

# CHARTING A COURSE

A living policy document



DOUGALD LAMONT

for Leader of the  
Manitoba Liberal Party

[ournewway.ca](http://ournewway.ca)

I've been clear about why I am running for leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party.

For 40 years, as the economy has grown, too many Canadians and Manitobans have been left behind. People's lives are getting harder, bit by bit - for 17 years under the NDP, and it is only getting worse under the PCs. We don't think it has to be this way.

In 2016, Manitobans voted against the NDP because they wanted change, not because they wanted Brian Pallister and the PCs.

2020 represents an opportunity for the Manitoba Liberal Party that we haven't seen in a lifetime.

We want to make sure that in 2020, Manitobans can feel good about voting for a Manitoba Liberal Party that is credible, progressive, practical, and committed to governing for all Manitobans.

Manitoba can't afford another four years of the PCs. That is why this race is important - because it is not just the leadership or the Manitoba Liberal Party that is on the line, but the outcome of the next election - and what will happen to our province as a result.

This is for *all* Manitobans. The ones who have been disappointed by the PCs and NDP and politicians of all stripes.

We have an obligation to put forward a vision for this province because the status quo under the PCs and the NDP has not been working.

Both parties have been more interested in getting elected than in getting something done for the rest of us.

And we need to do something more than just offer incremental change - bit by bit.

When people's lives have been getting harder, year by year, incremental improvements mean that people may not live to see their lives get better. That is why significant changes are necessary.

In 2008, the greatest financial disaster in generations struck the global economy.

In Canada alone, government bailed out Canada's banks by over \$100-billion - \$66-billion from CMHC alone. That is more than three times the federal stimulus "Action Plan." The international bailout was in the tens of trillions - for banks and financial institutions, not for people.

This crisis and its aftermath have shown that a generation of economic ideas were little more than a house of cards.

We now know that austerity does not work. We know that trickle-down economics does not work. We now know that trade deals haven't always lived up to their promises.

For a generation we have ignored that the health of an economy depends on good jobs that pay well - and not just the cheapest goods.

We have forgotten that the health of democracy means governments must have the power to act to protect their citizens in the interest of all, not just a few.

For 40 years, from 1935 to 1975, as the Canadian and other economies grew, they grew for everyone.

Our New Way is about changing politics and government in Manitoba, and building a new Manitoba Liberal Party to do it. A party that is progressive, practical, and committed to governing for every Manitoban, not just a few.

And to achieve that means harnessing the best of what business and the entrepreneurial spirit has to offer on the one hand, and the best of what social democracy has to offer on the other.

Health care, education and public infrastructure are not costs or luxuries to be cut: they are the foundation of the economy of today and tomorrow. When it comes to the environment, we cannot continue to take from the earth without giving back.

We cannot cut our way out of debt. We have to work our way out of it.

We have an opportunity as a party and as a province, to show leadership, instead of following. We have an opportunity to stand up for what is best in our community, and to challenge ourselves to bend the arc of history towards justice.

This document is intended to set a direction for Manitoba, but it is not intended to be definitive: it is to be a living document. We invite you to be a part of Our New Way - and add to it.



Dougald Lamont

**“ What the Pallister government is doing, right now, is a perfect example of how governments actively make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The PCs change to the personal tax exemption will add \$150-million to the deficit this year. It’s one of the reasons our credit rating was downgraded.**

**The low-income people it is supposed to help will get \$14 a year. But Pallister himself and others making \$200,000+ will get \$500 a year.**

**While Pallister has handed himself a tax cut, and legislated himself a 20% raise while running a deficit, he is laying people off, freezing people’s wages and cutting funding to everything from economic development agencies to people on rent-assist.**

**The lost income is not just temporary: for some people that means that over their lifetime, they will make less money. This is how growing inequality happens.**

**It is not technology, or refugees making people poorer: it is politics. This is what must change.”**

**- Dougald Lamont**

# **Six Things We'll Do, Two Things We Won't (and what we'll ask the Federal Government to Do)**

## **1. Grassroots Job Creation: Creating a Manitoba Business Development Bank to Grow Manitoba Businesses and Create Manitoba Jobs**

For decades, the PCs and the NDP alike have tried to attract outside investment in Manitoba by offering special deals to companies whose headquarters and shareholders are elsewhere. Manitoba gets the low-paying jobs, while profits for executives and owners leave the province.

