



Speech from the Throne



At the Opening of the
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42nd Legislature

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Delivered by:

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Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Manitoba

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Madame Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature.

We are gathered on Treaty One Territory and acknowledge that Manitoba is located on the Treaty Territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Ojibway Cree, Inuit, Dakota and Dene Peoples.

Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis, and we acknowledge that northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

As Manitoba's 26th Lieutenant Governor, I welcome you to fifth session of the 42nd Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.

We express our sincerest sadness on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty's unparalleled lifelong commitment to service and duty throughout the Commonwealth is truly an inspiration to us in this chamber, in our public service, and in our communities.

We welcome the ascension of King Charles III to the throne and acknowledge the role of the Crown in Manitoba's history and constitution.

From his first official visit in 1970 to his most recent in 2014 when he was present in this chamber, His Majesty has had a special relationship with our province.

The Crown underpins our constitutional relationships with the federal and provincial governments, and Indigenous communities.

It is a reminder to government that our power to govern rests elsewhere and it is entrusted to elected governments to exercise on behalf of, and in the interest of, the people.

I also express sincere gratitude to the Honourable Janice Filmon for serving as Manitoba's 25th Lieutenant Governor. She served Manitoba with dignity and grace.

Today, Manitoba is at a crossroads with tremendous potential ahead as we continue these early days of moving beyond the pandemic. Signs of recovery surround us as Manitobans literally step out into the world once again with a renewed sense of hope and optimism.

But significant challenges remain as Manitobans carry the burden of high inflation and cost of living increases, making it difficult for so many to make ends meet.

Our government's role is to be a help to Manitobans with measures like our Affordability Package, to help families and seniors most in need, with tax relief measures for everyone and with supports for our small business community.

Our government's role is also to fight to help our health care community heal with innovative programs and initiatives to shorten wait times for surgical and diagnostic services and supports that rebuild, retain and retrain our network of front line health care professionals who continue to suffer the most.

Our government also thinks of our young people and our seniors and the tremendous burden they carried through the pandemic. Walking alongside them, we will continue to strengthen and expand services in mental health and addictions to ensure that, as a community and a province, we recover together.

Left behind are the vestiges of human suffering that we experience everyday in a violent crime rate that is escalating and must be arrested. Working in partnership with so many community organizations dedicated to our sense of safety, our government has said enough is enough as it introduces tough new measures to support police while also addressing on a significant way, the root causes including poverty and homelessness.

Together, we have faced what historians will no doubt call the greatest challenge in generations. It has been an easy path for no one, but our government will continue to tackle all challenges with a renewed sense of vigour. We will not give up fighting to right our great province for the benefit of our children and seniors, our doctors and nurses and teachers, our business community and every citizen who calls this great province home.

A year ago, my predecessor laid out our government's vision and priorities for the remaining years of its current mandate.

These priorities included a focus on reducing surgical and diagnostic backlogs, promoting economic recovery, improving our competitiveness to attract more investment, addressing labour supply needs and investing in infrastructure and communities and significant efforts towards reconciliation.

Progress has been made but much more needs to be done.

In the coming year, we will further commit to:

- Helping Make Our Communities Safer
- Helping Families Make Ends Meet
- Strengthening Health Care and Reducing Surgical and Diagnostic Backlogs
- Helping Make Manitoba More Competitive
- Helping Protect Our Environment, Climate and Parks
- Helping Build Stronger Communities
- Advancing Reconciliation

Our government will continue to listen to and work with Manitobans to accomplish our shared goals.

Helping Make Our Communities Safer

Throughout our province, communities are confronted with unprecedented concerns over violent crime and public safety.

Our government will continue to work collaboratively with all police agencies alongside all levels of government to ensure the resources needed to make our communities safer are available and investments are made strategically and focused on protecting our citizens.

Our government will continue to tackle the underlying issues of homelessness, addictions and mental health by providing increased supports for front-line law enforcement officers through technology, specialized training, increased police presence and support for more officers.

These measures will provide the tools and staffing necessary to deal with those who have resisted help, preyed on others and chosen a life outside the law.

Our government understands that without addressing the root causes of crime, we will not succeed in ensuring families across the province feel safe.

Manitobans experiencing homelessness deserve a safe place. For the first time in more than two decades, our government properly addressed the funding and moderation of our shelters with a recent announcement of a \$15 million investment.

