



# NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

## Canadian Consortium for Research

1. *Science – social, natural and health – is a fundamental part of Canada, having relevance to societal well-being, human functioning, health, technology, innovation, productivity and the economy.*

*What is your party's commitment to research and development?*

**NDP Response:** The Conservatives have waged an ideological war on science and evidence based decision making. They have reduced funding for Canadian researchers by \$200 million between 2007 and 2014, when measured in constant 2010 dollars. Canada has also fallen from 18th position to 25th out of 41 countries for the total business investments in research and development as a proportion of our GDP, according to the Science, Technology and Innovation Council's 2012 State of the Nation report.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair has a plan to give back to scientists and researchers the respect they deserve. Tom Mulcair and the NDP believe Canadian researchers of all disciplines must have the support they need to ensure Canada has a vibrant scientific landscape, a healthy democracy, and an innovative economy. The federal government must take a leadership role to properly value research and make the critical investments needed for Canadian researchers to become the Nobel laureates of tomorrow. If we are to succeed, it is essential, that we strike the correct balance between applied scientific research and longer-term, discovery-driven research.

That's why Tom Mulcair has committed to establishing a \$100 million Mental Health Innovation Fund for Children and Youth to improve care for children and youth. This four-year fund will contribute: \$15 million annually for healthcare providers and community mental health associations to implement best practices that reduce wait times and provide appropriate care; \$10 million annually for research and sharing information among healthcare providers across the country.

2. *OECD data show that Canada's gross domestic expenditure on R&D, as a percentage of GDP, at just 1.6% in 2013 is lower than the OECD average of 2.4%, and significantly lower than other countries such as the U.S., Korea, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Further, while investments have been and continue to be made in funding programs for research excellence, many researchers rated highly by international standards of excellence continue to be turned down each year due to lack of funding.*

*Does your party plan to increase the base budgets for the three granting councils? If yes, by how much or by what percentage of the GDP?*

**NDP Response:** While the Conservatives trumpet that Canada leads the G7 in higher education research, the truth is that Canada has been losing ground for over a decade. Canada has slipped from third place out of 41 countries to fourth in 2008 and ninth in 2011, when it comes to higher education expenditures in R&D, according to the Science, Technology and Innovation Council. The federal government must take a leadership role to properly value research and make the critical investments needed for Canadian researchers to become the Nobel laureates of tomorrow.

If we are to succeed, it is essential, that we strike the correct balance between applied scientific research and longer-term, discovery-driven research.

- 3. One of the key aspects needed to support people and businesses, including government, is support for research that is conducted both within and outside of academic settings alongside support for various building blocks of Canada's national research capacity and public science.*

*What will your party do to support research in these areas?*

**NDP Response:** Tom Mulcair and the NDP are committed to supporting public science and research. We have opposed the government's reckless cuts to research funding while defending the need for true scientific integrity and evidence based decision making. The NDP has tabled a motion on scientific integrity in the House of Commons (M-453) to ensure communications officers, elected officials, and Ministerial staff could no longer restrict public access to government scientists. The NDP has also tabled Bill C-346 to reinstate Statistics Canada's long-form census and increase the independence of the Chief Statistician.

Tom Mulcair and the NDP are also making targeted investments in business innovation. We have committed to establishing an innovation tax credit for businesses that invest in machinery, equipment and property used in innovation-boosting research and development. This plan will save Canadian businesses making these critical R&D investments approximately \$40 million each year.

After years of Conservative neglect, an NDP government would invest \$40 million over the next four years in the Canadian Space Agency's Space Technology Development Program to help Canadian space companies commercialize new technologies. Tom Mulcair has also announced robust investments to support research and development in the automotive sector, including industry-facing university research.

- 4. Reliable data and research that is both collected and conducted in a standardized manner from a representative sample can be critically and meaningfully used to inform public policy, direct innovation, influence economic and social prosperity, and examine complex socio-economic issues.*

*What will your party do to base policies on scientific evidence?*

**NDP Response:** Tom Mulcair and the NDP have fought to make the voices of the scientific community heard in Ottawa. We have tabled The Parliamentary Science Officer Act, Bill C-558 to end the muzzling of government scientists. The Bill is a first practical step to mend the relationship between scientists and politicians, and will give public science a more robust voice in the federal government. The PSO would have a mandate to assess the state of scientific evidence relevant to any proposal or bill before Parliament; Conduct independent analysis of federal science and technology policy; raise awareness of scientific issues across government and among Canadians; and encourage coordination between departments and agencies conducting scientific research. We have also tabled Bill C-346 to reinstate Statistics Canada's long-form census and increase the independence of the Chief Statistician.

5. *Scientific evidence is key to policy-making. Decisions must be well-informed through public research and building a science culture in Canada that is inter-disciplinary in nature, and supports inquiry and results.*

*Will your party establish a parliamentary science office to guide the use of scientific evidence in policy-making?*

**NDP Response:** Two years ago, the NDP's Opposition Science & Technology Critic tabled *The Parliamentary Science Officer Act*, Bill C-558, to end the muzzling of government scientists. The Bill is a first practical step to mend the relationship between scientists and politicians, and will give public science a more robust voice in the federal government. Modeled on the current Parliamentary Budget Officer, the UK's Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology, and the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy, the Parliamentary Science Officer would be established as an independent agent of Parliament. It would have a legislated mandate to assess the state of scientific evidence relevant to any proposal or bill before Parliament; answer requests from Committees and individual Members for unbiased scientific information; conduct independent analysis of federal science and technology policy; raise awareness of scientific issues across government and among Canadians; encourage coordination between departments and agencies conducting scientific research.

6. *Data from the most recent National Graduates Survey show that Master's degree holders from the class of 2010 held an average total student debt of \$26,600; PhD graduates held an average debt of \$41,100. With fewer public financial assistance programs available, many graduate students are forced to turn to private sources. For PhD graduates that rely on private debt alone, debt has increased 114% from 2000 to 2010 to an average of \$40,000.*

*How does your party plan to increase financial support for graduate students, and by how much?*

**NDP Response:** Conservative and Liberal governments have abandoned supporting post-secondary education. Youth-unemployment is in double-digits, and far too many young people are finding themselves stuck in precarious, low-paid work. Meanwhile, many young people face thousands of dollars in student debt.

An NDP government will take action to address affordability and to lower student debt loads. The NDP has fought long and hard to restore the federal government's role in making post-secondary education affordable and accessible. That's why we tabled the *Post-Secondary Education Act*, designed to ensure adequate and stable funding.

7. *Reflecting on the above or your party's science and technology strategy/platform, how would your party prioritize its investments in science and technology?*

**NDP Response:** Tom Mulcair supports investments in researchers and graduate students of all disciplines. The NDP have committed to making targeted investments in business-led innovation in the manufacturing, auto, and aerospace sectors. We have also committed to making a significant investment in mental health innovation.