

New Era REVIEW

Three Years of Action - New Era Promises Made And Kept

The government was sworn into office on June 5, 2001, with a four-year mandate to build a New Era of hope and prosperity for all British Columbians. It was a mandate for change and renewal, based on a platform of 201 specific commitments that the government promised to undertake.

Three years into its term, the government has now completed or advanced work on 97 per cent of those New Era commitments – 194 priorities fulfilled or underway as the government works to revitalize the economy, restore sound fiscal management and put patients, students and people first.

In some cases, the actions taken to date are only the first steps towards completion of ongoing commitments. Over the next year, the government will continue work on these initiatives, as well as the remaining three per cent of its commitments. The following is a summary of the progress made to date.

The “90 Day” Agenda:

<p>✓ Introduce a dramatic cut in personal income taxes, within 90 days.</p>	<p>Done. Income tax cuts averaging 25 per cent were fully implemented in January 2002. British Columbians now enjoy the lowest rates of personal income tax in Canada on their first \$64,900 of income.</p>
<p>✓ Pass real Balanced Budget legislation, to make balanced budgets mandatory by our third full budget and to hold all ministers individually accountable.</p>	<p>Done. Under the <i>Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act</i>, passed in August 2001, 20% of ministers’ salaries is withheld pending compliance with ministry and government budget projections.</p>
<p>✓ Pass real Truth in budgeting legislation that ensures all provincial finances are fully, accurately and honestly reported under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Budget Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act</i> was passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore education as an essential service under the Labour Code to ensure that no child’s right to an education is denied during school strikes and lockouts.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Pass Merit Employment legislation, to restore a professional, non-partisan public service, appointed strictly on merit and not on patronage. Restore a professional, non-partisan public service, based on merit – not patronage.</p>	<p>Done. Legislation passed in August 2001 strengthens merit-based recruitment by establishing a Merit Commissioner – appointed by unanimous recommendation from a special legislative committee – to audit hirings and report directly to the legislature.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a “Waste Buster” Website for taxpayers to help identify, report and stamp out government waste.</p>	<p>Done. The Web site went online in August 2001.</p>

<p>✓ Restore workers' democratic right to a secret ballot vote on certification under the Labour Code and ensure the same rules apply for certification as de-certification.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore all workers' right to negotiate contracts by outlawing sectoral bargaining.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Restore open tendering on government contracts to allow fair competition for businesses and provide better value to taxpayers.</p>	<p>Done, in open cabinet, July 2001. The new Procurement Services Act was passed April 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Appoint an independent task force to review the options, models, costs and effectiveness of private sector pay equity legislation, and make recommendations to the Legislature.</p>	<p>Done. The task force reported to the legislature in February 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the HCL union-only "hiring hall" requirement on highway construction projects and government-sponsored silviculture contracts.</p>	<p>Done, in open cabinet, July 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate government subsidies to businesses that give some companies an unfair advantage over their competitors.</p>	<p>Done. The Industrial Development Incentive Fund was reduced by \$100 million to prohibit any new loans; 22 other government subsidy programs were eliminated in January 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Pass a Community Charter to outlaw provincial government "offloading" of costs onto municipal governments, and to give local governments greater autonomy and better planning tools to reduce pressure on property taxes.</p>	<p>Done. <i>The Community Charter was brought into force on Jan. 1, 2004.</i></p>
<p>✓ Appoint an independent public inquiry into the fast ferry fiasco and the mismanagement of BC Ferries.</p>	<p>Done. The review was completed in December 2001, and a new structure for BC Ferries announced in November 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that Crown corporations are subject to local zoning and land-use by-laws.</p>	<p>Done. Crown corporations have been advised to honour the policy, and a cross-government working group has been established to formally implement it.</p>
<p>✓ Scrap photo radar, to put police officers back on the street, enforcing traffic safety.</p>	<p>Done. The photo radar program ended in June 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a fixed provincial election date under the BC Constitution Act, to ensure provincial elections must be held on a fixed date every fourth year, or immediately if any government loses a confidence vote in the Legislature.</p>	<p>Done. Under the <i>Constitution (Fixed Election Dates) Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001, the next election is scheduled for May 17, 2005.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a fixed date for the tabling of the provincial budget, and a set legislative calendar.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Budget Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act</i> establishes the third Tuesday in February as budget day. The government has also established a set calendar for sittings of the legislature.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a new Premier's Council on Technology to help bridge the "digital divide" and recommend strategies to enable all British Columbians to participate in and benefit from increased jobs and opportunities in the new economy.</p>	<p>Done. The Premier's Technology Council has released five detailed reports and is developing strategies to make B.C. one of the world's top 10 technology centres by 2006.</p>
<p>✓ Repeal the NDP's "fixed wage" legislation that has added huge costs to taxpayers on public construction projects.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Skills Development and Fair Wage Repeal Act</i> was passed in August 2001.</p>

<p>✓ Restore workers' right to their pensions by repealing the law that allows some pension plans to suspend pension benefits for early retirees who choose to continue working in their previous field of employment.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Skills Development and Labour Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Conduct a comprehensive audit of the Province's finances within 90 days and make the results public.</p>	<p>Done. The independent financial review, completed in July 2001, identified a major structural deficit that must be addressed through measures to control spending and revitalize growth.</p>

A New Era of **Higher Paycheques:**

<p>✓ Cut the base personal income tax rate to the lowest rate of any province in Canada for the bottom two tax brackets, on the first \$60,000 of income, within our first term. Honour this commitment without cutting funding for health or education.</p>	<p>Done. Since January 2002, British Columbians have paid the lowest rate of personal income tax in Canada on their first \$60,000 of income. In addition, the top marginal rate is the second-lowest in the country.</p>
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A New Era of **Accountability:**

<p>✓ Honestly balance the budget, without cutting funding for health care or education.</p>	<p>Done. The government introduced a balanced budget in February 2004. Funding for health has increased by \$3 billion since 2000-01, to \$11.3 billion in 2004-05; K-12 education spending is being increased by \$313 million over the next three years; and advanced education funding will rise \$105 million over the next three years.</p>
<p>✓ Increase funding for the Auditor General's Office, to help identify and prevent waste, and to increase value-for-money.</p>	<p>Done. Funding has increased by 20 per cent from \$6.6 million to \$7.9 million in Budget 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the use of Special Warrants, to prevent government from spending your money without prior legislative approval.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Budget Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act</i>, passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Establish service plans that include measurable performance standards and targets for all programs that are annually audited and published, for all taxpayers to see.</p>	<p>Done. Three-year ministry service plans were released in February 2002, with the government's first provincial budget.</p>
<p>✓ Require Crown corporations to be directly accountable to a committee of the Legislature for their financial management and budget plans.</p>	<p>Done. The Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, activated in August 2001, is responsible for reviewing Crown corporations.</p>

A New Era of **Hope:**

<p>✓ Protect private property rights to prevent government from expropriating assets without fair compensation.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The <i>Protected Areas Forests Compensation Act</i>, passed in May 2002, ensures compensation for the establishment of parks and protected areas. Legislation was passed in May 2002 to provide a settlement with Carrier Lumber.</p>
<p>✓ Modernize the Residential Tenancy Act to properly protect renters and landlords in plain language everyone can understand.</p>	<p>Done. The new <i>Residential Tenancy Act</i> was passed in November 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Restore an independent BC Utilities Commission, to re-regulate BC Hydro's electricity rates.</p>	<p>Done. The independent BC Utilities Commission regulates hydro transmission, generation and distribution services in B.C. – including the terms and rates of transmission services.</p>

