

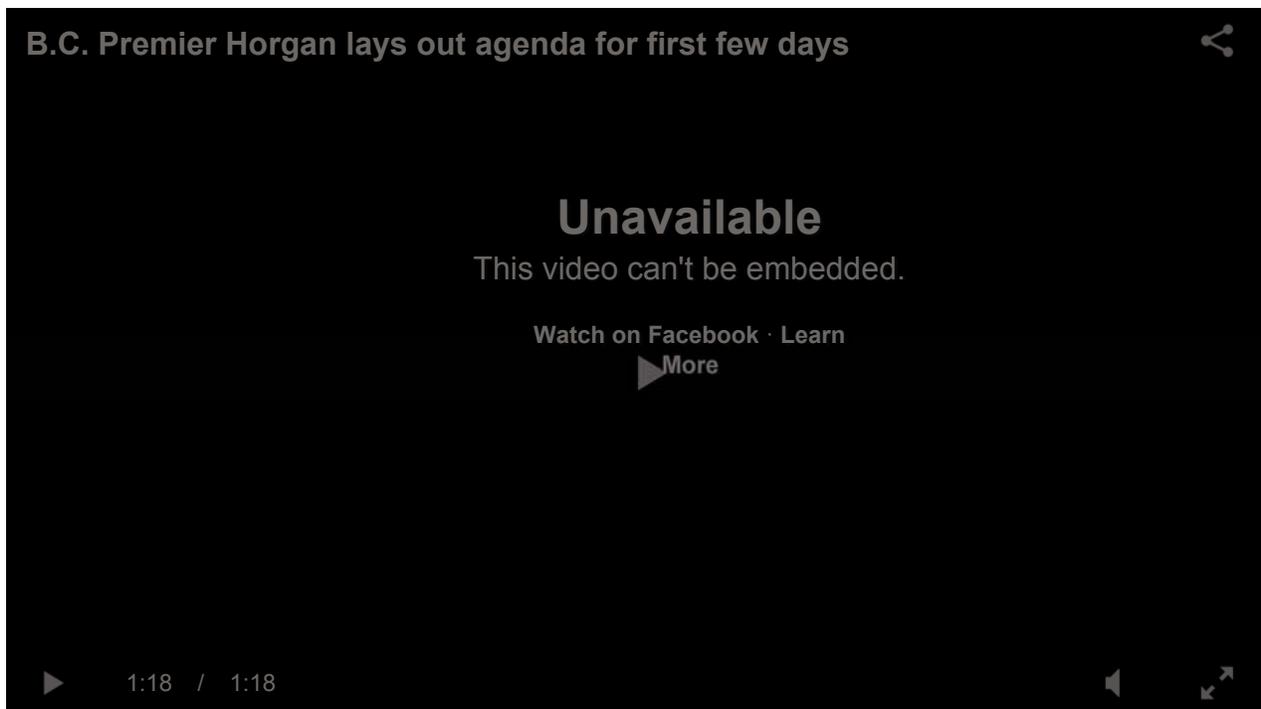
# B.C. NDP Cabinet 2017: Metro Vancouver MLAs handed key cabinet roles



ROB SHAW

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and the NDP's political power base, a massive voice in shaping his new administration.

Almost two-thirds of Horgan's new 22-person cabinet comes from the Lower Mainland, where the NDP made key gains in the May 9 election that ultimately allowed it to topple the B.C. Liberals and officially assume power on Tuesday.

The NDP's strong showing in Vancouver during the election — it holds eight of 11 city ridings — appears to have been recognized with the largest representation at the cabinet table, including some of the most important portfolios in government.

That includes David Eby (attorney general, and also minister responsible for liquor, gambling and the Insurance Corp. of B.C.), Adrian Dix (health), Shane Simpson (social development and poverty reduction), George Heyman (environment and climate change strategy), Melanie Mark (advanced education) and George Chow (minister of state for trade).

Horgan's recent appointment of former Vancouver city councillor Geoff Meggs as his chief of staff also bolstered the relationship with Vancouver.