Early next year, as part of Manitoba's first-ever homelessness strategy, we will include funding for non-profit organizations who partner with us so that they can provide enhanced and sustainable services.

Our recent investment of \$1.7 million in N'Dinawemak's 24/7 shelter ensures that those in need have a safe, warm place to spend the night.

Violence against women and girls, and incidence of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, continues to be a priority for our government. The first progress report and update to the gender-based violence framework will be released in the coming months.

Our government is not only putting additional funding into homelessness initiatives, but we will contribute additional funding to help police deal with serious street crime, gang and organized crime prosecutions.

Over the next number of months, in collaboration with frontline officers, other levels of government and key stakeholders, my government will continue to strive toward providing a greater sense of safety whether you are going downtown to work, to sporting events or on a family outing.

We recently announced more than \$3.2 million to invest in intensive bail supervision and high-risk warrant units to ensure the most violent criminals do not remain on our streets.

They will be properly monitored upon release to decrease the instance of repeat offence.

This will help us find and apprehend the most violent criminals responsible for committing the most heinous crimes in our communities.

The Downtown Community Safety Partnership is making strides in creating a safer city centre. Earlier this month, we extended funding to the DCSP with a \$3.6 million grant.

Working with our community partners, a renewed and enhanced camera network system will provide even more eyes on the ground to make downtown safer for everyone.

Crimes targeting children are of the utmost concern for our government. To stop those preying on our children, we will increase funding that targets gang activities and child exploitation.

Helping Families Make Ends Meet

We know that in Manitoba and across the country, families and individuals are grappling with the rising cost of living. Everything from gas to groceries is getting more expensive as a direct result of rising inflation and the federal carbon tax.

Our government has and will continue to listen to the needs of Manitobans.

We have heard, we have acted and we will continue to fight to help families make ends meet.

Earlier this year, we introduced new taxation measures, as well as the \$87 million Family Affordability Package to help families with children, seniors living on a fixed income and vulnerable Manitobans.

We have also established two refundable tax credits in relation to the new affordability payments for families with children and low-income seniors.

Families with children under the age of 18 with a household income of under \$175,000, receive a Family Affordability Cheque of \$250 for the first child, plus \$200 for each additional child.

This means an average Manitoba family with two children will receive a \$450 cheque in their mailbox.

And, seniors will receive a \$300 Seniors Affordability Cheque.

We are confident this will help ease the cost of living, especially for those who need it most.

In recent months, our government also moved to raise the minimum wage.

And it will reach \$15 per hour in October 2023.

In 2023, the Education Property Tax Rebate will provide even further assistance with an increase for residential and farm properties to 50 per cent from 37.5 per cent in 2022, increasing the average rebate for a homeowner to \$774 in 2023 from \$581 this year.

Manitoba Public Insurance has issued rebates, averaging \$700 over the last two years.

And we will continue to do even more as we strive to help make life more affordable for all Manitobans with a pledge to continue to look at new supports as they are needed. As we head into the winter and the holiday season, our government is particularly mindful of additional cost pressures and will stand with all Manitobans.

Our government values Manitoba Hydro, the resource it is for Manitobans and the key driver it is for our economy.

Manitoba Hydro has been historically mismanaged by previous governments.

Significant increases to funding for the Public Utilities Board will strengthen its ability to fulfill its independent regulator role, reviewing rate applications and acting in the best interests of Manitoba ratepayers.

Our government will financially stabilize Manitoba Hydro as a crown corporation. We have taken actions before and we will take even more action in the months to come.

Our actions will secure Hydro's future. We will lead in providing clean hydroelectric power for Manitobans and their businesses among the lowest rates in the country for years to come.

Additional announcements will be made in the weeks ahead as we work to ensure Hydro continues to be affordable for Manitoba ratepayers.

Strengthening Health Care

Manitobans deserve consistent, accessible healthcare and it is time for Manitobans to stop waiting for the care they deserve.

We are solution-focused and open to innovation and new ideas, especially from health care practitioners.

Our focus on putting patients first will ensure the changes we make today will benefit Manitobans today for decades to come.

Partnerships are integral to finding solutions and will be pursued when they benefit all Manitobans. Other provinces have demonstrated that a blended public-private delivery system works. We will continue to secure partnerships to ensure we explore any and all avenues to get Manitobans the help they need now.

