

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# MAKING LIFE BETTER



STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Making life better

## Our government continues to put people first.

Making life better for people continued to be our priority this year. We made more progress on affordable housing. We improved our public services by building more hospitals and urgent primary care centres, investing in schools and funding more child care spaces. We took historic steps with Indigenous peoples on a path to true and lasting reconciliation. And we created more jobs and opportunities for people, as part of a strong, clean economy.

In March 2020, B.C. was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic and jurisdictions all over the globe made the necessary decision to restrict social and economic activities in order to keep people safe. Under the expert leadership of B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, and Minister of Health Adrian Dix, essential businesses continued to operate safely throughout the pandemic. Still, the social and economic impacts have been significant.

The full effects of COVID-19 were not felt until after the fiscal year ended on March 31, so they are not reflected in this report.

When the pandemic hit, we took immediate action to help protect people's health, homes and incomes. As our province moves into recovery, our government will continue to put people first. We will work to keep people safe by supporting our hospitals and health-care workers; help people who need it with programs like income supports; and make sure that essential services, like groceries and public transit, continue to be available. And we will work to rebuild a cleaner economy that works for everyone.

## The Confidence and Supply Agreement continues to provide a strong and stable government for British Columbians.

For three years, the Confidence and Supply Agreement (CASA), signed with the BC Green Party caucus, has formed the basis of British Columbia's minority government.

Working together, we have provided British Columbians with a strong, stable government focused on getting things done for people. CASA commitments led to critical investments in health care, child care and housing, and have also put us on a path to a cleaner, better future, through CleanBC, B.C.'s comprehensive plan to address climate change. CleanBC will guide B.C.'s approach to clean economic development, taking full advantage of B.C.'s abundant, clean electricity.

Bringing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into law last year was an historic moment for both government and the BC Green Party caucus. It ensures that reconciliation with Indigenous peoples will be central to an economic recovery plan that leaves no one behind.

Together with the BC Green Party caucus and independent MLA Andrew Weaver, our work to put people first has provided us with a strong foundation as we begin to restart and rebuild B.C.'s economy. With CASA, we are well positioned to rebuild a more innovative, more equitable and more sustainable future for British Columbia.

# Making life more affordable

Our government is making life more affordable for all British Columbians. We're tackling the housing crisis, delivering more affordable child care, and reducing costs for families across the board.

- ▶ On January 1, 2020, we eliminated unfair Medical Service Plan premiums, putting up to \$1,800 per year back into people's pockets.
- ▶ We are making the largest investment in affordable housing in B.C.'s history – \$7 billion over 10 years – and working with partners to build 114,000 affordable homes. More than 23,000 homes are already complete or underway, including:
  - More than 2,800 homes for people with middle incomes.
  - Approximately 9,800 homes for people with low to moderate incomes.
  - More than 2,200 supportive homes for people experiencing homelessness, with 900 in progress.
  - Nearly 680 new spaces of transition, second-stage and affordable housing for women and children leaving violence.
  - Nearly 1,200 on- and off-reserve homes for Indigenous peoples, the first of 1,750.
- ▶ We are investing \$2 billion over three years in child care, to help families find affordable, high-quality care.
  - We have funded more than 13,000 new, licensed child care spaces, with more to come.
  - We are lowering fees for child care spaces, which is saving some families up to \$19,200 per year, or \$1,600 per month, per child.
  - In 2019-2020, 63,000 families saw a savings of up to \$1,250 per month, per child, through the Affordable Child Care Benefit.
  - Our Childcare BC initiatives mean that 28,000 children received child care for \$10 a day or less in 2019-2020.