Premier John Horgan smiles at cabinet members after being sworn-in as Premier during a ceremony with his provincial cabinet at Government House in Victoria, B.C., on Tuesday, July 18, 2017. *CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

Overall, the 22-person cabinet unveiled Tuesday was gender-balanced, with a mix of new and old MLAs that marked only a modest

reorganization from the structure of the previous Liberal government. They were all sworn in at a ceremony at Government House in which Lt.-Gov. Judith Guichon made Horgan as B.C.'s 36th premier.

Horgan pledged quick action this summer on several key issues: Assisting those displaced by wildfires, reducing the fentanyl overdose crisis, solving the softwood lumber dispute, raising welfare and disability rates, putting more teachers in classrooms and eliminating tolls at the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges.

“We have the team, we have the plan, we are committed to getting it done,” Horgan told a cheering audience of supporters packed in to the Government House ballroom. “You can count on that, each and every day we are going to work as hard as we can .... We are ready to get started, lets go.”

The list of priority puts early pressure on several new cabinet ministers, such as Education Minister Rob Fleming, who will have to act quickly to solve funding issues that teachers say are preventing the proper hiring of staff before schools return in September.

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New Westminster MLA Judy Darcy was put in charge of tackling the overdose crisis through a new Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. Horgan is meeting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau next

week to also discuss the crisis. Darcy faces a particularly daunting task because she will have to work with Dix's health ministry to separate out services for mental health without communications problems, which has been a concern raised by public health officials.

Ending Metro bridge tolls will fall to both Transportation Minister Claire Trevena, from the North Island, and the parliamentary secretary for TransLink, Bowinn Ma from North Vancouver. Ma will report on TransLink-related issues to Selina Robinson, the new minister of municipal affairs and housing. Robinson will also have to realize the NDP's election plans to build 114,000 new rental, co-op and affordable housing units.

"We can make progress on the bridge toll question right away and can make progress on making life a little bit easier for people with disabilities and people on income assistance," Horgan told reporters.



Premier John Horgan takes an oath with Lieutenant-Governor Judith Guichon as he's sworn-in as Premier during a ceremony with his provincial cabinet at Government House in Victoria, B.C., on Tuesday, July 18, 2017. *CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

Surrey MLAs who made the cut included Bruce Ralston (jobs, trade and technology), Jinny Sims (citizens' services) and Harry Bains (labour). In Burnaby, where the NDP swept all four seats, only one made cabinet: Katrina Chen (minister of state for child care).

The Tri-Cities area includes veteran Mike Farnworth (solicitor general and expected to be house leader) and Robinson.

Horgan appeared to do his best to deal with his party's poor showing in the north and interior, appointing the only four MLAs it had outside of Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island to cabinet posts: Doug Donaldson (forests, lands, natural resource operations and rural development), Jennifer Rice (parliamentary secretary for emergency preparedness), Katrine Conroy (children and family development) and Michelle Mungall (energy, mines and petroleum resources).

Mungall will inherit the NDP's promise to put the \$9-billion Site C dam up before a review, which Horgan reiterated Tuesday will happen immediately.

Horgan gave his top cabinet spot to former party leader Carole James, who was appointed finance minister and deputy premier to a standing ovation and the loudest cheers of the day. Horgan has been a loyal James supporter since she was forced out as leader in 2010. He nonetheless appointed several anti-James rebels (Lana Popham became agriculture minister, for example) declaring the internal troubles of the party a past issue.





**B.C. Green Leader Andrew Weaver looks on as Premier John Horgan takes an oath with Lieutenant-Governor Judith Guichon as he's sworn-in as Premier during a ceremony with his provincial cabinet at Government House in Victoria, B.C., on Tuesday, July 18, 2017. CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Left out of cabinet were a dozen NDP MLAs, at least half of whom are veteran politicians, including Spencer Chandra Herbert, Leonard Krog, Doug Routley, Nicholas Simons, Raj Chouhan, and Jagrup Brar. However, some of those people are expected to receive jobs such as speaker, caucus chair, whip, deputy speaker and other committee appointments in the future.

"It is a difficult job," Horgan said of his decision to exclude several veterans.