Fundamentally, Canada needs to invest in people and in facilities.

This year, our premier chairs the Council of the Federation.

It is notable that the council, made up of all Canadian premiers, is calling upon the federal government to restore our fair share of health care funding.

Federal contributions are now less than half of what they were when Canada's public health system was first implemented.

Provinces alone cannot fund all the investments needed in health care nor should we.

Our government will continue to fight for our fair share of federal funding for health care.

Like all other Canadian provinces, Manitoba is facing a shortage of trained health care professionals. Last year, we committed to establishing 400 new nurse training seats within the province but we are prepared to do so much more.

As recently announced, we will add 2,000 more professionals to our health care system through our aggressive \$200 million multi-year health human resource action plan. Manitobans have been seeking a comprehensive human resource plan and, in this initiative, we will focus on recruiting, retaining and retraining professionals in an environment that is anchored in respect.

Our investment of \$110 million in the Surgical and Diagnostic Task Force is making noticeable progress addressing backlogs with innovative ideas.

Cataract surgery case backlogs have dropped dramatically from 1,200 cases in February to 116 cases in August of this past year.

As well, the number of backlogged orthopedics total hip and knee replacements has fallen from 1,557 in February to 1,140 in August.

We know that much more needs to be done and we are prepared to take the bold steps necessary to further reduce wait times for Manitobans in need of care.

Modern health care facilities are a critical part of a strong health care system which is why we continue to build. Our initial \$812 million commitment outside of Winnipeg includes new hospitals for Neepawa and Portage la Prairie, in addition to other health-care facility enhancement projects in Brandon, Steinbach, Dauphin, Selkirk, Ashern, and Winkler.

Today, our government is making an even greater commitment with a multi-year, multi-billion dollar capital investment in our hospitals.

This unprecedented investment in Winnipeg hospitals will ensure Manitobans get the best care possible in the most modern of facilities.

Across Canada, many seniors suffered horribly through the pandemic.

To better protect and safeguard them, we are committed to further improving our long-term care homes as a demonstration of care, concern and respect to the generations who have committed so much to Manitoba.

Like never before, the demand for mental health services and treatment for addictions is on the rise, nation-wide, making timely access increasingly difficult.

Since 2019, we have invested a record \$58 million in innovative programs to increase and improve mental health and addictions services across the province.

To ensure everyone seeking treatment is given an opportunity to be healthy, our government is making a significant investment to increase and support up to 1,000 treatment spaces.

Care that is recovery-oriented helps reduce deaths which is why we must continue to invest in saving the lives of so many precious family members.

Child and youth suicide is a national crisis requiring strong federal leadership. No family, and no community should suffer from the needless loss of life.

Suicide crises are most acute within Indigenous communities.

Building on our existing five-year roadmap for mental health, we will complete and implement a provincially-coordinated strategy for suicide prevention focusing on youth and at-risk communities.

Our government is committed to collaborating with Indigenous communities and the federal government to bolster regional health care and mental health and addictions services.

Education

The hallmark of a successful education system is one which provides a strong, cohesive continuum of learning from childhood to adulthood in safe, secure environments.

Transformational investments in child care, education and advanced education are critical to preparing young Manitobans for their future.

To address the need for affordable and accessible high-quality early childhood education, especially in rural communities, we are investing up to \$70 million to fund up to 17 new facilities to create more than 1,200 new spaces.

To strengthen the sector and encourage more individuals to pursue a career in early childhood education, an increase to operating grants is planned for early in the new year to support increased wages.

As the workforce grows, more investments will be made to add more spaces.

Our province is also making unprecedented investments in K to 12 education.

We are on track to deliver on the \$1.6 billion, four-year funding guarantee with over \$1.3 billion invested in the first three years, including more than \$460 million for 2022/23.

We will be creating both a teacher registry and an independent body to improve accountability and transparency related to educator misconduct in K-12 schools.

Our government will continue to work with community agencies, policing services and department stakeholders to prevent child exploitation – be it online or in schools.

Growing the workforce is a priority and Manitoba's supporting investments in adult, continuing and post-secondary education are on track.

It is essential that we strengthen our collaboration with post-secondary institutions and businesses to identify skills and labour needs and respond to the training, research and development needs of Manitoba businesses, including the manufacturing sector.

Our government is considering all post-secondary program proposals that will help address labour shortages and foster economic growth.

