Sept. 28, 2015.

East Kootenay Regional Hospital's received a \$20-million new ICU and electrical upgrade.

Vernon Jubilee Hospital's Polson Tower officially completed, with the top two floors adding 16,815 square metres of space to the hospital.

### **Local governments:**

The following actions are underway or completed regarding local governments:

- Review the recommendations made by Chris Trumpy to improve the operations of the office of the Auditor General for Local Government and provide options for reform.
  - A new AGLG was announced at UBCM 2015. All recommendations made by Chris Trumpy were made permanent through amendments to the AGLG Act in fall 2015.
  - Community, Sport and Cultural Development Minister Peter Fassbender appointed two additional positions to the Audit Council.
- Develop and present options to Cabinet on potential processes under which local governments could either amalgamate or integrate service delivery by June 30, 2016.
  - The Province has appointed facilitators to work with local governments and the Capital Regional District. The purpose is to explore service and governance challenges as well as opportunities and help lay the groundwork for specific solutions they may wish to pursue towards greater integration of services and governance.

### **Sport**

The Canadian Soccer Association stated that the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup yielded \$59 million in net economic activity (GDP) with \$9.7 million in tax revenues supported throughout the province. Hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup has proven to be a very positive economic choice, setting the stage for similar international events in the future. The B.C. government assessed and reported to Cabinet on the economic impact resulting from the FIFA 2015 Women's World Cup in Vancouver and made recommendations on whether to financially support and pursue other similar events.

### **Working with the federal government**

The British Columbia government is working with the federal government to secure funding for British Columbia available under the Building Canada Communities Fund. Phase 1 included 55 projects valued at joint federal-provincial contribution of \$145.7 million. Events were held summer 2015.