"I wanted to have a balanced cabinet that included as many men as women, I wanted to make sure the ethnic diversity of British Columbia was reflected. ... I wanted to make sure the people of British Columbia saw themselves reflected in their cabinet."

Horgan said the entire 41-person NDP caucus took a bus together Tuesday from the legislature to Government House, and that the team-building exercise helped ensure there were no hard feelings.

"Everybody wants to be in cabinet, but everybody also understands the job ahead involves all of us," he said.



Four ministers and two parliamentary secretaries are under 40 years old, 10 ministers and secretaries are visible minorities, and the cabinet includes Mark, who is B.C.'s first female First Nations minister.

The Liberals, who were defeated on a confidence vote last month by an NDP-Green power-sharing alliance, slammed the new NDP cabinet.

"This #GreeNDP government was not recognized by the majority B.C. and will pander to minority interest at the expense of the majority," tweeted MLA Rich Coleman, the former deputy premier.

Horgan shrugged off the criticism.

"To have a fight with someone, you need two people swinging and I have no intention of rising to the bait of B.C. Liberals," he said.

The capital region on southern Vancouver Island, which was left out by the Liberals in cabinet because they had no MLAs, is now represented by Horgan, James, Fleming and Popham. Elsewhere on Vancouver Island, Scott Fraser (Indigenous relations) and Trevena (transportation and infrastructure) made the cut.

The outgoing Liberal government had 21 ministers, not including the premier.

The NDP capped Tuesday evening with a packed "open house" at the legislature, where the public was invited to meet the new premier and ministers. Horgan was mobbed on the front steps of the building by a significant crowd that waited to take pictures with him.

Ministers were scattered inside the hallways and outside on the grounds, speaking to the public and celebrating with well-wishers. At one point, the lineup to enter the front of the legislative building stretched across the lawn and to the road on either side of the block.

The Vancouver Sun caught up with eight cabinet ministers amid the chaos.

“Today is a day to celebrate this, and tomorrow morning we’ll go to work,” said Social Development Minister Shane Simpson, who spoke outside the front steps of the building amid the crowd.

“I found out a day ago that this was going to be my responsibility and so my head has been spinning a little bit since then about all of the different pieces and ideas and things that I think it’s important to do, things I need to learn, directions I hope we go and people we need to engage. It’s all great. It’s pretty exciting, and new, and daunting, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Simpson said his major policies will include moving quickly to increase social assistance and disability rates by \$100 a month, as the NDP promised in the election.

“We’ll move forward on that as quickly as we can,” he said. “We’ll move quickly if we can do it through regulation. I’m hopeful we can do it that way.”

Simpson said he’s also already spoken to ministry officials about starting work on a poverty reduction plan, that would “hopefully frame legislation as soon as possible to implement a plan probably in 2018.”

Near the security scanners inside the front entrance was Health Minister Adrian Dix, taking selfies with the public. “It’s a wonderful moment,” he said.

Dix pointed to the NDP promise to create primary care centres, staffed with doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health-care officials that will be open weekends and help members of the public who can’t get a family physician.

“There’s lots of important priorities,” he said.

“There’s clearly a primary care priority and it’s really important people need a primary care practitioner, and that’s a real priority. For some people it’s hallway medicine.”





The new health minister, Adrian Dix, grins as Premier John Horgan gives a thumbs up after being sworn in on July 18. *CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

Dix said there's also "a significant and fundamental crisis in mental health and addictions right now" which he will work with alongside colleague Judy Darcy. And he said while the health care system, which eats up 40 per cent of the provincial budget, is large, it also does good work. Dix was critic six years ago on the file.

"Remember it does fantastic and important things every day for people and all that has to continue," he said.

"I'm confident. I think the agenda John put forward in the campaign for change on primary care, building some hospitals, reducing wait times, improving and reducing costs of prescription drugs and some significant issues around health research which I've had an ongoing interest in. All of those are important issues."

Outside, Energy Minister Michelle Mungall said she looked forward to the first NDP cabinet meeting at 8 a.m. Wednesday. "Lots of big issues, which is not a surprise to anyone in British Columbia but I can't wait to tackle them," she said.