*A family of four earning \$70,000 and living in Metro Vancouver could access nearly \$30,000 in savings from various government programs.*



- ▶ To make life more affordable for families and young people moving from school into the workforce, we eliminated interest on B.C. student loans.
- ▶ We continued to tackle money laundering activity that has distorted our economy, fuelled the overdose crisis and driven up housing prices. We announced a public inquiry, headed by B.C. Supreme Court Justice Austin F. Cullen, to look at the full scope of money laundering, including real estate, gaming, financial institutions, and the corporate and professional sectors.
- ▶ We moved toward a new way of doing insurance at ICBC, which will increase care and recovery benefits from \$300,000, to a maximum of at least \$75 million. This will help make life more affordable for British Columbians, as drivers will save an average of 20%, or approximately \$400, on their insurance per year.
- ▶ The B.C. Utilities Commission is now collecting information on refined fuel imports and exports, fuel volumes at refineries and terminals, and wholesale and retail prices. This will help our government evaluate policy measures to bring fairness to fuel prices.
- ▶ To help lower costs of cellphone bills for British Columbians, we delivered a strong message to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commissions (CRTC) by calling for improved affordability and choice in cellphone services. We are also working to address contract and billing issues identified in the B.C. survey on cellphone billing transparency.



*Our Childcare BC initiatives mean that 28,000 children received child care for \$10 a day or less in 2019-2020.*

# Delivering better services

Our government is improving the services British Columbians count on. We're working to deliver better, faster health care, more support for students and teachers, and increased access to skills and training opportunities.

- ▶ We are taking steps to improve health care in communities around the province, so people can get the care they need, when they need it.
  - We are establishing primary care networks in B.C. communities, with 18 beginning implementation in 2018/19, and an additional 21 started in 2019/20, for a total of 39 primary care networks underway. These networks connect teams of health-care providers with other community organizations and services, so people get better, faster primary care in their own communities.
  - We have announced 13 major health capital projects since 2017, to replace outdated facilities and meet the needs of growing communities.
  - In 2019/20, significant progress has been made in the volume of surgeries over the baseline year of 2016/17. During this time, hip and knee surgeries increased by 29.61% and dental surgeries increased by 15.32%.
  - We have added new MRI units and expanded operating hours of existing MRI units, leading to a 34.4% increase in MRI exams since 2016/17.
  - We have increased staffing levels in long-term care homes, with the goal of having each health authority reach an average of 3.36 direct care hours per resident, per day by the end of 2020/21.
  - We've made changes to how people access long-term care; and as of July 2019, seniors and their families can review options and choose up to three preferred care homes.
- ▶ People in B.C. expect an urgent, comprehensive response to the opioid crisis. We're taking vital steps to support everyone in B.C. who is living with a mental health or substance use challenge, and this year we launched "A Pathway to Hope," B.C.'s roadmap for improving mental health and addictions care for people in B.C., with an initial three-year focus on:
  - Improving wellness for children, youth and young adults
    - We've opened nine new Foundry centres across the province, which act as "one-stop shops", with mental health, substance use, primary care, peer supports and employment services. There are two in development and eight more coming soon, for a total of 19 provincewide.
    - We announced integrated child and youth teams in two school districts, which provide mental health and substance-use resources, services and supports. Three more school districts will be announced in the next two years.
    - We've also invested \$12 million to assist school districts and independent schools with enhancing mental health and wellness supports and programs.

*We have opened 17 new urgent and primary care centres to help people who don't have a family doctor get access to the care they need. And there are more to come.*

