

## A mundane budget

The Trudeau government's second budget is all about managing expectations and counting on growth. For what it is it makes sense, but aspects should worry us.

The first budget from Finance Minister Bill Morneau was a change budget. Whether you liked the new direction or not, it was a natural extension of the Trudeau platform and campaign. Then, along came an international economic slowdown. And more importantly, along came Donald Trump. Now the government needs to make decisions recognizing the culture of instability and unpredictability in Washington. Increasing corporate taxes might make sense, but surely not when it is expected Trump will slash U.S. corporate tax rates. If Congress lets him, which is far from certain. That uncertainty on a single issue is magnified many times across the economic spectrum. Morneau and Trudeau had no choice but to be circumspect.

Banking on growth makes sense when there is evidence to support doing so. Lawrence Schembri, deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, said last week that the economy has made good progress since the oil price plunge in 2014. Retail, wholesale and manufacturing sales have all been stronger than expected as well as has international trade and job creation. But crazy policy from Washington could change all that in a relative flash.

That sets the scene. What about the budget specifics? Most of the worst fears expressed by business didn't materialize. No major changes to capital gains tax. Almost all new spending is reined in \$1.2 billion is actually new while much more is from the last budget and much of that has been pushed back for years.

There is some good news. Parents will get more flexible leave by taking lower employment insurance benefits over a longer period of time up to 18 months.

There is \$11 billion for affordable housing, but again, that is part of the \$93 billion announced in the last budget, and it falls short of what the Federation of Canadian Municipalities called for \$12 billion.

There is \$7 billion over 10 years to create new child-care spaces up to 40,000. But a go-slow approach on child care doesn't allow more women to enter or re-enter the workforce, which means the economic benefit from that won't be realized. There is more deficit, for more years, which is the biggest worry. The government doesn't forecast a return to balance until after the next election, which hands opposition parties serious ammunition and goes against the grain for average Canadians who worry about future generations. This is a hold-the-course budget, even the government acknowledges. That may be necessary given global economic uncertainty and unpredictability in Washington. But if the budget doesn't fill you with confidence overall, you're in good company.

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## Letters to the editor

### CASHh seeks your support

Cancer Assistance Services Halton Hills (CASHh) welcomes spring with our annual April door-to-door campaign.

The renewed growth that comes with spring is fleeting. However, CASHh continues to grow through each season over the past 17 years.

We work hard to deliver the free programs that you have entrusted us with, but we cannot do this without your help.

Your generosity reassures us that our work is important and that we can count on you as needs escalate.

Cancer shows no remorse. Our office deals with an average of 96 different patient requests each month for programs. There is no doubt that the increase shows that cancer is not going away.

Sadly we get many calls from other communities desperate for practical help.

It is hard to hear the disappointment and frustrating cries for help. We have prepared a figurative tool kit to coach other areas to embrace a charity that could bring relief to those needing help.

We believe every person and every

community deserves quality care when cancer strikes. Wouldn't it be nice if other communities embraced a charity that cares?

When a canvasser or information arrives at your door we ask that you respond generously.

We are counting on your support to make this possible. The results of your generosity are more programs, awareness and kindness to our cancer patients.

Investing in us makes CASHh the best dividend for Halton Hills. Make your generosity part of our growth strategy.

Sheila Smith,  
Director of Operations

### Drone regs go too far

I fully agree that drones should not fly near airports, but I have issues with some of the new interim recreational drone flight restrictions introduced on March 16, because several rules have no impact on air traffic safety:

The 75-metre minimum distance from people, vehicles, buildings, roads and animals amounts to an effective ban on drone use, in even sparsely populated areas (such as my rural town of Hillsburgh), yet does nothing to improve

air traffic safety.

Due to drones aerodynamic and flight characteristics and gravity, in the rare event of mechanical failure, drones fall vertically, so the safe distance from people, vehicles, buildings, roads and animals does not need to be anywhere near 75 metres. (The American FAA regulation is 25 feet, or 7.6 metres from individuals and sensitive property).

The new rules impact drones weighing between 250 g and 35 kg. Not all drones are created equal. Many newer drones (including mine) feature layers of sophisticated collision avoidance features and won't even take off within airport no fly zones and other restricted air space. If drones are to be categorized, a 0.8 kg drone should not require the same restrictions as a 35-kg drone with no safety features.

As for privacy concerns about recreational drones, the 75 metre distance rule is of no benefit, since criminal trespassing and privacy laws already exist, thus making the hypothetical scenario of flying a drone by someone's window for spying already illegal. Besides, drones would make poor Peeping Tom spying tools due to their wide angle lenses compared to cheaper, quieter cameras with zoom lenses or selfie sticks.

Tristan Clark