<p>✓ Establish regional transportation authorities that are accountable to local taxpayers and give local communities more control over their transportation needs and planning.</p>	<p>Initiated. Work is expected to resume in 2005, including full consultation and implementation to meet this commitment.</p>
<p>✓ Require taxpayer approval by regional referendums prior to authorization of any new type of TransLink tax or levy.</p>	<p>Ongoing. No new types of taxes have been approved.</p>
<p>✓ Not sell or privatize BC Rail.</p>	<p>Done. BC Rail has not been sold or privatized. Under the new BC Rail Investment Partnership, BC Railway Co. remains a provincial Crown corporation, with the tracks, railbed and right of way protected under public ownership.</p>
<p>✓ Protect BC Hydro and all of its core assets, including dams, reservoirs and power lines under public ownership.</p>	<p>Done. Under the government's new Energy Plan and the BC Hydro Public Power Legacy and Heritage Contract Act, BC Hydro must not sell or otherwise dispose of protected assets.</p>
<p>✓ Designate BC Ferry routes as an essential service, to ensure that water transportation routes are not shut down by labour disputes.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Coastal Ferry Act</i>, passed in March 2003, designates BC Ferries as an essential service.</p>
<p>✓ Introduce greater competition in auto insurance, to create increased choice and reduce motor vehicle premiums.</p>	<p>Done. The Insurance (Motor Vehicle) Amendment Act, which comes into effect in fall 2004, levels the playing field between ICBC and private insurers for optional insurance. The Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, passed in May 2003, made the B.C. Utilities Commission the independent regulator of ICBC's basic auto insurance rates. Proposed regulation changes have been published for consultation.</p>
<p>✓ Implement a flexible, innovative program to increase the supply of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Done. Since June 2001, funding has been committed through BC Housing for construction of 3,400 new units under the Provincial Housing Program. By 2006, through the Independent Living BC program, 3,500 additional independent living spaces for seniors and persons with disabilities will be built in co-operation with non-profit, community, municipal and federal partners.</p>
<p>✓ Focus resources on improving Northern and rural transportation.</p>	<p>Ongoing. As part of the Heartlands Economic Strategy, the province is investing \$1.3 billion in transportation infrastructure over three years, more than two-thirds of which will go toward rehabilitating and improving highways, rural side roads and oil and gas roads in the Heartlands.</p>

A New Era of Prosperity:

<p>✓ Cut the "red tape" and regulatory burden by 1/3 within three years.</p>	<p>Underway. The net reduction in regulatory requirements is 113,440 as of March 31, 2003; gross reduction is 139,421.</p>
<p>✓ Make the Workers' Compensation Board more responsive to workers' and employers' needs.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Reforms to sustain the system in the future were passed in June 2002, reforms to improve the appeals process were passed in October 2002, and a new board was appointed in December 2002. A new Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal was in place March 1, 2003, to provide fair and timely final appeals.</p>
<p>✓ Increase access to Crown lands and resources, to create jobs in tourism, mining, forestry, farming, ranching, and oil & gas.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. A maximum of 140 days has been set to process applications. An integrated agency, Land and Water BC, was created in February 2002 to co-ordinate land and water applications. Amendments to the <i>Oil and Gas Commission Act</i>, passed in May 2002, streamline permitting and application reviews.</p>

<p>✓ Phase out taxes on investment and productivity to stimulate economic growth and job creation, in keeping with our commitment to balance the budget and protect health care and education funding.</p>	<p>Done. The provincial sales tax was eliminated on production machinery and equipment bought by eligible manufacturers, and by logging, mining and energy businesses, in July 2001. The corporate capital tax rate on non-financial institutions was eliminated September 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Stimulate tourism with a plan to improve operators' ability to successfully compete for visitors from around the world.</p>	<p>Done. The province's tourism program was released in May 2004 at the Spirit of 2010 Business Summit.</p>
<p>Aggressively support and champion British Columbia's bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics.</p>	<p>Done. B.C. won the 2010 Olympics on July 2, 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Push for provincial control over the management and revenues of BC's offshore fisheries, to improve fisheries management and protect fishery jobs.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. The province established the Pacific Council of Fisheries Ministers with the federal government in July 2003, providing more input into a broader range of fishery issues. Analysis is underway to guide strategic direction to renew our fisheries and focus provincial efforts.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the backlog and delays in Crown land applications, which have cost over \$1 billion and 20,000 lost jobs.</p>	<p>Done. The backlog of 1,536 Crown land applications has been eliminated. Delays were addressed by redesigning and simplifying the application process, cutting processing time in half.</p>
<p>✓ Encourage mineral exploration which has dropped by 80% under the NDP.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A 20% flow-through share credit was implemented in July 2001 to encourage mineral exploration, with a commitment to match any extension of the federal flow-through credit. The Mine Health, Safety and Reclamation Code is now results-based and streamlined. The B.C. Mining Task Force is making recommendations on how to revitalize the mining industry in the province. Spending on exploration rose from \$29 million in 2001 to nearly \$55 million in 2003; another substantial increase is expected in 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Consider the Northern Development Commissioner's forthcoming report on offshore oil & gas.</p>	<p>Done. A scientific review panel report was released in May 2002. \$2 million has been provided to the University of Northern BC for technological research and preparation of a provincial work plan. A dedicated offshore oil and gas team, established in January 2003, is consulting stakeholders and working to ensure offshore oil and gas resources are developed in a scientifically and environmentally responsible manner.</p>
<p>✓ Make the Agricultural Land Commission more regionally responsive to community needs.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>Agricultural Land Commission Act</i>, passed in May 2002, establishes a new structure and six regional panels.</p>

A New Era of **Employment**:

<p>✓ Give workers and employers greater flexibility in Employment Standards to negotiate mutually beneficial relationships that help them compete and prosper.</p>	<p>Done. Amendments to the <i>Employment Standards Act</i>, passed in May 2002, allow workers to negotiate more flexible work schedules, and impose the strongest mandatory penalties in Canada. Employment Standards regulations for specific sectors are under review to ensure the rules attract jobs and investment to B.C.</p>
<p>✓ Focus on reducing BC's youth unemployment, which is the worst of any province west of Quebec.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A first-job wage has been implemented to encourage employers to hire youth entering the workforce. In April 2004, 14,000 more youth were working than in December 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Work with employers, post-secondary institutes and the Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission to increase training and apprenticeships in trades and technical sectors.</p>	<p>Underway. The Industry Training Authority established in January 2004 is working to increase the number of trainees by 30 per cent over three years, and has approved new credentials and training. 42 pilot projects have been launched to test new training and delivery ideas; 16 are completed. 44 extra technical training programs have been funded at 11 institutions. A new trades and applied learning campus has been announced for Kwantlen University College, as well as an aerospace campus for BCIT and a new Okanagan College that will expand trades training.</p>

A New Era of **Sustainable Forestry**:

