



End of Mandate Report

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell
29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
(2014–2023)

A MESSAGE FROM HER HONOUR

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell



The Lieutenant Governor at an event in support of the Hennick Bridgepoint Hospital, 2019

It is with profound gratitude that I present my End of Mandate Report to the people of Ontario. This report covers the primary themes, key moments, and chief accomplishments during my term as the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

It has been an unimaginable privilege to serve in this office for nine years.

And what a momentous nine years it has been. When I reflect on the many changes we have seen since I first pledged to fulfil my vice-regal responsibilities, 2014 might belong to another era altogether. Our years together have been full.

Canada 150. An unprecedented pandemic. The Platinum Jubilee. The passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. Increased recognition of, and commitment to, the work of reconciliation. Rapid technological change and the increased fragility of democracies around the world.

Ours is a time in which the pages of history turn swiftly.

Yet I truly believe that during the last nine years, we have seen the best of Ontario.

As the unofficial “Storyteller-in-Chief,” I have been humbled by the stories you have shared. Across the province and on the international stage, your achievements, perseverance, creativity, and compassion have demonstrated that the most remarkable times bring out the most remarkable spirit in all of us.

I hope that the stories and memories in this report inspire you, as much as they have done for me. Through moments great and small, joyful and challenging, you have made me feel justified in calling myself an eternal optimist.

Indeed, I can think of no higher privilege than to have played a role in encouraging Ontario to realize the best version of itself: a resilient, inclusive society committed to sustainability, the safeguarding of democracy, and reconciliation.

As our next chapter begins, may the stories we tell uphold our highest aspirations – and may those aspirations reflect our best selves.

BY THE NUMBERS

From September 23, 2014 to November 14, 2023

The Lieutenant Governor participated in

6529

engagements

The Lieutenant Governor granted Royal Assent to a total of **419 bills**



The Lieutenant Governor approved

17,497

Orders-in-Council

The Lieutenant Governor signed

261

writs of election



2

General Elections

13

By-Elections

For more information regarding Her Honour's activities, please refer to the Annual Reports released yearly by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Lieutenant Governor provides special event messages to non-profit organizations and congratulatory greetings to Ontarians celebrating birthdays (90 years and older) and anniversaries (50 years and longer). From 2014-2023, the Office provided:

900+

special event messages

30,000+

&

greetings



The Lieutenant Governor recorded 200+ video messages that were broadcast online and through traditional media.

CROWN HONOURS AND LG AWARDS



From 2014-2023, Her Honour presented provincial honours to hundreds of recipients of the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers, the David C. Onley Awards, the Hilary M. Weston Scholarship, and the Lincoln M. Alexander Award.

Her Honour, as Chancellor of the Order of Ontario, invested over 160 members into the Order.

ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Engagements in Every Corner

Northernmost: Kitchenuhmaykoosib
Innuuwug First Nation

Southernmost: Point Pelee National Park

Easternmost: North Glengarry

Westernmost: Kenora

Highest Population: Toronto (3 million)

Smallest Population: Killarney (397)



Throughout her mandate, the Lieutenant Governor has attended thousands of events in all **124** ridings.

As part of those thousands of events, Her Honour has also made

100 official visits to municipalities & **26** visits to First Nations communities.

WORDS TO REMEMBER

“I want to start by listening. In the first months of my mandate, I will convene diverse groups of Ontarians to hear your ideas and insights about Ontario’s place in the world.”

Inaugural Address, 2014

“Democracy is so much more than a vote. It’s really about how we choose to live our lives together.”

County of Prince Edward Inaugural Council Meeting, 2022

“As we seek to navigate these early years of the 21st century, it is crucial that Canadians respect and recognize the traditional knowledge and ways of knowing of Indigenous Nations...”

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation 33rd Annual Three Fires Homecoming PowWow and Traditional Gathering, 2019

“Ontarians haven’t just been looking back at their history; they’ve also been looking forward.”