“Think about my riding, and the Kootenays in general. We produce 50 per cent BC Hydro’s hydro electric power. We have some of the largest mines. So it’s a natural fit to put a Kootenay person there, and a Kootenay woman at that.”

Sending Site C to a review by the BC Utilities Commission is Mungall’s top priority. And she said she’ll learn more about whether Hydro needs a leadership review.

“We’ve made commitments to deal with the rates we’ll be dealing with that right away,” she said. “We’ve made commitments to deal with Site C and we’ll be dealing with that right away. And I know there’s a whole host of issues the ministry is putting together right now that are going to be at the top of my desk tomorrow morning.”

At the bottom of a stairwell, crammed amid a crush of people, the new Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister, Selina Robinson, said her file’s priorities of housing, local politics and a parliamentary secretary on TransLink are all interconnected.

“It’s about paying attention to where we are putting our transit infrastructure, making sure we’re addressing housing affordability and you have to work with local governments to make all of that happen and come together,” she said. “It all makes perfect sense.”



Selina Robinson *GERRY KAHRMANN / PNG*

In the hall of honour, near a portrait of the Queen, Attorney General David Eby towered over the crowd of well-wishers.

“I’m thrilled John has this level of confidence in me and I’m incredibly honoured to be representing the people

of B.C. on these files,” he said. Eby’s ministry includes courts, as well

as gambling, liquor and the cash-strapped Insurance Corporation of B.C., which is threatening to raise rates.

“It’s a lot of work and there’s a lot of challenges, everything from our overcrowded courts to the problems with ICBC’s sustainability, but I look forward to really digging in,” he said.

In another corner of the room, Transportation Minister Claire Trevena reflected on her file, which includes Horgan’s promise to eliminate bridge tolls in Metro Vancouver this summer.

“I think there are going to be a number of files at the top of my desk, but tolls obviously, people have been dealing with these for too many years,” she said. “We’ve said very clearly in our platform that we want to eliminate the tolls and we will do that.”

She echoed Horgan’s comments that more research will need to be done on the Liberal Massey bridge project, but that most local mayors don’t want it and the NDP will focus on what the mayors want for transit in the region.

Education Minister Rob Fleming was near one of building’s stained glass windows, shaking a long line of hands of well-wishers. He’s tasked with finding the money to get more teachers into classrooms by September, as well as work to eliminate school portables in Surrey.

“We are going to get to work on it right away,” Fleming said. “I think the main thing is to look at the Supreme Court implementation. Some districts are struggling. They haven’t been given much direction by the B.C. Liberals and it may be a case of insufficient



resources. There's a lot of things happening.” **Rob Fleming**

The new minister said he'd already spoken to Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner and would move quickly to start eliminating portables in that district as the NDP had promised in the election. “I'll be reaching out to all 60 school district chairs, they have projects in mind... so we want to get a quick start on those things,” he said.

Back outside the building amid the crowds waiting to get inside the front entrance, Advanced Education Minister Melanie Mark was dressed in ceremonial robes that reflect her First Nations heritage. She is the first female cabinet minister of First Nations ancestry in B.C. history. Mark paid tribute to those who have come before her, and said matriarchs have a role in providing examples of leadership in the province too.

“I can't deny that fact, to think that the lived reality of my grandparents, the lived reality of my parents, my own struggles with life, it's a pretty amazing day to be here,” she said.

Mark's portfolio includes eliminating interest rates on post-secondary student loans, and other measures to improve affordability.

“There's a lot going on in my mind right now,” she said. “It's a dynamic portfolio.”