- Supporting Indigenous-led solutions
  - We are working with the First Nations Health Authority on 29 new mental health and wellness initiatives that are designed and led by First Nations throughout B.C.
  - We've invested \$20 million to support the renovation, replacement and construction of First Nations-run treatment centres and \$23.25 million for Indigenous land-based healing over three years.
  - We have also invested \$24 million to support a First Nations-led response to the overdose emergency over three years.
- Improving access and quality of care
  - We expanded access to low- or no-cost counselling services in 29 community organizations over the past three years.
- ▶ To better support students and children, we are making record investments in B.C.'s education system.
  - In 2019, we invested in 5,725 new student seats, part of 12,390 to date; we invested in 18 seismic upgrades or replacements, part of 47 to date, and six of which are complete; we funded five property purchases for future schools, part of 12 to date; and we built 45 new playgrounds, part of 100 to date.
  - We invested \$6 million into the ERASE (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) strategy to help kids dealing with mental health issues, substance use and gang violence.
  - We've ensured all B.C. school districts and independent schools now have SOGI-inclusive codes of conduct in place, so schools are safe for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.
  - In April 2019, we announced that all schools must offer free menstrual products in their washrooms, so all students have stigma-free access.
- ▶ We are breaking down barriers for people by making post-secondary education and skills training more accessible and affordable.
  - In February 2020, we announced the new B.C. Access Grant, which will help students, who might not otherwise have the means get a post-secondary education.
  - This year, we added 321 early childhood education spaces, 1,200 new tech spaces, and 268 health spaces.
  - In 2019, we announced \$15 million to support skills training and employment programs for young adults and \$9 million for co-op or work-integrated learning.
  - More than 1,200 former youth-in-care have accessed tuition-free post-secondary education.
  - More than 20,000 students are now accessing tuition-free Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning programs.



*Our additional health-care assistant seats will help people get the care they need, when they need it.*

# Building a resilient economy – before and after COVID-19

Our government understands that making life better for people is the true measure of a strong economy. Our work continues to show that investing in people pays dividends.

- ▶ British Columbia ended the 2019-20 fiscal year as the only province with triple-A credit ratings from the three major international rating agencies, zero operating debt and a strong fiscal foundation.
- ▶ As part of our CleanBC plan, we are supporting investments in projects that help people and communities reduce pollution, increase energy efficiency and support a low-carbon economy that creates jobs and opportunities for all British Columbians.
- ▶ We are working with partners to strengthen and diversify the forest sector, so it can continue to sustain communities that rely on it.
  - We launched two new programs that provide direct support to forestry workers impacted by challenges in the Interior forest industry.
  - Our regionally-driven renewal of the province's Interior forest industry and our Coast Forest Sector Revitalization Initiative will help us develop competitive, sustainable futures for forest companies, workers and communities that depend on both Interior and coastal forest industries.
  - We changed our building code to allow wood-construction buildings to reach 12 storeys, a full year ahead of the national building code.
- ▶ B.C.'s record \$40-billion investment by LNG Canada is creating jobs and economic activity, now and for the future, and will produce one of the world's cleanest LNG facilities.
  - Construction on the LNG Canada export facility and its connecting pipeline is underway and currently employing more than 2,000 people.
  - In Spring 2019, we passed legislation that brings together the final fiscal elements of the policy framework for natural gas development in B.C. This will secure thousands of well-paying jobs for British Columbians and help us uphold strong environmental protections.
- ▶ We joined the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority and FortisBC to establish the first ship-to-ship LNG marine refuelling (bunkering) service on North America's west coast.
- ▶ To help local governments in the northwest take advantage of opportunities offered by business investments in the region, we announced a \$75-million Northern Capital and Planning Grant for distribution to 26 local governments. This is on top of last year's \$100 million in grant funding for northern communities.

*We are increasing the number of WorkBC Centres, so people with barriers to employment have better access to services that help them re-enter the workforce, access training opportunities and find good jobs.*