Government is also taking a close look at ensuring equitable funding across post-secondary institutions.

Our government will work with colleges to refine their College Growth Proposal to address labour and skills shortages.

Earning micro-credentials is becoming increasingly important, and our colleges are adapting programs to serve students, employees and businesses.

A comprehensive review to inform the development of an Adult Education Strategic Plan is underway on how best to retrain Manitobans to address high demand, well-paying trades in our province.

Promoting skilled trades as a strong career path will help Manitoba build and support a skilled, diverse workforce.

A new income support program to address the unique needs of people with severe and prolonged disabilities will be launched next spring.

And, the *Journey to Independence Fund* will be introduced to help prepare Manitobans for better job prospects and community participation.

Making Manitoba More Competitive

Manitoba's workforce is projected to grow by 3.7 per cent by 2026.

Nearly a third of job openings over the next five years are expected to be new jobs created by economic growth, and six out of ten will require post-secondary education.

The Conference Board of Canada shows Manitoba's real economic growth will rise again this year, although inflation and higher interest rates may impact that growth.

To make us more competitive, our government has and will continue to make strategic investments in venture capital and infrastructure to position our province to capitalize on developing global economic growth opportunities in green energy, digital services, sustainable agriculture, manufacturing and critical minerals.

Earlier this year, we announced a \$50 million investment into the Manitoba Venture Capital Fund. As Manitoba companies use the fund to grow from within or choose to locate in Manitoba, our government will make further investments to ensure the financing required at all growth stages of a company are available and in place.

Already, this initial investment has generated more than \$100 million in private sector interest.

The Communities Economic Development Fund supports northern economic development by providing a reliable source of capital for northern business development.

The fund will soon reopen its business loan program to support key sectors of a growing northern economy and help fill financing gaps for Manitoba businesses.

Manitoba is in a unique position economically, with gateways to trade in the north, the south, the east and the west.

Our vision and strategy is to build on our multi-modal transportation hub and trade gateways, to forge a more prosperous future for all Manitobans.

Helping to create a more competitive province will allow us to get growing while we are weathering the economic storm.

Investments will strengthen and complement existing projects, including the Winnipeg Perimeter Freeway Initiative, the CentrePort Rail Park, and the Hudson Bay rail line and completing the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway to the Ontario border.

Accelerated investment in these key trade corridors will maximize our trade capacity. A recent \$40 million commitment to CentrePort will stimulate high-paying jobs essential to economic growth.

We will continue to work with the City of Winnipeg as they develop their transportation master plan.

Northern Manitoba's success is essential to our province's long-term economic sustainability.

The recent announcements of \$74 million in the Hudson Bay rail line will guarantee continued service to remote communities and will attract increased investment in the Port of Churchill.

The dividends flowing from those northern critical infrastructure investments will be in the form of new jobs.

In this tumultuous time, people, companies and investors are recognizing that Manitoba is the answer to many of the world's problems.

The world has discovered that the combination of Manitoba's critical mineral and strategic resources, our affordable, reliable, renewable energy, and our highly skilled workforce will be key to creating the materials and products that will drive the world's energy transition. This is best illustrated by the record investment by global companies in mineral exploration in Manitoba last year.

We are regaining our reputation as a leading mining jurisdiction.

While the world grapples with the food insecurity caused by Russia's aggression, Manitoba's agricultural industries have rebounded to record yields, helping feed and driving economic growth.

And soon products and resources from across the west will reach markets around the world using western Canada's northern transportation corridor. From the Rockies to Hudson Bay, Manitoba will lead the development of the northern trade corridor.

Manitoba is also experiencing unprecedented interest from global manufacturing businesses seeking to shorten their supply chains and reduce the carbon intensity of their products.

With assets like CentrePort, our affordable, clean energy advantage and our unique multimodal transportation infrastructure, Manitoba has the answer for the world's manufacturing and supply chain challenges.

As part of our mineral strategy, our government will incent capital investment to process Manitoba's critical minerals right here in Manitoba.

The Manitoba Protein Advantage Strategy will make Manitoba an even greater standout in protein industry development, with more investment and more jobs.

We have seen historic investment in key protein processing facilities in recent years and our government will continue to focus on attracting world leading industry partners.

To help ranchers recover from climate-change driven droughts and floods, a temporary rent reduction on agricultural crown lands will be provided in 2023 to 2025.

