

# Alberta NDP would adopt universal child care with or without feds, Notley pledges <sup>[1]</sup>

Opposition leader wants to overhaul provincial electrical system

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**Source:** CBC News

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 6 Jun 2021

## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

NDP leader Rachel Notley would revive a consumer cap on electricity prices, consider a revamped provincial carbon tax and move more aggressively to introduce universal child care, she says.

In a campaign-style stump at the Alberta NDP's virtual convention on the weekend, Notley revealed more details about her vision for diversifying the province's economy, should she get a second chance at being premier.

"Our party is in the strongest position ever, stronger than we were in the last government, and ready to form the next government," Notley told party faithful on Sunday.

Recent polling shows Notley's NDP cruising ahead of Premier Jason Kenney and the United Conservative Party government in palatability with voters. The left-leaning party also out-fundraised the governing party in the most recent quarter.

At the party's first convention since they lost the 2019 provincial election, members voted 98 per cent in favour of retaining Notley as leader, rather than holding a leadership review.

Regrets from her surprise ascension to power in 2015 include not pushing harder to diversify the province's economy, and moving too slowly to adopt affordable child care, she said.

Thus far, the UCP government has been disinterested in co-operating with the federal government on its goal to offer universal child care for \$10 a day by 2026.

Notley said she would happily work with federal counterparts to make it happen — and pledged to adopt universal child care in the province even without any funding from Ottawa.

She is also eyeing substantial changes to Alberta's electricity market, promising to make the power grid net-zero by 2035. An NDP government would do that by incentivizing wind and solar power, transitioning oil and gas workers into geothermal energy and supporting the production of green hydrogen, she told reporters in a news conference. The electricity transition alone would generate at least 60,000 jobs, she said.

She hinted that a Notley government would bring back a provincial carbon tax — the object of much derision from many Alberta conservatives, and the first NDP policy the Kenney government axed.

Now that the Supreme Court of Canada has backed the federal government's right to impose a carbon price on the provinces, it makes little sense for Albertans to hand that money to Ottawa, Notley said.

"We need to be able to implement and execute that carbon pricing system in this province in a way that works for Albertans, that works for Alberta workers, that ultimately can serve to create more jobs, and can continue our place as an energy leader," she said.

Any Alberta-made carbon price would be done with consultation first, she said. Notley said she regrets not working more with rural residents on both labour changes for farm workers and a carbon levy that considered expenses they can't avoid.

In contrast to UCP government moves that have proved controversial, Notley also committed to the public operation of health-care services, and a modern school curriculum informed by evidence, climate action and tackling racism.

Leah Ward, director of campaigns for Metric Strategies, and former director of communications for the Alberta NDP caucus, said she's happy to see the party talking more about economic strategy, rather than emphasizing its commitment to public services.

"The voters told us in 2019 they wanted to see a more clear and hashed out plan on the economy," she said last week.

Convention delegates also debated and passed resolutions, including support for universal child care, advocating for new provincial park

fees to be repealed and urging government to create an emergency action plan to respond to the opioid crisis.

**Region:** Alberta <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** universal child care <sup>[4]</sup>

federal budget <sup>[5]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 9 Jun 2021):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/06/alberta-ndp-would-adopt-universal-child-care-or-without-feds-notley>

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