

2025 REVIEW OF MEMBERS of the NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REPORT

Presented by the



**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

**LA COMMISSION INDÉPENDANTE SUR L'EXAMEN DE LA
RÉMUNÉRATION ET DES AVANTAGES SOCIAUX DES DÉPUTÉS**

NOVEMBER 2025

Acknowledgements

The Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits (ICRMCB) thanks the staff of the Speaker's Office and of the NWT Legislative Assembly for information, research and other support provided for this review. We would also like to thank Susan Ashton who was a very valuable member of our team.

November 27, 2025

The Honourable Shane Thompson
Speaker of the NWT Legislative Assembly
Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Dear Mr. Speaker,

The Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits has completed its review of the remuneration and benefits paid to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, as defined in Section 35.1 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*.

The Commission is pleased to submit this report completed in 2025, which includes our decisions, recommendations and rationale for these conclusions.

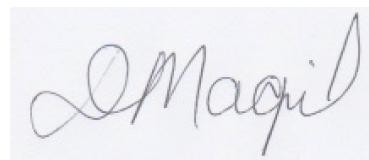
Respectfully submitted,



Ms. Janet Toner
Commission Chair



Mr. Robert C. McLeod
Commissioner



Ms. Dian Papineau-Magill
Commissioner

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Summary of Recommendations

A: Constituency Assistants (CA) – Terms of Employment

1. It is recommended that MLAs seek out support if they hire a Constituency Assistant to assist with answering any questions about the hiring process and responsibilities of being an employee or provide clarification regarding this relationship.
2. It is recommended that while each MLA continues to negotiate the salary level for their Constituency Assistant, the minimum hourly rate should not be less than \$30.00 per hour.
3. It is recommended that the contract used to hire constituency assistants be updated to include the proper names for the current statutory holidays in the Northwest Territories.

B: Speaker Remuneration

1. It is recommended that no adjustments be made to the Speaker's compensation or the Speaker's indemnity.

C: Constituency Offices – Lease Agreements

1. a) It is recommended that a maximum dollar limit for lease agreements for constituency office spaces be established.
b) it is recommended that this amount should not exceed \$50,000 for a twelve-month period.
2. It is recommended that the maximum dollar limit for lease agreements for constituency office spaces is increased each year by either the Canadian Consumer Price Index or an amount established by the Board of Management.
3. It is recommended that if a member exceeds the maximum dollar limit, that the Board would have the discretion to approve the use of the Member(s)'s constituency budget to offset any additional costs.

D: Constituency Offices – Security

1. It is recommended that all Constituency Assistants receive health and safety training particularly on working alone.

- a. During the CAs orientation, there should be training on working alone, such as inviting someone from the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC) to come and speak about health and safety issues around working alone.
- b. At a minimum, all CAs should become familiar with the WSCC Working Alone Code of Practice (September 2016) as part of their orientation.

2. It is recommended that all Constituency Offices have standing operating procedures with a checklist for working alone.

- a. The WSCC Working Alone Code of Practice has sample procedures and checklist in Appendix A. of that document. (Found at:
<https://wscct.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Working%20with%20Alone-%20English%20-20NT%20and%20NU%20-%20September%2030%2C%202016.pdf>)

3. It is recommended that a budget of \$1,500 is created for specific health and safety items related to the office security.

E: Member Benefit Entitlements Upon Leaving Office

- 1. It is recommended that a one-day training event be offered, prior to the end of session, for all Members. This could include information from a financial planner and a pension advisor.
 - a. Each Member could also be offered the opportunity to meet individually with the financial planner and/or the pension advisor, to have the opportunity to discuss their specific needs.
- 2. It is recommended that a Members' reference guide be created that covers key areas such as:
 - a. How to make an official announcement of resignation
 - b. The process for leaving the role of an MLA
 - c. Post-employment rules for former MLAs, including information about the "cooling-off" period
 - d. Benefits for departing Members e.g., retirement information, vacation pay, transition allowance, training support
 - e. Information about health and dental coverage

F: Capital Accommodation Allowance

- 1. It is recommended that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife, if required, should be increased from \$32,000.00 per year to \$35,000.00 per year.
- 2. It is recommended that the additional amount for the dependent remains at \$6,000.00 per year for each dependent residing in the second residence of the Member. However, the maximum total amount will change from \$49,000.00 to a maximum total amount of \$53,000.00 per each fiscal year.
- 3. It is recommended that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife should be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, to ensure the allowance remains in line with the current rental market rates.

G: Transitional Allowance

1. It is recommended that the definition of “transition” found in Section 83 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* includes clarification of when a Member ceases to hold office.
2. It is recommended that the Speaker, Minister and all other Members cease to hold office when the Writ of Election is issued by the Commissioner and parliament is dissolved.
3. It is recommended that a Member, who has served only a four-year term, shall be paid a minimum transition allowance of six months.