These rent reductions will provide almost \$4 million in support.

To contribute to our economic competitiveness, red tape reduction through regulation reform and modernization continues.

Economic reconciliation, key to building a stronger province for everyone, will continue with Indigenous Peoples by removing barriers to full participation in Manitoba's economy, ensuring access to education and training, and revenue sharing.

Manitoba's film and television production industry is experiencing significant growth, attributable to the Manitoba film and video production tax credit.

The industry is worth almost \$400 million, and it can reach half a billion.

To get there, we require more film crews and more investment in training Manitobans, building on the new regular direct air access to Los Angeles.

Helping Protect Our Environment, Climate and Parks

Advancing economic activity and job creation are key to our province's future, and so is environmental protection and conservation.

Our government made substantial investments in water management, conservation, and protection, and more will follow.

Water is our most valued resource, and every drop counts.

To secure Manitoba's water future and advance our environmental, economic, and community priorities, the action plan for our recently announced water strategy framework will be released by spring 2023.

A thorough review of all water legislation to guide our water management will be initiated.

Manitobans value their provincial parks and a capital plan for major investments in our parks will be announced.

A Trails Strategy and Action Plan to enhance and support a high quality network of accessible trails, will soon be announced. It will create a path forward providing health, social and economic benefits for trail users and communities across the province.

We will revitalize our Conservation Officer Service, the third largest peace officer force in Manitoba, by hiring more officers and outfitting them with better equipment and technology to combat dangerous activities such as poaching, night hunting and road hunting. This investment, in both the tools and the people will ensure safety in our parks, in our forests, on our lakes and in our fields.

Our government will continue with significant investments to achieve critical environmental goals, such as the \$167 million investment in the second phase upgrades to the North End Sewage Treatment Plant.

Manitoba continues to pursue further emissions reductions across all sectors of the economy, and we will do our share to help Canada meet its international obligations.

Our comprehensive provincial adaptation strategy will reduce the impact of extreme climate events such as floods, droughts, wildfires and more.

Working with stakeholders, we will modernize the waste diversion and recycling framework to divert more materials from our landfills; and create new business and job opportunities within a circular economy.

Helping Build Stronger Communities

Investments in our communities, recreation, arts and culture, and newcomers to our province creates prosperity and a good quality of life.

Many organizations face reduced revenues and fundraising challenges.

The Arts, Culture and Sport in Community Fund will invest a hundred million dollars in communities to maintain and strengthen the programs and facilities that are an important part of this place we call home.

Notably, the first year's allocation will be fully subscribed.

Public libraries are important institutions within our communities and we will continue to strengthen our public library system with increased funding.

Every region of the province benefits from tourism revenue and jobs.

Updated forecasts project Manitoba tourism revenues to return to 2019 levels in 2023, a year earlier than original estimates.

Immigration is a key component of our labour supply plan.

Throughout our history as a province, Manitoba has been a destination for those fleeing conflicts around the world, seeking peace, and the opportunity for a better life for their families.

Manitoba continues to welcome and support newcomers to our province.
Last year, we welcomed more than 16,000 newcomers to our province.

And this year, in little over six months, the welcoming and generous spirit of Manitoba was exemplified by how we united as community, to welcome more than 12,000 people fleeing the brutal and unjust war in Ukraine.

We are the gold standard across Canada for welcoming refugees from Ukraine. This demonstrates, once again, that when we work together, we win together.

The final report of Manitoba's Immigration Advisory Council will be delivered soon with recommendations to enhance the success of Manitoba's provincial nominee program.

Our renewed Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement will ensure our province is able to attract potential immigrants based on provincial economic priorities, while collaborating on the settlement and integration of newcomers.

Conclusion

We have outlined our plan for this upcoming year.

- We will help make our communities safer.
- We will help families make ends meet.
- We will strengthen our healthcare and reduce wait times.
- We will make Manitoba more competitive.
- We will protect our environment, climate and parks.
- We will help build stronger communities.

Estimates for the requirements for the public services of the province for the next fiscal year and the public accounts for the last fiscal year will be placed before you for your consideration.

I leave you now to the faithful performance of your many duties and trust that in meeting them, you may have the guidance of Divine Providence in all your deliberations.

I wish hope and opportunity for all Manitobans.

God bless Canada.

God save the King.