<p>✓ Establish a working forest land base, to provide greater stability for working families and to enhance long-term forestry management and planning.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Enabling legislation passed in October 2003, and a final designation is expected in 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Streamline the Forest Practices Code to establish a workable, results-based Code, with tough penalties for non-compliance.</p>	<p>Done. The new Forest and Range Practices Act was passed in November 2002 and regulations came into effect in January 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Cut the forestry regulatory burden by one-third, within three years, without compromising environmental standards.</p>	<p>Done. In fact, the forestry regulatory burden has been reduced 50 per cent.</p>
<p>✓ Apply 1% of all direct forest revenues, not including "super stumpage," to global marketing of BC's forest practices and products.</p>	<p>Done. A product development and international marketing fund was established in March 2002. In November 2003, the Premier broke ground on the first phase of the \$12-million Dream Home China project, designed to showcase B.C. wood-frame construction. The first phase of the project will be complete in November 2004. China has also adopted a building code for wood-frame buildings and is undertaking research that will enable imports of Mountain Pine Beetle wood. The BC Market Outreach Network was established and promotes B.C.'s sustainable forest management to international customers around the world.</p>
<p>✓ Create a market-based stumpage system that reflects global market realities and local harvesting costs.</p>	<p>Underway. A market-based timber pricing system was introduced for the Coastal forest industry in February 2004; it will be introduced in the Interior later this year.</p>
<p>✓ Either fix or scrap Forest Renewal BC, starting by removing the political appointees on the Board.</p>	<p>Done. A new Forest Investment Account has been established, to focus resources on land-based activities, marketing and value-added growth.</p>
<p>✓ Invest in research to promote forest stewardship.</p>	<p>Ongoing. To date, more than \$20 million has been invested in forest research and science under the new Forest Investment Account.</p>

✓ Protect private property rights in treaty negotiations.	Done. Private property rights are protected under B.C.'s publicly endorsed principles for treaty negotiations. This principle is part of four recently signed Agreements-in-Principle.
✓ Work to expedite interim measures agreements with First Nations, to provide greater certainty during treaty talks.	Ongoing. The province's economic development fund provided support to 145 projects worth \$26.3 million to First Nations throughout BC.
✓ Increase the Allowable Annual Cut over time through scientific forest management, proper planning, and incentives to promote enhanced silviculture.	Ongoing. The allowable annual cut has increased since June 2001 to address the mountain pine beetle, and a new Forest Investment Account has been established to improve forest management.
✓ Eliminate "waterbedding."	Underway. The market-based timber pricing system introduced on the Coast in February 2004 eliminated waterbedding. A market-based timber pricing system for the Interior will be introduced later this year.

A New Era of **Environmental Stewardship:**

✓ Adopt a scientifically-based, principled approach to environmental management that ensures sustainability, accountability and responsibility.	Done and Ongoing. Sustainability principles have been adopted for major policy initiatives, regional moratoriums on grizzly bear hunting have been implemented, and new regulations have been put in place for salmon aquaculture to provide one of the world's most comprehensive regulatory regimes.
✓ Pass real comprehensive ground water legislation to improve the quality of British Columbians' drinking water.	Underway. Government passed the Drinking Water Protection Amendment Act in October 2002. Regulations governing the protection of groundwater under the act are under development.
✓ Oppose the Sumas 2 power project and phase out Burrard Thermal.	Ongoing. The province, together with residents of the Fraser Valley, won a favourable decision at the National Energy Board and is now opposing Sumas 2 in its application seeking Leave to Appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal. The government's new Energy Plan confirms the goal of phasing out Burrard Thermal.
✓ Ensure mining or logging is not permitted in parks.	Ongoing. Amendments to the <i>Mineral Tenure Act</i> , passed in May 2002, create a two-zone system that clearly defines parks, ecological reserves and protected heritage property as closed to mining.
✓ Acquire and preserve Burns Bog	Done. In March 2004, a final deal to permanently acquire and preserve Burns Bog was announced by Premier Campbell, together with the federal government, the GVRD and the Corporation of Delta.
✓ Create a BC Trust for Public Lands to encourage and facilitate the expansion of public lands through private land donations.	Underway. Amendments to the Land Title Act help facilitate private donations of land for public purposes.
✓ Pass a Living Rivers Act to protect and improve BC's river systems with scientifically-based standards for watershed management, enhancements to fish-habitat, and a 10-year program to correct past damage.	Underway. The province established a Living Rivers Trust Fund in October 2002 to provide stable funding for watershed restoration projects, and a comprehensive strategy to repair past damage is being drafted.
✓ Work to develop an internationally accepted standard for "eco-labelling" of BC forest products.	Ongoing. Almost all major forest companies now comply with one or more international standards. The new Forest and Range Practices Act upholds B.C.'s world-renowned high environmental standards.
✓ Maintain the longstanding ban on bulk water exports.	Done. The ban has been maintained.

<p>✓ Replace the NDP's blanket moratorium on grizzly bear hunting with a proper peer review by scientists and biologists, and local moratoriums where grizzly populations are endangered.</p>	<p>Done. The blanket moratorium was replaced in July 2001 with regional moratoriums and proper peer review by scientists and biologists.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that major capital spending decisions and land-use decisions involving the Agricultural Land Reserve, new parks, land claims and tenure reform are decided by Cabinet in public, and not behind closed doors.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. Cabinet has made policy decisions publicly on new parks, the Agricultural Land Reserve, four Agreements-in-Principle (all approved in Open Cabinet), and the Lions Gate Bridge project.</p>
<p>✓ Promote clean and renewable alternative energy sources, like wind, thermal, solar, tidal, biomass and fuel cell technologies.</p>	<p>Ongoing. In September 2003, the province announced the largest purchase of green energy in B.C.'s history, which will provide about \$800 million in private-sector investment in 16 power projects and enough electricity to meet the needs of 180,000 homes. Under the province's energy plan, the goal of deriving 50 per cent of new power from clean sources is providing independent power producers with opportunities to develop clean energy sources like micro-hydro, cogeneration, wind, solar and fuel-cell power.</p>

A New Era of **Connectivity:**

<p>✓ Work to extend high-speed, broad-band Internet access to every community in BC through wireless technology, cable, phone lines and fibre optics.</p>	<p>Ongoing. NetWork BC, launched in February 2004 will connect all communities in B.C. by 2006 and build the next-generation voice and data network for B.C.'s extended public sector.</p>
<p>✓ Use public assets, like roads, railways and power lines to leverage rapid growth in communications infrastructure and broadband capabilities.</p>	<p>Underway. A new partnership announced in April 2004 with Telus and the Columbia Mountain Outreach network will link Kootenay communities. With the creation of LWBC, the province has streamlined the process of gaining access to provincial rights of way to leverage rapid growth in telecommunications infrastructure.</p>
<p>✓ Provide incentives to make computers and Internet access more affordable for all families.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The government is working with government data networks, the extended private sector, telecommunications vendors, communities and the federal government to leverage funding to make Internet access more affordable for all families. Community Access Terminals have been installed in all Service BC/Government Agent offices. The province also increased the library grant in fiscal 2004/05. BC Public libraries provide over 1,200 terminals connected to the Internet for community use.</p>
<p>✓ Put more computers in schools and increase resources to improve computer literacy for students of all ages.</p>	<p>Ongoing. This year, 154 schools in rural communities are being upgraded to high-speed Internet to ensure students and educators in the Heartlands can access current technology and state-of-the-art electronic teaching tools. All remaining low-speed schools will be upgraded by March 2005. Three school districts have been selected to pilot state-of-the-art electronic learning programs and develop models that can be used across the province. Government also funds Computers for Schools BC, which has donated 60,000 computers to schools in every one of B.C.'s 60 school districts. The province is also providing schools with an exciting, new educational computer game, Crosscountry BC, that will help improve student achievement by increasing students' knowledge of British Columbia's geography and economy.</p>