- ▶ We extended the new mine allowance to 2025 and, to help companies purchase machinery and equipment for pollution control and management, we removed geographical constraints on PST exemptions.
- ▶ A key shared priority with the BC Green Party caucus is B.C.'s tech sector, which is leading the nation in revenue growth and job creation, with more than 10,900 companies employing over 123,000 people – an increase of nearly 7,000 people in just one year.
  - Innovate BC is accelerating the growth and success of B.C. companies by providing resources and market opportunities for innovations that solve challenges and drive competitiveness in B.C. industries.
  - The Emerging Economy Task Force presented its final report to government in March 2020. It identified trends and opportunities that can help B.C. stay at the leading edge of global economic development.
  - We are investing in the Alacrity Cleantech Program, which helps B.C.'s clean tech companies enter into new international markets.
  - We announced the vision for the City of Surrey as a second downtown, with an innovation corridor and a Quantum Algorithms Institute, which will help drive economic development, and technology and innovation opportunities into Surrey and the Fraser Valley.
- ▶ B.C.'s Innovation Commissioner from 2018-2020, Dr. Alan Winter, prepared the report, "Putting Innovation to Work for British Columbia: Growing B.C. Companies," as a final summary before concluding his two-year term. Our government is committed to building on his work by growing tech adoption and enablement throughout the economy.
- ▶ To expand local food production in our province, increase access to local food in our public institutions, and bring increased prosperity and economic stability to farmers, ranchers and producers, we're creating new opportunities through Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC.
  - We created the Food Security Task Force to find new ways to use technology and innovation to strengthen B.C.'s agriculture sector and grow the economy.
  - We are making efforts to revitalize the Agricultural Land Reserve, preserve farmland and support and encourage farming in B.C.
  - The \$143-million provincial-federal BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund is advancing work to enhance salmon habitats and secure the sustainability of wild Pacific salmon and wild fish stocks. To date, BCSRIF has supported 41 projects totaling almost \$70 million in funding.
- ▶ Tourism is an important economic force in B.C. and our government is working to position B.C. as a preferred destination to visitors from around the world.
  - We opened a project office and pocket gallery in Vancouver Chinatown to continue planning for a Chinese Canadian Museum. This builds on the feedback from the public engagement held in early 2019.
  - We launched a provincewide engagement to modernize the Royal BC Museum, so we can protect this important history and bring the building to modern seismic and accessibility standards.



*Indigenous businesses throughout the province now have a dedicated Export Navigator advisor to help them grow by reaching new markets outside of B.C.*

- We created Pathways to Sport, a new strategic framework that will guide government investments in increasing sport participation, strengthening athlete development and enhancing event hosting opportunities for B.C. communities.
- ▶ Our government is reaching out to trade partners around the world to expand markets and attract investment.
  - In June 2019, Premier John Horgan participated in a trade mission to Europe and strengthened relationships and business ties in the U.K. and the Netherlands, promoting B.C.'s clean tech, energy and renewable energy sectors.
  - In November 2019, our government launched a new international engagement framework that will position B.C. as a clean, premium supplier of goods and services, leverage federal resources, and prioritize markets and new opportunities for B.C. businesses.
- ▶ We are investing in safer, smarter and more affordable ways for people to get around.
  - In early 2020, we welcomed ride-hailing services to B.C., and now have the highest safety standards in North America for ride-hailing services.
  - We restored service on 10 ferry routes that were cut in 2014, restoring 2,700 round-trip sailings for people living in coastal communities.
  - We are helping to deliver lasting, effective and fair solutions for the people of Metro Vancouver by funding 40% of the capital costs of the Mayors' Council 10-Year Vision for a modern, integrated and affordable transit system.
  - We launched the new "Move. Commute. Connect." strategy to boost safe, accessible active transportation.
- ▶ We announced new funding to bring high-speed internet to many more rural and Indigenous communities in B.C., as connecting people helps them do business online, work remotely, access vital services and stay in touch with friends and family.
- ▶ Our government is supporting the arts and culture industry, so B.C. continues to grow a diversified economy and healthy, more inclusive communities.
  - We increased funding to the BC Arts Council, and this year they awarded 1,885 grants to support artists and arts and culture organizations in 200 communities around the province.
  - We renewed funding for Amplify BC, which invests in B.C. artists, live music events, music companies and helps grow the music industry.



