

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Premier's Youth Council

Message from Council the Co-Chair

As co-chair of the Premier's Youth Council, and in accordance with the requirements for a category three entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I hereby submit the 2020-21 Annual Report of the Premier's Youth Council. This report covers the period starting April 1, 2020 and ending March 31, 2021 and compares actual results to those anticipated in the Council's 2020-23 Activity Plan.

During the 2020-21 fiscal year, the Premier's Youth Council provided advice to the Provincial Government on a variety of topics important to both Government and youth, as outlined in this report. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and out of respect for the health and safety of members and the public, the Premier's Youth Council did not meet in-person this past year. Through their virtual meetings and activities, members are satisfied they were able to fulfill their mandate to advise the Provincial Government from a youth perspective.

As co-chair, I understand the importance of providing platforms for the youth of Newfoundland and Labrador to have their say on issues that matter. Under the leadership of Premier Furey, Ministers and departments have shown themselves to be both interested in, and responsive to, the views and advice of our membership. We thank the Premier and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for their commitment to youth.

The members of the Council are responsible for the preparation of this annual report and are accountable for the actual results reported herein. Together, we look forward to continuing to work with the Premier, the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, departments and agencies, and provincial stakeholders to bring forth perspectives and viewpoints of young people for Government's consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Dibbon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Katherine Dibbon, Co-Chair

On behalf of the members of the Premier's Youth Council

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Overview

Mandate

The mandate of the Premier's Youth Council (PYC) is to provide advice to the Premier by bringing a youth perspective to select topics important to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Membership

The PYC is mandated to have up to 25 members between the ages of 16 and 24 years at the time of appointment and who normally reside in the province for at least nine months of the year. Terms are for one-year with the possibility of reappointment for an additional year. No new members were appointed to the PYC in fiscal year 2020-21. Members as of March 31, 2021 were:

Matthew Babb, St. John's	Leann Goodyear, Lumsden
Noah Briffett, Pasadena	Amelia Jones, Forteau
Mira Buckle, Corner Brook	Emily Laite, Gander
Nathan Canning, Bridgeport	Ryan McFarlane, Deer Lake
Michael Coombs, St. Alban's	Kirby Mouland, Musgrave Harbour
Katherine Dibbon, St. John's (co-chair)	Benjamin Oates, St. John's
Elliot Dicks, Deer Lake	Lesley Pilgrim, St. Anthony
Jade Downey, Grand Bank	Mehnaz Tabassum, St. John's
Julian Edwards, St. John's	Emma Whelan, Paradise
Nicholas Ellis, Winterton	Julia White, St. John's

Members receive no remuneration for their service. During fiscal year 2020-21, the PYC relied on the administrative, logistical and strategic support of the Public Engagement and Planning Division (Communications and Public Engagement Branch, Executive Council) in the fulfilment of its mandate.



Report on Performance

The following objective and indicators are as put forward in the PYC's 2020-23 Activity Plan (see: <https://assembly.nl.ca/business/electronicdocuments/PYCActivityPlan2020-23.pdf>). As its focus will remain the same for the duration of the 2020-23 planning period, the PYC will report on the same objective and indicators each year.

Issue

Provide advice to the Premier and Government departments and agencies on issues of that are of interest and importance to the Provincial Government.

2020-21 Objective

By March 31, 2021, the Premier's Youth Council will provide advice, in writing or in-person, to the Premier and/or departments and agencies on issues of importance identified by the Provincial Government.

Indicator 1: Number and nature of meetings held to discuss and deliberate – these meetings may include PYC members and/or representatives from Government or external stakeholders identified by Government.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 global health pandemic, the PYC was unable to meet in-person during fiscal year 2020-21. Further, as many Government activities and initiatives were temporarily halted as departments shifted their focus to the safe delivery of vital programs and services, there were fewer opportunities for the PYC to be engaged. Normally, the key engagement activity of the PYC is the in-person policy roundtable, where PYC members get a chance to listen to the Premier, Cabinet Ministers and senior officials present on a variety of economic, social and environmental issues facing Government and the province, and to deliberate and provide advice accordingly. However, this meeting was also canceled due to COVID-19.