A New Era for **Students:**

<p>✓ Work with the federal government to ensure that our tax treatment of stock options and capital gains is globally competitive.</p>	<p>Done. Lower personal income tax rates (provincial and federal) and reduced inclusion rate for capital gains brought down the tax rate on stock options from 38.5 per cent in 2000 to 21.9 per cent in 2002. Federal changes that delay the time when the tax is triggered on stock options have made the tax treatment of stock options in B.C. competitive with other jurisdictions in Canada and the U.S.</p>
<p>✓ Lead annual international 'Leading Edge' marketing missions to promote BC technology and investment.</p>	<p>Done. The first Leading Edge marketing mission was to California in November 2002. The Premier also led trade missions to Houston, Texas in October 2003 and China and India in November 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Restore BC as a world leader in E-government, to give all citizens and businesses better on-line access to core services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A new government Enterprise Portal was introduced in September 2003. The Registry Statutes Amendment Act, passed in April 2002, provides for online filing of forms and documents and reduces costs associated with paper filing. E-filing changes have also been made to the Mineral Tenure Act, Petroleum and Natural Gas Act and Motor Vehicle Act. The Government Authentication Project has commenced; it will implement a common approach for all ministries, central agencies and statutory public bodies to identify, authenticate and authorize users to access BC Government services delivered online and through other service delivery channels. In May 2004, the Chief Information Officer released an e-BC Strategy Paper as a guide for current and future e-government work.</p>
<p>✓ Use on-line procurement technology to save costs and maximize taxpayers' value-for-money on all major government purchases.</p>	<p>Underway. The new BC Bid, launched in February 2003, is the first fully electronic two-way bidding system in Canada. In November 2003, the province launched pilot projects in four ministries, setting the stage for paperless purchasing and payment in all ministries by September 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Cut the cost of paper flow by digitizing all government data, forms and information possible.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is establishing a system to manage government's electronic records in support of e-service delivery. The <i>Registry Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed in April 2002, provides for online filing of forms and documents and reduces costs associated with paper filing. E-filing changes have also been made to the <i>Mineral Tenure Act</i>, <i>Petroleum and Natural Gas Act</i> and <i>Motor Vehicle Act</i>.</p>
<p>✓ Double the annual number of graduates in computer science, and electrical and computer engineering, within five years.</p>	<p>Underway. 2,485 new student spaces have been allocated to participating public post-secondary institutions since 2002-03 as part of an overall investment of \$150 million in student spaces over five years.</p>
<p>✓ Increase investment in technology research and post-secondary skills and training.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province launched a \$45-million Leading Edge Endowment Fund in April 2002 and announced a \$7.5-million B.C. regional innovation chairs program in February 2003. Through its continued commitment to the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, since 2001 government has also committed \$160 million for research infrastructure throughout B.C.</p>

A New Era for *Knowledge Workers*:

<p>✓ Maintain and increase education funding levels by increasing revenues through economic growth.</p>	<p>Done. The annual budget for the Ministry of Education will increase by \$313 million by 2006-07.</p>
<p>✓ Establish specific goals and outcomes to measure the success of educators in public schooling.</p>	<p>Underway. New accountability contracts have been established, district review teams make school boards publicly accountable for student achievement, and School Planning Councils are responsible for developing an annual plan for each school, including goals and outcomes for improvement.</p>
<p>✓ Devote more of each education dollar to improving the quality of education, and less to bureaucracy.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Ministry savings were passed on to districts through one-time grants of \$44.6 million in 2001-02, \$50 million in 2002-03 and \$32 million in 2003-04. A new, simplified funding formula gives school districts the flexibility to allocate funding to meet the needs of their students. The province and 45 school districts have formed a new buying group that will help districts save up to \$14 million on computer software and videos used to teach students.</p>
<p>✓ Support more flexibility and choice in public schooling.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Amendments to the <i>School Act</i> give students the choice to attend any school in the province, provided space is available, while requiring districts to create catchment areas to ensure students can attend their neighbourhood schools. Over 40 choice schools have been established in B.C.</p>
<p>✓ Give local school boards more autonomy and control over the delivery of education services, subject to provincial curriculum and testing standards.</p>	<p>Done. The new funding formula reduces the number of funding categories from 60 to six, giving boards the flexibility to allocate funds to meet the unique needs of their students. In addition, since September 2003, 20 school districts have set up 43 new specialty schools to better meet local student needs.</p>
<p>✓ Give school boards multi-year funding envelopes, to improve long-term education planning and budgeting.</p>	<p>Done. Three-year funding envelopes were provided with Budget 2002 in February.</p>
<p>✓ Work with educators and employers to expand job training and skills development opportunities.</p>	<p>Done. A new Industry Training Authority has been established that will increase apprenticeships by 30%.</p>
<p>✓ Maintain current funding arrangements for independent schools.</p>	<p>Done. The cap has also been lifted on enrolment in distance education programs offered by independent schools, continuing the commitment to provide parents and students with more choice.</p>
<p>✓ Provide teachers with more technology training.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Three school districts have been selected to pilot state-of-the-art electronic learning programs that will include training for teachers.</p>
<p>✓ Eliminate the PST on basic school supplies purchased by Parent Advisory Councils, which volunteer their time and effort to raise money for public schools.</p>	<p>Done. Budget 2002 provided PST refunds on purchases by Parent Advisory Councils.</p>
<p>✓ Guarantee that parents of students attending schools are entitled to volunteer their services, provided it does not result in the displacement of existing staff services.</p>	<p>Done. The <i>School (Protection of Parent Volunteers) Amendment Act</i> was passed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that music, arts and physical education curriculums are fully funded in BC's public schools.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The new graduation program to begin in September 2004 requires music, arts and physical education as areas of study in the graduation portfolio.</p>

<p>✓ Improve school accreditations.</p>	<p>Done. Amendments to the <i>School Act</i> passed in May 2002 create a new accountability cycle – including new accountability contracts with districts – which requires each school, district and the Ministry of Education to review performance measures and develop goals and strategies for improvement. As well, in October 2003, the B.C. College of Teachers established new standards of competence to strengthen teacher accountability.</p>
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A New Era of **Advanced Education:**

<p>✓ Establish a “Leading Edge Endowment Fund,” based on a cost-sharing partnership with the private sector, to establish 20 permanent BC Leadership Chairs across the province in the fields of medical, social, environmental and technological research.</p>	<p>Done. The \$45-million fund has been launched and the first chair established for spinal cord research. Under the fund, in 2002, the province provided \$2.2 million to fund two chairs in aboriginal early childhood development. An additional \$7.5-million B.C. regional innovation chairs program was announced in February 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Support the 5% tuition cut and tuition freeze and fully fund it in the current fiscal year to offset costs to post-secondary institutes.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>✓ Consult with educators, students and administrators on the hidden costs to students and institutes of previous tuition freezes that were not properly funded by government and that have reduced student access and reduced course offerings.</p>	<p>Done. Legislation granting B.C.’s public post-secondary institutions autonomy over tuition-fee levels was passed in April 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Strengthen our network of colleges, institutes and on-line learning throughout the province.</p>	<p>Underway. BCcampus was launched on October 30, 2002, to provide learners with a single point of contact for distance education courses and programs offered at all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in B.C. In addition, the province allocated 620 online student spaces to public post-secondary institutions in 2003-04. The merger of the Open College and Open University with University College of the Cariboo will form a special-purpose university with a strong commitment to excellence in online and distance learning.</p>
<p>✓ Increase research funding for colleges, universities and institutes.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Since June 2001, B.C. has committed over \$900 million to enhance post-secondary research and access.</p>
<p>✓ Expand training and post-secondary programs to graduate more Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses and Registered Nurses.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Since 2001, the government has added approximately 2,000 new education spaces for nurses in local colleges, institutes, university colleges and universities throughout the province. More than 700 nurses have been funded to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses. This allows non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to be eligible to return to nursing..</p>
<p>✓ Develop a Rural and Remote Training Program that provides forgivable loans to BC students attending accredited nursing and medical schools who agree to practice in a rural or remote community in BC.</p>	<p>Done. The loan forgiveness program was established in August 2001. Loans are forgiven at a rate of 33% per year for each year of service in rural or remote communities.</p>
<p>✓ Increase the number of medical school graduates over the next five years.</p>	<p>Underway. The medical school at UBC is being expanded and will include new satellite campuses at UNBC and UVic. Medical-school spaces will almost double, to 224 from 128, by 2005.</p>
<p>✓ Train more social workers to meet the critical skills shortage that has developed under the NDP.</p>	<p>Done. The government funded 20 new post-secondary spaces in 2002-03 for social work and child protection, and another 20 in 2003-04.</p>