Kincardine Canada 150 Trail Opening, 2018

“While frequently bringing relief to others, you are nonetheless all too often present during the most difficult and tragic moments in many people’s lives. In doing so, you have relied not just on training, but also on virtues that are not so easily taught.”

Ontario Medal for Police and Firefighter Bravery, 2017

“For more than seventy years, this was a woman who put duty before desire, service above self. And in doing so the Queen’s legacy may be measured by an extraordinary impact on the quality of our national character and the complexion of civic life in Canada.”

Provincial Memorial for Her Majesty the Queen, 2022

CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As the world continues to deal with proliferating challenges and transitions, democracies feel more fragile around the globe. In this increasingly complex and polarized context, Her Honour took her constitutional duties seriously to ensure the health of democracy in Ontario, and to engage with Ontarians about the importance of democracy, and our collective role in safeguarding it.

In Ontario, the Lieutenant Governor exercises the powers of the Crown, which derive from the written constitution, constitutional convention (political rules of the constitution), and statute law. Throughout the course of her term, Her Honour exercised all the constitutional responsibilities of a Lieutenant Governor, including:

- Summoning, proroguing and dissolving the legislature
- Presiding over Royal Assent to bills passed by the Legislative Assembly
- Delivering the Speech from the Throne
- Signing election writs for the 124 ridings in the province
- Swearing in new Executive Councils of Ontario (Cabinets)
- Ordering elections to the Legislative Assembly on the advice of Cabinet, in accordance with the Election Act
- Approving government business, such as regulations and public appointments, by signing Orders-in-Council on the advice of Cabinet

The foundation of Ontario's democracy is "responsible government", which means:

- The Crown acts upon formal advice
- The Government is responsible to the Legislature for its advice

The Government (Premier and Cabinet ministers) is formally appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Provided the Government enjoys the "confidence" of the Legislative Assembly, its advice is invariably accepted and legitimized by the Crown.

The Lieutenant Governor also meets regularly with the Premier; during their meetings, she has the right to be consulted, to encourage, and to warn on government matters. These meetings remain confidential to promote open and productive dialogue.

The Lieutenant Governor remains strictly nonpartisan in carrying out her constitutional duties. In doing so, the Lieutenant Governor ensures that the democratic will of Ontarians and their elected representatives is upheld.



The Lieutenant Governor delivering the Speech from the Throne, 2022



The Lieutenant Governor and Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa, seated at a table signing writs for a by-election, 2022



The Lieutenant Governor at a swearing-in ceremony for members of the Executive Council (Cabinet) 2018

COMMUNITY ROLE



The Lieutenant Governor laying a wreath at the Korean War Memorial, 2022



The Lieutenant Governor with a young participant of the LG Games at Variety Village, 2019



The Lieutenant Governor speaking to former Premier Bill Davis at the 50th anniversary of PAMA, 2018

Representing Ontarians

The Lieutenant Governor acts as a focus for unity and pride. Through official visits to communities, celebrations, and commemorations, she learned about Ontarians' hopes and concerns, as well as the local initiatives in which they take pride. The Lieutenant Governor also represents all Ontarians when interacting with important visitors from outside Ontario and abroad.

Honouring Ontarians

As the Crown's representative, the Lieutenant Governor recognizes Ontarians through the honours system. Honours and awards formally and publicly acknowledge the excellence, achievements, and contributions of role models from all walks of life.

During presentation ceremonies throughout the year, the Lieutenant Governor takes great pride recognizing people who have made a difference to their communities.

Bringing Ontarians Together

The Lieutenant Governor plays an important role in promoting a sense of identity among the people of Ontario, bringing awareness to the need for reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and encouraging Ontarians to take part in voluntary service and activities aimed at building more just and sustainable communities.



The Lieutenant Governor with a veteran, 2018



The Lieutenant Governor with new appointees to the Order of Ontario, 2022



The Lieutenant Governor participating in a citizenship ceremony in the Lieutenant Governor's Suite, 2019

CORE INITIATIVES

STORYTELLER-IN CHIEF

As Ontario's unofficial "Storyteller-in-Chief," the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell committed to hearing and sharing Ontarians' stories. Their diverse narratives of achievement, resilience, community-building, and service form a treasure trove of experiences to continually learn from and build on. Through hundreds of speeches and initiatives such as *Stories of Sustainability* and *Voices of Ontario*, Her Honour showcased the stories of incredible people from across the province.