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## **The Cabinet**





John Horgan

Government of British Columbia Premier – Hon. John Horgan, Juan de Fuca



Melanie Mark

Minister of Advanced Education, Skills & Training – Hon. Melanie Mark, Vancouver-Mount Pleasant



Lana Popham

Minister of Agriculture – Hon. Lana Popham, Saanich South



David Eby

Attorney General – Hon. David Eby, Vancouver-Point Grey



Katrine Conroy

Minister of Children & Family Development – Hon. Katrine  
Conroy, Kootenay West





Katrina Chen

Minister of State for Childcare – Hon. Katrina Chen, Burnaby-Lougheed



Jinny Sims

Minister of Citizens' Services – Hon. Jinny Sims, Surrey-Panorama





**Rob Fleming**

Minister of Education – Hon. Rob Fleming, Victoria-Swan Lake



**Michelle Mungall**

Minister of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources – Hon. Michelle Mungall, Nelson-Creston





George Heyman

Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy – Hon. George Heyman, Vancouver-Fairview



Carole James

Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier – Hon. Carole James, Victoria-Beacon Hill



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Doug Donaldson

Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – Hon. Doug Donaldson, Stikine



Adrian Dix

Minister of Health – Hon. Adrian Dix, Vancouver-Kingsway



Scott Fraser

Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation – Hon. Scott Fraser, Mid Island-Pacific Rim



**Bruce Ralston**

Minister of Jobs, Trade & Technology – Hon. Bruce Ralston, Surrey-Whalley



**George Chow**

Minister of State for Trade – Hon. George Chow, Vancouver-Fraserview



Harry Bains

Minister of Labour – Hon. Harry Bains, Surrey-Newton



Judy Darcy

Minister of Mental Health & Addictions – Hon. Judy Darcy, New Westminister





**Selina Robinson**

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing – Hon. Selina Robinson,  
Coquitlam-Maillardville



**Mike Farnworth**

Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General – Hon. Mike  
Farnworth, Port Coquitlam





**Shane Simpson**

Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction – Hon. Shane Simpson, Vancouver-Hastings



**Lisa Beare**

Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture – Hon. Lisa Beare, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows





Claire Trevena

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure – Hon. Claire Trevena, North Island

**Parliamentary secretaries**

Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness – Jennifer Rice, North Coast

Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction – Mable Elmore, Vancouver-Kensington

Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors – Anne Kang, Burnaby-Deer Lake

Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Multiculturalism – Ravi Kahlon, Delta North

Parliamentary Secretary for Technology – Rick Glumac, Port Moody-Coquitlam

Parliamentary Secretary for Translink – Bowinn Ma, North Vancouver-Lonsdale

**Deputy Ministers**

Government of British Columbia Deputy Minister to the Premier, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Public Service, Office of the Premier – Don Wright

Ministry of Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat, Office of the Premier – Okenge Yuma Morisho

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training – Shannon Baskerville

Ministry of Agriculture – Wes Shoemaker

Deputy Attorney General, Ministry of Justice – Richard Fyfe

Ministry of Children & Family Development – Allison Bond

Ministry of Citizens' Services – Jill Kot

Ministry of Education – Scott McDonald

Ministry of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources – Dave Nikolejsin

Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy – Mark Zacharias  
(Deputy, Environment)

Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy – Bobbi Plecas  
(Deputy, Climate Change)

Ministry of Finance – Lori Wanamaker

Ministry of Finance – David Galbraith (Associate Deputy Minister;  
Secretary to Treasury Board)

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural  
Development – Tim Sheldon

Ministry of Health – Stephen Brown

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation – Doug Caul

Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology – Fazil Mihlar

Ministry of Labour – Trevor Hughes

Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions – Doug Hughes

Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing – Jacquie Dawes

Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General – Mark Sieben

Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor  
General – Becky Denlinger

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction – Sheila Taylor

Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture – Sandra Carrol

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure – Grant Main

Government Communications and Public Engagement – Evan Lloyd

Public Service Agency – Lori Halls

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**Cindy Watt** · Insurance Adviser at Coast Capital Insurance Services Ltd.

Well said!

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**Flora Sterling**

Curious why out of this large Cabinet, except for two from the Kootneys and only 1 from the North, all the rest are from greater Vancouver and the Island. I guess 80% of the Province's citizens will not be represented. Just remember, B.C. Is resourced based and those resource areas have been shut out.

Like · Reply · 2 hrs



**Christopher Porter** · Software Engineer at EnerNOC

4/22 cabinet minsters are from outside Greater Vancouver and Vancouver Island. Considering that only 21% of British Columbians live in those regions (not 80%), I



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