A New Era of **Health Planning:**

<p>✓ Ensure that BC health care is universal, accessible, portable, comprehensive and publicly administered, consistent with the five principles of the Canada Health Act.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities have established three-year Health Service Plans, updated annually, to reform and renew patient services for each region, along with new province wide standards for care.</p>
<p>✓ Establish provincial health standards that ensure all citizens in every part of the province are entitled to equitable, reliable, high quality health services.</p>	<p>Done. Provincewide access standards have been established for emergency, acute care and specialty services. The government was the first administration ever in this province to implement a system of performance agreements with health authorities, which holds these bodies accountable for the services they deliver and how they are delivered.</p>
<p>✓ Develop performance measures that are annually audited and publicly reported for each health standard, to ensure provincial and regional health authorities are accountable for fulfilling their duties to provide the prescribed levels of patient care.</p>	<p>Done. Accountability contracts and measures have been established, along with three-year health service plans for each authority. The government has also provided health authorities with three-year funding commitments, updated annually, to enable them to plan and act with certainty. Our government is continuing to redesign the health care system so that funding for health authorities is spent efficiently and focused on public health and patient care.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a 10-year human resource plan, that properly provides for the training, recruitment and retention of physicians, nurses, specialists and other health care providers in every area of the province, and that addresses critical skills shortages and staffing levels in under-serviced areas.</p>	<p>Underway. As a first step, programs have been launched to expand the supply of nurses and doctors. Since September 2001, government has committed \$59 million to the nursing strategy, which includes the creation of approximately 2,000 new education spaces for nurses in local colleges, institutes, university colleges and universities throughout B.C. A total of 45 new spaces for nurse practitioners will be added. The province has also increased the number of nurses licensed to practice in B.C. by over 700 since 2001, and has funded more than 700 nurses to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses. This allows non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to be eligible to return to nursing.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a Hospital Facilities Plan, that identifies each health region's key capital requirements and funding priorities.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Ministry of Health Services is working with health authorities to develop and implement multi-year capital plans that address immediate and long-term needs in the hospital sector through service redesign and modernizing facilities.</p>
<p>✓ Develop an Intermediate and Long-Term Care Facilities Plan, that addresses the needs of our aging population and frees up existing acute care beds.</p>	<p>Underway. Health authorities are modernizing home and community care to provide more care options for seniors. This includes the creation of Independent Living BC to provide more independent housing options with support services.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a Medical Machinery and Equipment Plan that ensures existing medical diagnostic and care equipment is adequately staffed, fully utilized and properly maintained, and that provides for future investments in new equipment and technologies.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Ministry of Health Services is working with health authorities to develop a more strategic approach to capital planning and management, including maintaining and updating equipment, by developing multi-year capital asset management plans. To assist health authorities in meeting their identified needs, \$200 million in federal funding from the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal is being allocated for investment in diagnostic and medical equipment and training of specialized staff. The ministry has established a committee to advise on new technologies and priorities for improving health care delivery.</p>

<p>✓ Develop a comprehensive Technology Plan to assist health care professionals in delivering faster, more effective treatment to patients through new information technology and telemedicine.</p>	<p>Underway. The province is funding \$15 million in tele-health programs across B.C., including a new filmless medical imaging system launched in April 2003. Tele-health programs provide emergency and trauma, pediatric, maternity and mental health services for 30 communities. BC's CIO Council has developed a strategic plan on the main goals and priorities to support the health system and health service delivery, as well as a tactical plan. The ministry and its partners are also developing a strategic plan on the Electronic Health Record, as part of a comprehensive technology plan to assist health professionals and improve patient care across the province.</p>
<p>✓ Establish a Rural and Remote Health Initiative to ensure all families get the care they need, where they live, when they need it.</p>	<p>Underway. The province has funded \$58.5 million in incentives and benefits to attract doctors to rural practices. It established a rural specialist locum program to ensure continuous coverage during the recruitment process and introduced the first Interprofessional Rural Program in Canada to place students from various health professions in rural areas for training.</p>
<p>✓ Introduce a Rural and Remote Training Support program that provides financial and travel assistance to health care providers who want to update or upgrade their skills and training.</p>	<p>Underway. The government's Nursing Strategy provided more than 6,000 nurses with continuing and specialty training in much-needed nursing specialties, and the B.C. Ambulance Service has received \$30 million for new measures aimed at strengthening ambulance service across the province.</p>

A New Era of **Health Quality**:

<p>✓ Maintain this year's overall \$9.3 billion budget for health.</p>	<p>Done. In addition to maintaining funding, spending has increased.</p>
<p>✓ Increase future health care funding as economic growth increases government revenues.</p>	<p>Done. In fact, health funding now accounts for 43% of all government spending. Spending on health in British Columbia has increased \$3 billion since 2000-01.</p>
<p>✓ Work with front-line health care professionals to act on their ideas for maximizing the value to patients of every health dollar spent.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Dialogue on Health in October 2001 brought together 140 professionals, administrators and other experts. The Legislature's Select Standing Committee on Health held hearings in 10 communities and received 700 submissions for its December 2001 report on health-care renewal.</p>
<p>✓ Provide health regions and hospitals with 3-year rolling funding commitments (updated annually), to enable them to plan and act with certainty.</p>	<p>Done. Three-year rolling funding commitments, updated annually, were first provided with Budget 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Fully fund and implement the \$125 million mental health initiative.</p>	<p>Done. The government is implementing a \$263-million mental health commitment, including the \$125-million mental health plan and \$138 million for capital and facilities.</p>
<p>✓ Fund health regions at a level necessary to meet the needs of the people who live there, regardless of where a service is provided.</p>	<p>Done. Funding for B.C.'s six health authorities rose by \$132 million in 2003-04 to exceed \$6.1 billion. This is in addition to a 7.4% increase in Budget 2002. Base funding for health authorities will increase in 2004-05.</p>
<p>✓ Replace obsolete hospital equipment and ambulance equipment and ensure all equipment is fully utilized and properly maintained.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities are working to replace obsolete hospital equipment. This includes developing capital plans and identifying priorities for allocating \$200 million in federal funding from the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal. In addition, defibrillators have now been installed on all 450 B.C. ambulances.</p>

<p>✓ Fulfill BC's obligations under the Canada Health Act to properly fund and provide access to all medically necessary services.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Spending on health in British Columbia has increased \$2 billion since 2001/02 and will increase an additional \$1 billion by 2006/07.</p>
<p>✓ Focus funding on patient care, by reducing waste in the system and eliminating administrative duplication and costs from provincial government mismanagement.</p>	<p>Done. The number of health authorities has been reduced from 52 to six, to achieve greater efficiency. Health authorities are on target to achieve administrative savings of 7% - a total reduction of \$97.1 million by the end of 2004/05. Ministry administrative costs are being reduced by 43%, so those resources can be redirected to front-line services.</p>

