



Incoming OMSSA President - Welcoming speech

Elaine Baxter Trahair

Good evening everyone. I'm honoured and pleased to be your OMSSA president for the next two years. Thank you to OMSSA's Board of Directors and to all members for this welcomed opportunity.

We all know first-hand the extent of change occurring in each of our sectors. For the most part, it's positive change of transformation and modernization that will result in stronger systems. Advancing human service integration is a priority across all sectors and is an important part of modernizing our service delivery and ensuring our services are client-centered and responsive to client needs.

With this change, we are also in a very opportune time for social services. We are building on partnerships with both levels of government. The federal government is joining us at the table and has demonstrated a willingness to learn from those of us on the ground delivering human services. New investments have also been announced from the Province and the Federal governments, opening new opportunities to transform and expand service delivery.

A critical opportunity and personal priority for me is working together with our Indigenous communities and partners and advancing the vision of Truth and Reconciliation and the calls to action. As municipalities, we work closely with our residents and communities and are positioned to influence positive change at the ground-level. As local governments and service managers, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to learn about Truth and Reconciliation, listen to our Indigenous partners and seek to understand what we can and must do to advance reconciliation and to support the healing and wellbeing of our Indigenous communities.

With such change and opportunity upon us, OMSSA is more relevant than ever. OMSSA creates the space for municipalities to share practices, learn from each other, build upon successes, speak with one voice, and strategize for ensuring that municipalities are heard and are at the table in federal and provincial planning discussions.

OMSSA is currently undergoing a strategic planning and review process and I value all the feedback received thus far. As your new President, I look forward to working together with everyone to continuously strengthen OMSSA. A priority for me as your President is to listen and respond to you, OMSSA's membership, and ensure that OMSSA is both responsive and proactive in meeting your needs. Together, we will focus on strengthening membership engagement and ensuring that we have the right two-way communication channels in place.

Building upon this opportune time, we will also ensure that we are at the table to proactively communicate the priorities, issues and requirements of Ontario's local governments to our provincial and federal partners.

I'm pleased to announce that Elisa McFarlane, who had stepped into the role of acting Executive Director, has now been officially confirmed in this role. I'd like to offer a sincere thank you to Elisa for



the leadership that she has already provided. I am confident in the future of OMSSA with Elisa guiding the way.

Lastly, I'd like to provide a special thanks to Keith Palmer and for his stellar leadership in guiding OMSSA through a difficult, but successful transformation over the last two years. We all heard earlier today at the AGM evidence of this transformation. I invite you all to join me in raising a glass to toast and thank Keith for his time, his leadership and guidance, and his dedication and commitment to resetting the course for OMSSA, strengthening who we are and what we, together, can achieve. Thank you Keith.