*Our Provincial Nominee Program Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot will attract entrepreneurs from around the world to establish businesses in regional communities and grow local economies.*

# Advancing reconciliation together

Our government is committed to working with Indigenous peoples and communities to advance true and lasting reconciliation.

- ▶ On November 28, 2019, we became the first province to pass legislation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes in law the rights of Indigenous peoples. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act gives us a path forward on reconciliation that respects Indigenous people's human rights and creates clarity and predictability for all people in British Columbia.
- ▶ In August 2019, we shared nearly \$200 million with the B.C. First Nations Gaming Revenue Sharing Limited Partnership, so First Nations can invest in self-government, cultural revitalization and services that make life better for families. This was the first two years of funding from a commitment to share \$3 billion over the next 25 years, which means First Nations can plan for the long term and invest in the services they decide their communities need to thrive and prosper.
- ▶ Our government, the First Nations Summit and the federal government reached an agreement on a new treaty policy that will guide the modernization of treaty making in the province, creating transformational opportunities that help support strong, healthy and thriving Indigenous communities.



*Our province is the first to pass legislation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

# Creating a strong and sustainable future

Our government is leading the way in building a low-carbon economy that creates jobs and opportunities for people, while protecting our air, land and water.

- ▶ We introduced legislation that requires government to provide detailed reports every year in the legislature on progress made toward our CleanBC targets.
- ▶ In May 2019, we passed the Zero Emission Vehicles Act (ZEVA), which means all new light-duty cars and trucks sold in the province will be clean energy vehicles by 2040.
- ▶ As part of growing our innovation economy, and supporting environmental protection and transportation connectivity, we are launching the Clean Grid Initiative, in partnership with Washington State, to be powered as much as possible from abundant, affordable, clean electricity.
- ▶ We came together with the 'Namgis, the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis and Mamalilikulla First Nations, and B.C. salmon farming companies Cermaq Canada and Mowi Canada West, to mark the decommissioning of five salmon farms and announce new funding for three First Nations projects to help assess, restore and monitor wild salmon habitat in the Broughton area.

*Through CleanBC, eligible families can receive up to \$14,800 on rebates for energy-efficient home improvements and up to \$5,000 on rebates for purchasing an electric vehicle.*



# Lifting people up

## Our government is working to fight inequality and break down barriers that hold people back.

- ▶ To improve access and inclusion for people with disabilities, we are working on B.C.'s first-ever accessibility legislation. More than 6,000 people participated in public consultation to help inform the development of this legislation, which will also be guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the principle of "nothing about us, without us."
- ▶ To further help lift people out of poverty, we are increasing the minimum wage in a predictable and measured way, to at least \$15.20 by 2021. Effective June 1, 2019, the minimum wage increased to \$13.85, and on June 1, 2020 to \$14.60.
- ▶ In March 2020, we introduced changes to the Employment Standards Act to provide up to five days of paid leave for employees impacted by domestic or sexual violence.
- ▶ We also made amendments to the Labour Relations Code in 2019 to provide greater protections and job security for workers, and more stable and harmonious labour relations for employers and unions.
- ▶ As part of our work to re-establish the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner and promote and protect human rights in B.C., we appointed the new Human Rights Commissioner.
- ▶ Food security grants, funded by the Province and distributed through the Victoria Foundation, are supporting rural and remote Indigenous communities in B.C. in food sovereignty and resilience, sustainability, and access to traditional foods

*In 2019, we launched the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network of community-based organizations working together to eliminate racism and discrimination, and build a safer and more inclusive province for everyone.*

# Making life better

Our government will continue to make choices every day that put people first. COVID-19 has challenged and changed our province, but we have taken critical steps to protect people's health, homes and incomes. Now, under the guidance of Dr. Bonnie Henry, we are turning our attention to recovery. For our government, recovery means more than just returning to what we had before. Together, we will build a stronger, more resilient B.C. by putting people at the centre of every decision we make. We're going to keep working hard to make life better for all British Columbians.