A New Era for **Health Professionals:**

<p>✓ Provide assistance and opportunities to help nurses develop the specialized skills needed in intensive care units, emergency rooms and operating rooms.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The government's nursing strategy has helped B.C. gain over 700 nurses since 2001. It has also provided more than 6,000 nurses with continuing and specialty training in critical and emergency care, and helped nurses on workers' compensation and long-term disability to return to work.</p>
<p>✓ Increase training spaces and recruitment of foreign-trained nurses and physicians.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Since 2001, we have funded more than 700 nurses to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses. This allows non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to be eligible to return to nursing. Also, government is working with Health Canada to expedite international medical graduate assessment and with other partners to improve the provision of placements.</p>
<p>✓ Launch a massive recruitment drive to bring non-practicing RNs and LPNs back into our health care system.</p>	<p>Underway. The government's nursing strategy helped B.C. gain over 700 nurses who are eligible to work here. Since 2001, the province has funded more than 700 nurses to take refresher, qualifying or English-as-a-second-language courses, enabling non-practicing Canadian graduates or internationally educated non-practicing B.C. residents to become eligible to return to nursing.</p>
<p>✓ Increase locum support to relieve pressure and reduce workloads, to enhance health care professionals' quality of life.</p>	<p>Done. Funding for rural locum programs increased by 50 per cent to \$1.85 million in 2003-04 from \$1.25 million in 2001-02.</p>
<p>✓ Increase the number of residency positions in BC's hospitals in the next five years.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Government has introduced a \$134-million Life Sciences Initiative that will almost double the number of B.C. medical school spaces, to 224 from 128, by 2005, and open up new residency positions in B.C. hospitals outside the Lower Mainland. The new Life Sciences Building at UBC; Island Medical Program facility at UVic and Northern Medical Program building at UNBC will be complete by August 2004, making medical training available outside the Lower Mainland for the first time.</p>
<p>✓ Give ambulance attendants better access to training and better life-support and communications equipment needed to capitalize on those skills.</p>	<p>Done. \$30 million was allocated in May 2002 for ambulance services, including funding to upgrade 1,300 rural paramedics to Paramedic 1 level. Defibrillators are now in use on all 450 B.C. ambulances – \$780,000 was spent in 2001-02, plus \$350,000 last year.</p>

A New Era of *Health Services*:

<p>✓ Ensure that appointees to regional health boards are representative of their communities' needs and accountable for their performance in meeting provincial health standards.</p>	<p>Done. Six new health authorities have been established, new boards appointed and new accountability contracts and measures established. Through B.C.'s Board Resourcing and Development Office, board member appointments are carefully considered to ensure necessary skills for the effective management and delivery of health care. For the first time, the province has implemented a system of performance agreements with health authorities, which holds these bodies accountable for the services they deliver and how they are delivered.</p>
<p>✓ Pressure the federal government to restore all of the health care funding withdrawn through budget cuts.</p>	<p>Ongoing. As a result of the First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal, in February 2003, the federal government agreed to provide \$20 billion in new funding for patient care in Canada over 5 years, with an extra \$2 billion if there was a federal surplus in 2003-04. BC's share of the federal funding in 2004/05, including the share of the \$2 billion supplement, is \$529 million (\$398 million plus \$131 million supplement). There will also be an additional \$17 million from the Public Health and Immunization Trust. This money will be directly invested to further improve public health and patient care.</p>
<p>✓ Work with non-profit societies to build and operate an additional 5,000 new intermediate and long term care beds by 2006.</p>	<p>Underway. The province is developing new residential care beds, supportive housing and assisted living spaces to ensure seniors and people with disabilities have a range of housing and care options. As a first step, Independent Living BC was established in May 2002 to develop 3,500 independent living units with support services across the province.</p>
<p>✓ Provide expanded home care and palliative care services to assist chronically and terminally ill patients with supportive home environments, as an option to institutional care.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is finalizing an end-of-life care strategy for as the first step toward developing a health system that provides compassionate, competent and respectful care. In addition, an expanded palliative care drug benefits program enables British Columbians to receive care in the comfort of their home. The number of hospice beds have nearly doubled since 2001, and more beds are in planning.</p>
<p>✓ Build a unified, universal, and cost-effective health services information network that will improve care and reduce long-term costs.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is working with the health sector and Canada Health Infoway to create a provincial Electronic Health Record Framework that will provide integrated, higher-quality health care with greater efficiencies and few errors. The new Personal Information Protection Act, passed in October 2003, ensures that adequate privacy and security provisions are in place. The NetWork BC plan is building the next-generation public-sector data and voice network that will connect all health authorities in the province.</p>
<p>✓ Increase technology funding and digital infrastructure support to facilitate tele-health options that will expedite and improve treatments, and reduce travel requirements for Northern and rural residents.</p>	<p>Underway. The government is funding \$15 million in tele-health programs across B.C., including a new filmless medical imaging system launched in April 2003. Tele-health programs provide emergency and trauma, pediatric, maternity and mental health services for 30 communities.</p>
<p>✓ Develop a rural travel assistance program, to reduce rural patients' transportation and lodging costs to receive treatment that is not locally available.</p>	<p>Underway. A new \$5-million Rural Travel Assistance Program will assist patients who have to travel outside of their region to receive a higher level of care.</p>

<p>✓ Ensure that patients living at home in palliative or long term care are entitled to the same pharmaceutical benefits as they would have if they were in a hospital.</p>	<p>Underway. The province is reviewing the palliative care benefits program to ensure it provides terminally ill patients in their homes and residential care facilities with medication, medical supplies and equipment at no charge.</p>
<p>✓ Give all citizens better access to their medical records and treatment histories, and enhanced information privacy rights.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is working with the health sector and Canada Health Infoway to create a provincial Electronic Health Record Framework that will provide integrated, higher-quality health care with greater efficiencies and few errors. The new Personal Information Protection Act, passed in October 2003, ensures that adequate privacy and security provisions are in place.</p>
<p>✓ Support community services volunteers and repeal the NDP legislation that allowed government to expropriate community health facilities without compensation.</p>	<p>Done. The section of the <i>Health Authorities Act</i> allowing assets to be seized without compensation was repealed in August 2001.</p>
<p>✓ Protect current funding and existing levels of access to abortion services throughout the province, as a matter of confidence in government.</p>	<p>Done. Funding and access to abortion services has been maintained.</p>
<p>✓ Intensify efforts to promote wellness and preventative care through better education, dietary habits and physical activity.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Under its Picture of Health vision, the province has launched a wellness and prevention initiative that includes Action Schools! BC, introduced to address elementary students' physical activity levels and lifestyles. The province also has formed the Provincial Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance to strengthen chronic disease support and prevention. Through the Nurseline and other components of the B.C. Health Guide, British Columbians have 24/7 access to health-care information.</p>
<p>✓ Double the Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Fund to \$44 million, to promote physical fitness and participation in amateur sport.</p>	<p>Done. Funding has been increased to double the fund over four years.</p>
<p>✓ Enhance preventative drug and alcohol efforts, such as addiction counselling for new mothers and the reduction of fetal alcohol syndrome.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The Premier released Canada's most comprehensive fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) prevention strategy in September 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Work to minimize interjurisdictional overlaps that are adding confusion and costs to health care delivery.</p>	<p>Done. The number of health authorities has been reduced to six from 52, to provide greater efficiency and co-ordination within regions.</p>
<p>✓ Work with doctors, pharmacists and others to find a cost-effective alternative to reference-based pricing.</p>	<p>Done. A consultation panel completed a review of the Reference Drug Program and issued a report with recommendations for ensuring a sustainable, publicly funded PharmaCare program. The review focused on redesigning the PharmaCare program to manage costs effectively and identifying strategies to support appropriate and safe prescribing practices. It also included improved information sharing among physicians, pharmacists and the public to support decision-making, and consultation with health-care providers and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>✓ Provide better home support and home care services.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Health authorities are focusing their resources on direct patient care needs to enable people with high care needs to live in their homes as long as possible.</p>