Despite the limited activity of the PYC as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, related public health restrictions, and quickly changing priorities, 12 meetings were organized with the Premier and/or with Government officials and partners in 2020-21. These were:

- April 2020: virtual meeting with the Premier on domestic violence;
- April 2020: meeting to provide input on the COVID-19 youth website of the Department of Health and Community Services: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/youth/>;
- April 2020: one member participated in a consultation regarding the planning of the Atlantic Summer Institute's virtual Atlantic Policy Forum on Mental Health Promotion;
- May 2020: focus group with Choices for Youth on the impact of COVID-19 on education and employment;

- June 2020: meeting with the Premier on antiracism;
- July 2020: consultation with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco on vaping;
- August 2020: two members participated in the Atlantic Summer Institute's virtual Atlantic Policy Forum on Mental Health Promotion;
- August 2020: final virtual meeting with outgoing Premier Dwight Ball;
- October 2020: consultation organized by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation and SportNL on the Healthy Active Living Champion Initiative;
- November 2020: three members participated in a follow-up consultation with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco on vaping to validate input and findings;
- December 2020: meeting with Dame Moya Greene, chairperson of the Premier's Economic Recovery Team;
- December 2020: first virtual meeting with Premier Andrew Furey.

Indicator 2: Research and other preparatory work carried out to facilitate meetings and the formulation of advice – this may include such things as attending relevant workshops, forums or training, as well as consultations with stakeholders.

PYC members were given advance notice of the issues discussed during their virtual meetings and, where appropriate, were provided background and contextual materials to help them prepare for their deliberations. As an example, members were asked to familiarize themselves with the terms of reference and mandate of the Premier's Economic Recovery Team ahead of their meeting with Dame Greene. Throughout the year, officials with the Public Engagement and Planning Division were available to answer any questions PYC members might have had after reviewing materials provided.

In advance of two PYC members' participation in the Atlantic Summer Institute's Atlantic Policy Forum on Mental Health Promotion, one member participated in a consultation session to inform planning. Meanwhile, three members participated in a follow-up session with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco to validate input the PYC provided during a consultation in July.

In total, the PYC or some of its members participated in dialogue or consultation with four external stakeholders: Atlantic Summer Institute; Choices for Youth; Alliance for the Control of Tobacco; and SportNL.

Indicator 3: Advice – in-person or in writing, provided to the Provincial Government.

During virtual meetings organized throughout the 2020-21 fiscal year, the PYC provided advice to the Provincial Government on the following topics:

- Domestic violence: this meeting led to the incorporation of texting options for the delivery of programs servicing victims of domestic violence;

- COVID-19 youth website design: PYC members reviewed the draft design and content and provided input prior to the site being launched;
- Education and employment impacts in the context of COVID-19; and
- Economic recovery and fiscal sustainability within the context of the work of the Premier's Economic Recovery Team.

A highlight of the PYC's advisory role in 2020-21 was its meeting with the Premier's Economic Recovery Team and its chairperson, Dame Moya Greene. Through its participation, the PYC was able to offer a youth perspective on issues facing the province and inform the development of this historic report whose recommendations may well help shape the future of the province. The PYC wishes to thank Dame Moya for providing its members an opportunity to share their vision for a prosperous and sustainable Newfoundland and Labrador.

As mentioned above, there were also a number of meetings with Government partners, such as the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco and Choices for Youth, which provided the PYC with an opportunity to provide advice on policy issues that are the focus of ongoing community-government dialogue and collaboration, such as vaping and recovery from the economic impacts of COVID-19.

In addition to these examples, individual members of the PYC provided advice on a range of issues on which Government departments were engaging the public, communities and stakeholders via the engageNL website: <https://www.engagenl.ca/>.

Indicator 4: Progress as reported by the PYC in its Annual Report

The content of this report provides an overview of progress toward the PYC's fulfilment of its mandate.

Of particular note is the initiative taken by the PYC, with support from the Premier's Office and the Communications and Public Engagement Branch, to write, direct, film, edit and publish a video for youth adjusting to life under COVID-19. The video premiered during the May 27, 2020 live COVID-19 briefing by the former Premier, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and the Minister of Health and Community Services: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF7QSH6xWv0> (see the introduction at the 11:30 mark and the video itself at the 12:30 mark). This was the first time the PYC had published its own content targeting youth. To have done so at a time when so many young people were struggling to adapt to the realities of the pandemic – interruptions to school life, work life, family life and social life – was a true testimony to the importance of leadership and the power of collective action in times of turmoil, as well as to the enduring spirit of youth.

Summary of Expenditures

The PYC incurred no costs during fiscal year 2020-21 as a result of COVID-19 travel and in-person meeting restrictions.