The Lieutenant Governor seated with a group at the Thunder Bay Public Library, 2019



SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout her tenure, Her Honour encouraged Ontarians to consider sustainability through the lenses of inclusive economic prosperity, social and cultural cohesion, and environmental stewardship. Amid rapid change and uncertainty, these three pillars offer a strong foundation on which to build a resilient Ontario that works for everyone. Through many conferences, lectures, report launches, youth events, art exhibitions and more, Her Honour supported Ontarians in their efforts towards realizing a brighter future for our province and those generations to follow.

The Lieutenant Governor with students holding SDG panels at Seneca College, 2019

ONTARIO IN THE WORLD

Whether representing Ontarians abroad or highlighting their initiatives to international audiences, Her Honour celebrated Ontario's work in building partnerships, spearheading new initiatives, and contributing to sustainability programs around the globe, including the presentation of *Awakening*, a collection of essays and an art exhibition that was displayed in locations around the world, including the UN Headquarters in New York and Geneva.

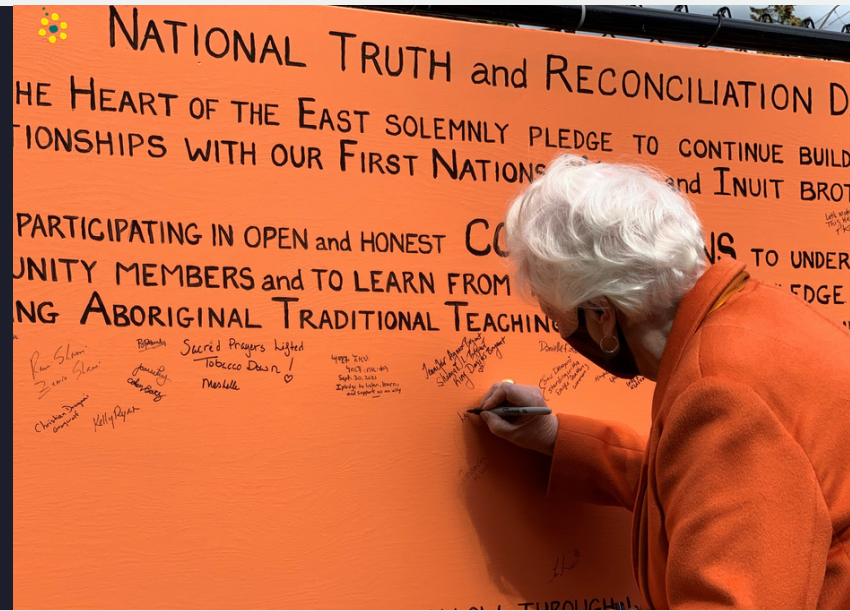
The Lieutenant Governor at the opening of Awakening at the UN Headquarters in New York, 2019



RECONCILIATION

The relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples is unique and enduring. Her Honour sought to foster reconciliation by connecting with Indigenous people across the province and facilitating opportunities for learning and dialogue. This has included visits to remote fly-in First Nations, the dedication of the Gi-Chi-Twaa Gimaa Nini Mississauga Anishinaabek AName Amik (The King's Anishinaabek Sacred Place) at Massey College at the University of Toronto, and the creation of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Garden, which provided the first marker on the grounds of Queen's Park to recognize Treaty 13 and to include an Indigenous language, Anishinaabemowin.

The Lieutenant Governor at a ceremony for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at Michael Garron Hospital, 2021



SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRACY

Though democracy can often feel fragile, all Ontarians play a role in safeguarding it. Through art exhibitions – such as the *Speaking of Democracy* exhibition– official visits to 100 municipalities, and countless community events, Her Honour engaged Ontarians in challenging, timely conversations about our cherished democracy and its future.