A New Era for **Children & Families:**

<p>✓ Stop the endless bureaucratic restructuring that has drained resources from children and family services.</p>	<p>Underway. The Ministry of Children and Family Development has achieved its budget targets while ensuring that services to the most vulnerable children and individuals are protected. The ministry recently developed a new planning approach to eliminate duplication of services and has consolidated partnerships between communities and the ministry.</p>
<p>✓ Increase emphasis on early childhood intervention programs for families with special needs children.</p>	<p>Done. Since June 2001, funding for early childhood development has increased by \$50 million to \$348 million. In addition, the province has launched Children First learning initiatives in 17 B.C. communities that offer educational, physical and social support, which helps to identify children at risk and prevent crises before they reach school age. Infant Development Program funding has increased by \$2.1 million since 2001, and funding for early intervention therapies has increased by \$5.2 million, bringing expenditures in this area to \$21.5 million in 2003-04.</p>
<p>✓ Target child care funding to help parents who need it most.</p>	<p>Done. The government's child care strategy, released in November 2002, increases the number of eligible funded child care spaces to 70,000 from 45,000 and helps low-income parents meet child care costs. The income threshold for the parent subsidy increased \$100 in May 2003, extending subsidy availability to 3,000 children and benefiting 6,000. In 2003-04, an additional \$3.3 million in annual funding was added to the supported child care program for children 6 and younger. This funding has reduced waitlists and increased opportunities for aboriginal children to receive services, particularly in rural and remote communities.</p>
<p>✓ Focus on early identification of at-risk children, and measures aimed at preventing crisis situations before they arise.</p>	<p>Done and ongoing. The province has created or enhanced 122 family resource centres to help parents with young children, established Children First learning initiatives in 17 communities, directed funding to 37 aboriginal communities for culturally relevant early childhood development programs and funded a Success By 6 partnership with the United Way and the Savings and Credit Unions of BC. \$7.3 million has been reinvested for services for aboriginal children and families, and services to assist families to care safely for their children. Funding for a Provincial Consultant for Aboriginal Infant Development programs has been in place since 2003. This position enables training, co-ordination and development of new programs across the province. Infant Development Program funding has increased by \$2.1 million since 2001. Since April 2003, the province has provided direct funding of up to \$6,000 per year per child, to parents of children aged 6 to 18 with autism spectrum disorder. This is to assist them with the costs of autism intervention services during out-of-school hours. More than 1,700 children are receiving extended autism intervention funding.</p>
<p>✓ Increase child care choices for parents by encouraging the expansion of safe, affordable child care spaces.</p>	<p>Done. The government's new child care strategy, released in November 2002, increases the number of eligible funded child care spaces from 45,000 to 70,000. The province has also improved the funding formula for major capital projects supporting new child care spaces to benefit small urban and rural communities.</p>

<p>✓ Stop the expansion of gambling that has increased gambling addiction and put new strains on families.</p>	<p>Done. Cabinet approved a policy in January 2002 to issue no new licences for casino gaming tables or slot machines, except those required to honour existing legal obligations. The province provides \$4 million a year to fund a comprehensive problem gambling program that includes counselling services, a 24-hour toll-free help line, an informational Web site and industry training to addiction counsellors.</p>
<p>✓ Work with foster parents to help them improve care and placements of foster children.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province has developed a new regional support structure to help foster parents improve care and placement of foster children and provide them with new information resources.</p>
<p>✓ Enhance training, resources and authority for front-line social workers to properly protect children at risk and improve services to families.</p>	<p>Done. In 2002-03, 20 new post-secondary spaces were added for social work and child protection. Training for existing social workers has increased, as have options that now allow children to be placed in the custody of extended family members.</p>

A New Era for **First Nations**:

<p>✓ Give all British Columbians a say on the principles that should guide BC's approach to treaty negotiations, through a one-time, province-wide referendum, within our first year.</p>	<p>Done. The referendum was completed in May 2002. The referendum principles continue to be applied to treaty negotiations, including to the four recently signed Agreements-in-Principle.</p>
<p>✓ Ask an all-party committee of the Legislature to consult with British Columbians, including First Nations, to draft the referendum questions.</p>	<p>Done. The Select Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs conducted hearings in 15 communities and received 482 oral and written submissions.</p>
<p>✓ Increase efforts to protect and promote aboriginal languages.</p>	<p>Underway. In all, the province has allocated over \$2.8 million to aboriginal language preservation, including funding toward the development of FirstVoices.com, an innovative, Internet-based, language-preservation program.</p>
<p>✓ Fast-track treaty talks, to conclude fair treaty settlements.</p>	<p>Done and Ongoing. In the last year, Agreements-in-Principle have been signed with four First Nations: Lheidli T'enneh, Maa-nulth, Tsawwassen and Sliammon. These are based on the publicly endorsed principles for treaty negotiation. Instructions have been issued to all negotiators to identify opportunities for expediting agreements.</p>
<p>✓ Offer to negotiate a delegated, municipal-style of self-government with any First Nation that wants to move beyond the failed Indian Act.</p>	<p>Done and Ongoing. Cabinet has approved B.C.'s approach to governance negotiations with First Nations. This approach has recently been tabled at all Final Agreement tables and the province is now engaging in negotiations.</p>
<p>✓ Increase program funding, together with the federal government, to solve urban challenges and build capacity.</p>	<p>Done. In all, the province has signed over 300 treaty-related measures, economic measures, forestry direct awards, oil and gas consultations and parkland management agreements with First Nations. Notably, under the economic development fund, 145 projects worth \$26.3 million have been approved that promote First Nations participation in shellfish aquaculture, tourism, forestry, and oil and gas sectors, as well as the 2010 Games. Key urban initiatives include the Aboriginal Employment Partnership Initiative, which works toward increased aboriginal participation in the workplace. Recent partner agreements involve London Drugs, the Vancouver Police, and the BC Construction Association. The province has also committed \$120 million over three years in forestry revenue-sharing with First Nations.</p>

