

Budget 2019: Thoughtful, measured, forward looking, safety and security

Written by Sylvia Jones

The Ontario Government has been hard at work preparing a budget that will be thoughtful, measured and forward looking. In the afternoon of April 11th, the provincial Budget for 2019 will be introduced. It will clearly outline our plan to restore fiscal balance in a responsible and sustainable manner. We will protect what matters most ? health care, education and other critical public services. Budget 2019 will continue to build on the 200 initiatives our government has implemented over the last 9 months, making Ontario open for business and always putting people first.

After 15 years of the previous government's fiscal mismanagement and high taxes, our government has put money back in people's pockets. We cancelled the cap-and-trade carbon tax, saving businesses \$880 million this year, and \$260 a year for each household. We introduced the most progressive income tax cut for low-income workers in a generation ? the Low-Income Individual and Families Tax Credit.

The interest payment on Ontario's debt is the fourth largest spending line in the budget, after health care, education, and social services. Every dollar spent on interest means one less dollar going to our hospitals, schools, and critical infrastructure.

Budget 2019 will be measured and thoughtful. We will not balance the budget at the expense of our critical programs, nor by making life harder for families in Dufferin-Caledon and Ontario by raising taxes. In fact, Budget 2019 will continue to strengthen public safety, ensure the security of Ontarians and protect essential services in this province, including our public health care and education systems. Our government puts people at the centre of every government decision.

Nine short months ago, our government immediately set out to address the fiscal imbalance. Whether it was reforming OHIP+ or removing underused landlines and fax machines in ministry offices, we found immediate ways to reduce costs and make programs and services more efficient and people-focused. By December 31st, we lowered Ontario's inherited deficit from \$15 billion to \$13.5 billion. Since June, we've added 132,000 net new jobs as a direct result of our government's policies.

Our government has remained focused on what's important to Ontarians, beginning with the need to restore accountability, sustainability and trust in government. We have continued to restore confidence in Ontario's finances and reducing the debt burden, while protecting critical public services. Budget 2019 will build on our progress to make Ontario the best place to do business, where jobs and prosperity can reach every corner of our province.