The Lieutenant Governor at the opening of Speaking of Democracy 2019

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Recognizing both the significant role that women and girls have played in Ontario, and the unfinished business that remains, Her Honour launched an initiative to inspire all Ontarians to work toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Championing women's achievements and examining their challenges, Her Honour brought Ontarians into conversation at the Lieutenant Governor's Suite and across Ontario.

The Lieutenant Governor with two young women from Afghanistan at an event in the Lieutenant Governor's Suite in support of the 30 Birds Foundation, 2022



KEY MOMENTS

Canada 150

Canada's sesquicentennial was a highly anticipated and much-lauded celebration of our identities and values, and an opportunity for genuine dialogue about who we are, and wish to be, as a people.

From small community events to the Ontario 150 Celebration to the launch of the Lieutenant Governor's Visionaries Prize, Her Honour engaged with thousands of people around the province during the sesquicentennial year.



Top and bottom: The Lieutenant Governor visiting the Queen Elizabeth Public School in Perth for Canada 150, 2017

The Platinum Jubilee:

From Red Lake in the northwest to Renfrew County in the east, the Lieutenant Governor joined Ontarians as they celebrated 70 years of Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Her Honour was moved to hear Ontarians eager to share their memories one generation to another, and was pleased to celebrate the tradition of service, stability, and continuity provided by the Crown.



Top: The Lieutenant Governor with a group seated at a table covered in afternoon tea treats. Union Jack bunting is on the wall, 2022

Bottom: The unveiling of the Platinum Jubilee Garden at Queen's Park, 2022

COVID-19 Pandemic

When the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic on March 11, 2020, the world changed almost overnight. Through carrying out her constitutional duties at Queen's Park without interruption to convening a series of thoughtful virtual dialogues, Her Honour aimed to be a steadfast and inclusive presence for Ontarians during uncertain and unprecedented times.



Top: The Lieutenant Governor receiving a vaccination booster, 2022

Bottom: The Lieutenant Governor speaking with a soldier who was part of OPERATION LASER, 2020

Transition of the Crown

2022 marked the transition of the Crown, with the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. With the continuity of the Crown serving as a source of stability during this time, Ontarians came together to share their collective grief and to support the new Sovereign.



Top: The Lieutenant Governor at the Accession Ceremony for King Charles III, 2022

Bottom: The Lieutenant Governor speaking at an event at Queen's Park to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, 2023

Her Honour

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell



A portrait of the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell is the 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and is the longest-serving Lieutenant Governor in the history of the province. As the representative of His Majesty The King, Ms. Dowdeswell carried out constitutional and ceremonial duties and facilitated healthy citizen and community engagement.

Ms. Dowdeswell has served the public interest in all orders of government and in the private sector. She contributed globally as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. In Canada, her diverse portfolios have ranged from education and culture to the environment and the management of complex public enquiries. She was the founding president and CEO of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization, and later the president and CEO of the Council of Canadian Academies. She has served on the boards of Canadian and international corporate and non-profit organizations.

After taking office in late 2014, Ms. Dowdeswell challenged Ontarians to think deeply about their roles not just as residents of a province, but as global citizens. Building resilience and sustainability through inclusive economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and social cohesion, as well as safeguarding democracy, were the focuses of her mandate.

Ms. Dowdeswell has a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics and a teaching certificate from the University of Saskatchewan, as well as a Master of Science in Behavioural Sciences from Utah State University. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Member of the Order of Ontario, and the recipient of numerous distinctions and fellowships. She holds 12 honorary doctorates.

This report presents the highlights of the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell's tenure as 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (2014-2023). It contains but a sample of Ms. Dowdeswell's activities and initiatives since taking office. As a historical record, this report serves as a guide to understanding the varied roles and responsibilities of The Crown's representative in Ontario.

To download an electronic copy of this report, visit the Lieutenant Governor's website at www.lgontario.ca.

Ce document est également disponible en français.