Competing to attract foreign owners on low taxes, low wages, and weak regulation has only further entrenched Manitoba's position as a have-not province. We are literally debasing our province, and its people and selling ourselves short.

Trying to attract Amazon's second headquarters is a perfect example: the PCs have announced that they will compete with other jurisdictions to see which can give the biggest corporate welfare cheque to Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world - while undermining local small businesses by providing tax breaks and benefits to international competitors.

We will create a publicly-owned Manitoba Business Development Bank that exists for one reason: to grow Manitoba Businesses and create Manitoba jobs. As it stands, Manitoba entrepreneurs have been forced to leave the province because they can't get the venture capital or financing they need.

Instead of spending public money to get chains and multinationals to place low-quality jobs in Manitoba, we will focus on local ownership and create good local jobs everywhere - Winnipeg, rural Manitoba or on Reserve.

## 2. Reforming Health Care: Returning Control to Communities

The fundamental problem with Manitoba's Health care system is that no one appears to be responsible for it. The reason for this is that in the 1990s, the PCs created a third layer of health care bureaucracy - Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) - that are appear to unaccountable to anyone - doctors, patients, communities and government.

A Lamont Liberal Government will dissolve the RHAs, taking the three layers of bureaucracy to two. We will restore funding, oversight, standards and bulk purchases to the Manitoba Government while returning administration to the local level - hospitals, health units and communities.

This process should free up resources so we can spend on delivering care, instead of on bureaucracy. Hospitals would be able to reopen ERs and urgent cares, and do a better job of recruiting doctors and nurses, especially to rural and northern communities.

We will also create a Health Care Provider Protection act: it will create legal protections as well as expectations that people working in health care system can speak up without fear of reprisals.

### **3. Reconciliation & Reducing the Number of Children in Care by Supporting Families and Children**

All governments and Canadians have a responsibility to work towards reconciliation. The first five of the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission all have to do with children in care.

Manitoba has the highest child apprehension rate, and one of the highest youth incarceration rates in the Western World. There is a CFS-to-prison pipeline in Manitoba, with over 12,000 children in care the vast majority of them Indigenous. This is the most serious social issue facing Manitoba, because it is about the future of these young people as well as the future of our province.

We need to recognize that this is not just a question of fixing the Child Welfare System: the province must work with all levels of government and communities to address the factors that result in children being apprehended.

On a broad level, this means addressing the social determinants of health - poverty, housing, addiction.

We will expand mental health and addictions treatment - including for young people - which will benefit all families in Manitoba.

More specifically to CFS, we will triage families and provide “family support workers” that may provide in-home support to families and children; create an appeals process for families, and work with communities to provide opportunities for healing, employment, treatment and growth.

## 4. Renew & Rebuild: A New New Deal for Manitoba

The NDP promised billions in infrastructure spending - but never spent it. The PCs are risking leaving hundreds of millions of Federal spending on the table.

A Lamont Liberal Government will deliver a reliable, sustained five-year investment in infrastructure, both for major cities, smaller towns and rural municipalities.

Eligible projects would include:

- Economic Infrastructure: Roads, bridges, highways, transportation and transit
- Community & Social Infrastructure (Affordable housing, Child Care Spaces, Personal Care Homes, Recreational Infrastructure)
- Environmental restoration: wetlands, lakes, streams & natural carbon sinks.

Specific projects include:

- Taking over and maintaining the rail line and rail bed to Churchill, cutting out Omnitrac and letting other operators use the line
- Paying for a full study into the costs, benefits and risks of rail relocation in Winnipeg, including the feasibility and costs of using the existing rail lines as a Hydro-powered commuter rail system

These infrastructure investments should fulfill the goal of

- Improving economic growth that is well-shared
- Reducing long-term environmental impact (improving water quality, mitigating climate change or reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions.)
- Reducing barriers to access so that people living with disabilities and seniors can maintain their independence.

## 5. A Secure and Public Future for Hydro

One of the fundamental problems facing Manitoba is that its Crown Corporations, which should be independently run in the public interest, are run as an extension of the party in power. Manitoba Hydro is no exception.