<p>✓ Seek clear direction from the Supreme Court of Canada on constitutional questions about aboriginal self-government.</p>	<p>Ongoing. There is a commitment to act where necessary but, as an alternative to the litigation process, the province has developed a new framework for negotiation of self-government arrangements consistent with the publicly endorsed referendum principles.</p>
<p>✓ Double the First Citizens' Fund to \$72 million to support native friendship centers, student bursaries and economic development programs.</p>	<p>Done. Funding has been increased to double the fund over four years.</p>
<p>✓ Create a permanent First Citizens' Forum that will provide aboriginal citizens living on and off reserves a direct means to communicate with government about their priorities and ideas to materially improve their quality of life today.</p>	<p>Done. Two forums have been held, in October 2002 and October 2003.</p>
<p>✓ Devote special attention and resources to addressing the challenges and needs of aboriginal women and youth, and to helping aboriginal families bridge the "digital divide."</p>	<p>Underway. The province has signed a memorandum of understanding to provide First Nations with greater independence in caring for children in need, allocated \$10 million to support aboriginal health programs through regional health authorities, dedicated \$800,000 to an aboriginal healing centre in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and supported the Nisga'a Lisims Government Network pilot project, which will deliver state-of-the-art, high-speed connections to four Nisga'a communities. The province has signed 10 aboriginal enhancement agreements with school districts and First Nations to improve aboriginal student achievement, and is working with 23 other school districts to conclude enhancement agreements, with the goal of having agreements with all 60 districts by 2005. The NetWork BC project will connect all First Nations communities with schools to high-speed Internet by 2006.</p>
<p>✓ Introduce a legislative framework for legally respecting aboriginal rights protected under the Constitution in the absence of treaties.</p>	<p>Done. As committed in the 2003 throne speech, the government has introduced a legislative framework for the accommodation of aboriginal rights through the provision of forest tenures and revenues to First Nations. B.C. has also signed a reconciliation protocol with the First Nations Summit to establish a new relationship of recognition and reconciliation with B.C. First Nations. A number of cross-government initiatives under this program are moving forward, including a plan to encourage the reintroduction of aboriginal place names.</p>

A New Era of **Public Service:**

<p>✓ Hold open Cabinet meetings at least once a month that are televised and broadcast live on the Internet.</p>	<p>Done. To date, 26 open cabinet meetings have been held.</p>
<p>✓ Give all government MLAs a meaningful new role in policy development and service planning through a new system of Cabinet decision-making.</p>	<p>Done. New government caucus committees have been established to review policies, programs and legislation. Private members have also been appointed to committees of cabinet.</p>
<p>✓ Give all MLAs and citizens a better voice in government through active legislative committees.</p>	<p>Done. All select standing committees have been active since 2001, and the number of public meetings and public reports has increased.</p>
<p>✓ Repeal the NDP "gag law" that restricts third-party advertising during election campaigns.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Election Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed October 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Amend the Election Act to eliminate loopholes on disclosures of financial contributions to parties and to include donations of labour.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Election Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed October 2002.</p>

<p>✓ Introduce free votes in the Legislature, to allow all MLAs to vote freely on behalf of their constituents on matters not specifically identified as a vote of confidence.</p>	<p>Done.</p>
<p>✓ Appoint a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform to assess all possible models for electing the MLAs, including preferential ballots, proportional representation, and our current electoral system.</p>	<p>Done. The assembly will report its findings by December 2004.</p>
<p>✓ Give the Citizens' Assembly a mandate to hold public hearings throughout BC, and if it recommends changes to the current electoral system, that option will be put to a province-wide referendum.</p>	<p>Done. As of March 2002, B.C. is now fully compliant with the Agreement on Internal Trade. B.C. led a successful national initiative to expand AIT rules to Crown procurement practices. Negotiations are underway with Alberta to achieve a comprehensive agreement on trade, investment and labour mobility.</p>
<p>✓ Outlaw donations from charities to political parties.</p>	<p>Done, under the <i>Election Statutes Amendment Act</i>, passed October 2002.</p>

A New Era of **Public Safety:**

<p>✓ Ensure all laws are equally applied and enforced for all British Columbians.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure auxiliary police officers are properly trained and armed to protect their communities.</p>	<p>Underway. Government has been working with the RCMP to develop an armed reserve/auxiliary force pilot project. The RCMP are currently completing their proposal.</p>
<p>✓ Pressure the federal government to fulfill its contractual obligation to fully fill all RCMP vacancies.</p>	<p>Done. Vacancies were filled.</p>
<p>✓ Hold the line on court fees, to ensure that everyone has affordable access to our justice system.</p>	<p>Done. Court fees have not increased.</p>
<p>✓ Fight child prostitution and youth crime with legislation aimed at providing greater protection to children at risk of exploitation and greater parental responsibility for children who commit property crimes.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Stakeholder consultation about legislation and services to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation will be held throughout the province during May, June and July 2004. Safe Care for British Columbia's Children: A Discussion Paper will allow stakeholders, families and communities input as government prepares legislation and designs the delivery of Safe Care services for youth at risk. The proposed legislation, for introduction in the spring 2005 session, responds to concerns raised about the Secure Care Act, passed in July 2000 but never proclaimed into law.</p>
<p>✓ Vigorously defend the Crown's ownership of provincial land and resources.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is working with the federal government to provide greater certainty over offshore oil and gas, and fisheries. In addition, the province is reinvigorating the treaty process to provide greater certainty about Crown land and access. The province has also revitalized the treaty process, achieving four Agreements-in-Principle that move B.C. towards increased certainty over the land, in terms of aboriginal title.</p>
<p>✓ Continue to pressure the federal government to scrap mandatory gun registration and put those resources into fighting crime.</p>	<p>Done. The province is no longer administering the registry and has notified the federal government on several occasions about its concerns with the program.</p>

A New Era of *Equality*:

<p>✓ Stand up for the equality of all Canadians and all provinces under the Canadian Constitution.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province is pressing the federal government to ensure that no jurisdiction bears an unfair burden under the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, and has aggressively pursued equitable funding arrangements under the First Ministers' Health Accord.</p>
<p>✓ Fight for BC's fair share of federal tax dollars through a more equitable distribution of federal government transfer payments and contracts.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Through the new Canada-B.C. Partnership, the province has secured an additional \$1 billion in investments from the federal government, including funding for the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre expansion, Olympic venues, transportation improvements and new parks.</p>
<p>✓ Work with other provinces to negotiate a more equitable federal equalization program that is consistent with the Constitution.</p>	<p>Ongoing. In response to a unanimous call from the provinces, the federal government removed the equalization ceiling in February 2003. B.C. continues to work toward a fair, equitable equalization program.</p>
<p>✓ Push to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers.</p>	<p>Done. As of March 2002, B.C. is now fully compliant with the Agreement on Internal Trade. B.C. led a successful national initiative to expand AIT rules to Crown procurement practices. Negotiations are underway with Alberta to achieve a comprehensive agreement on trade, investment and labour mobility.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure that our rural communities have the health and education services they need.</p>	<p>Ongoing. A new education funding formula, implemented in March 2002, provides supplementary grants for districts with unique student needs, enrolment decline and unique geographic factors. Rural health initiatives include expanded medical and nursing education spaces, new health authorities to improve regional services, and forgivable student loans for medical and nursing graduates who practice in rural communities.</p>
<p>✓ Insist on equal, non-discriminatory voting rights for all Canadians in respect of the governments that rule their lives.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Governance agreements accompanying Agreements-in-Principle with First Nations will enable them to form democratically elected and accountable governments. In addition, an amendment to the <i>Election Act</i> in spring 2003 brings the rules for prisoners voting in elections into line with a Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Work to ensure that all aboriginal governments have the same legal status in BC as they do in every other province.</p>	<p>Ongoing. B.C.'s publicly endorsed principles for treaty negotiations ensure aboriginal governments have the status and authority necessary to meet community needs.</p>
<p>✓ Invite all Members of the BC Legislature and all BC Members of Parliament to hold annual joint conferences aimed at publicly identifying and overcoming issues of regional alienation within Canada and BC.</p>	<p>Done. The first Provincial Congress was held in February 2002.</p>
<p>✓ Ensure all British Columbians have equal access to legal representation and justice.</p>	<p>Ongoing. The province has restructured legal services, introduced circuit courts and set up a 24-hour call centre, all to stabilize the legal aid system and ensure legal aid is available to British Columbians who need it most.</p>