We need to be clear about the situation Manitoba Hydro is in. Currently, Manitoba Hydro's debt is growing, for a very simple reason: they are building two large dams which are not producing any electricity, and therefore they are spending a lot of money and not bringing in revenue.

The concerns about this debt are overblown. It is true that Hydro faces a "debt pinch" for a brief time where their costs will exceed their ability to pay - just before their dams go online, at which point revenues will increase significantly, and Hydro will have substantial profits.

The simplest, least expensive and fairest way of dealing with this issue is for the Manitoba Government to assure bondholders that the Province will cover the costs of any shortfalls should they occur (and which the province is obliged to do in any case). This is not a bailout - it is an investment, because Hydro will become highly profitable shortly thereafter.

Instead, the PCs have been pursuing the riskiest option - which is to deny Hydro assistance. Instead of owners covering Hydro with a loan, customers are expected to pre-finance Hydro's payment with much higher rates that will hurt both individuals and business.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will provide a guarantee that Hydro will not default, and that we will cover the "debt pinch" if necessary, at the time it occurs. Hydro can repay this debt as its profits increase over many years.

This approach eliminates the need for massive Hydro rate hikes which will hurt individuals, businesses and the economy. By reducing the likelihood of default it will improve our province's credit rating.

## 6. Taxes:

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has asked whether we would embark on a taxation review. We believe that this is an excellent idea. Taxation has changed significantly in Manitoba over the last 20 years, but it seems to have been done randomly, on a patchwork basis, and has been based more on “vote-buying” rather than considering economic or policy impact.

We will launch a review of our tax system, to make sure that it is fair, effective and progressive.

Governments need to pay their bills, and people need to pay their taxes. I want government to be efficient, but those taxes pay for roads, and water and chemotherapy and hip replacements and education, and they make our standard of living possible. Without highways, there are no trucking companies. Without education, companies don't have trained workers.

Too many tax cuts and tax credits are like coupons. You still need money to make use of them, and they don't deal with the deeper issue. Tax cuts do not lead to growth, but growth can lead to tax cuts. We need to focus on growth and jobs first.

“We need to recognize that quality universal health care, education and public infrastructure are not simply costs to be minimized: they are essential to a modern economy.” - Dougald Lamont

## **Two Things We Won't Do:**

- No more dams for Hydro. We will focus on transmission of existing and new renewables.
- No more privatization or sell-offs of Crown Corporations

## **Six Things We'll Look to the Federal Government To Do:**

- Fulfill its obligations towards Indigenous people on education, employment, health care and children in care
- Work with provinces to improve immigration and immigration services
- Negotiate Free Trade deals that aim for fair growth for all Canadians
- Defend the interests of Canadian creators, innovators and artists by ensuring that copyright and patents are protected and paid
- Defend the principle of health care for all
- Support a plan for a national green power grid: if we can build pipelines, we can build a national power grid and sell Manitoba's Hydro into Saskatchewan and Ontario

## IT'S YOUR TURN

These proposals are intended to only be a beginning. This is a living document, and only a beginning – because we want all Manitobans to feel you can add their ideas about what we can do to make Manitoba a better place.

Send us your ideas at [ournewway.ca](http://ournewway.ca)



## ABOUT DOUGALD

Born at St. Boniface Hospital in 1969, the third of four children, Dougald was raised in Winnipeg by his mother Judy, an architect, and his late father Frank, a lawyer.

Dougald attended École Sacré Coeur, River Heights Junior High and St. John's Ravenscourt on a scholarship, and has two degrees in English Literature (B.A. and M.A) from the University of Manitoba.

Dougald is bilingual having learned to speak English and French at a young age.

Working as a writer, editor and policy analyst for over 25 years in both the private and public sector, Dougald's experience includes journalism & advertising, funding initiatives for start-ups, not-for-profits & charities, as well as advising elected officials and public servants on matters of the day.

His extensive knowledge of public policy was gained on the job through first hand experience including the Manitoba Museum, volunteering at Got Bannock, infrastructure at Western Economic Diversification, communications at Indigenous Affairs Manitoba, as well as advising political campaigns, candidates, elected officials and public servants.

He has taught Canadian Literature at the University of Manitoba, and most recently is a lecturer in government-business relations at the University of Winnipeg.

Dougald and his incredible wife Cecilia, have been together since 1993 and have four spirited children: three girls and a boy.

Approved by the Official Agent