H: MLA Base Salary

1. It is recommended that the base salary change to \$120,000.00 per year.
2. It is recommended that a plain language document outlining how MLAs are paid should be added to the website so the public can have a clear understanding of the compensation received by MLAs.
3. It is recommended that increases for the base salary are determined based on the lower of the average percentage increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index for Canada in the previous five calendar years or the Consumer Price Index for Canada on December 31st.

I: Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning Members

1. It is recommended that the Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning members increase from \$1,000 in program funding for each year of service to \$1,500 in program funding for each year of service, up to a maximum of \$18,000.00.

J: Children of a Member

1. It is recommended that comprehensive information be made available to all Members, detailing the process for preparing a claim for extraordinary expenses related to the care of a Member's child. This document aims to ensure that Members have a clear and thorough understanding of when it is appropriate to claim childcare expenses and the steps required to apply for reimbursement. By providing explicit guidance, the process will be more transparent and accessible, reducing uncertainty and helping Members confidently access the support to which they are entitled.
 - a. The information found in Section 12 of the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations* needs to be written in plain language with sample forms and templates included as needed.

2025 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION REVIEW OF MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS (ICRMCB)

1.0 Legislation, Commissioners and Mandate

1.1 Background

The *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, (NWT LECA) Section 35.1, requires that “within 18 months after the polling day for a general election, the Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, shall establish an independent commission and appoint as its members three individuals who are independent, neutral and knowledgeable.”



Former Member

Professional with Relevant
Financial or Legal Designation
And Experience

Interested Member of the
Public

The review of indemnities, allowances, expenses, and benefits provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) is a statutory requirement of the NWT LAECA. A copy of Section 35.1 is included as Appendix A.

On March 17, 2025, the Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker of the Northwest Territories (NWT) Legislative Assembly appointed three members to the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits (ICRMCB).

The Commission was tasked with setting out their recommendations for any suggested change to the compensation and/or benefits Members are entitled to receive. The report is to be submitted to the Speaker within 10 months of the establishment of the Commission. After receiving the report, the Speaker is required to table the report with “the Legislative Assembly as soon as is reasonably possible,” where it may be debated and/or result in changes based on the recommendations found in the Commissions’ report.

The work of the Commission is politically neutral. Further, the Commission and its members are independent of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

1.2 Responsibilities of the Commission

The goal of this Commission is to ensure that MLAs have a reasonable and sustainable compensation and benefits package.

The responsibilities of the Commission include researching materials, seeking public and Member input and outlining areas considered and reviewed, and make recommendations based on their review. Areas of exploration included:

- Indemnities payable to every Member
- Indemnities payable to office holders' taxable allowance for expenses
- Constituency work expense allowance and permissible expenditures
- Duty travel and meals
- All travel allowances
- Northern Living Allowance
- Leave and vacation allowance
- Transition allowance
- Pension and Benefits entitlement
- Constituency Assistant compensation and benefits
- Automatic adjustment to all allowances
- Limits to constituency office lease agreements
- Specific items referred by the Board of Management.

The Commission members then determined which areas of exploration would be addressed through this review.

1.3 Methodology

The Commission was assigned a comprehensive mandate, which involved several key responsibilities related to the compensation and benefits provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly. These responsibilities included:

- Assessment of compensation and benefits.
- Review of specific items referred by the Board of Management.
- Evaluation of reporting requirements associated with Members' and Ministers' expenditures.
- Consideration of other relevant matters related to the compensation, allowances, and benefits provided to all Members and Ministers.

Specifically, this Commission was formally asked by the Speaker to review key items concerning the compensation, benefits, and operational support provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly. The areas identified were:

1. Constituency Assistants: Terms of Employment
2. Speaker Remuneration
3. Constituency Offices: Lease Agreements
4. Constituency Offices: Security
5. Member Benefit Entitlements Upon Leaving Office

The detailed letter from the Speaker, dated December 11, 2024, has been included as Appendix B.

In summary, the Commission completed the review to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the benefits and allowances received by Members. They assessed reporting requirements and procedures to determine if there is an acceptable level of public accountability. They then made decisions, based on the information reviewed, researched, assessed, and heard. A report of their findings (this report) is the culmination of the work carried out by the Commission.

1.4 Commission Members

Janet Toner, Commission Chair



Janet Toner is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CA) with over 30 years of experience. Janet is a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of NWT/Nunavut and a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia.

In 2021, Janet was awarded a Fellow from the Chartered Professional Accountants of the NWT/Nunavut for her exceptional service to the profession.

Ms. Toner has spent most of her career working with Northern governments and organizations. For over 10 years, she was a partner at a local accounting firm, Crowe Mackay LLP, that provided accounting and audit services. From 2014 to 2019, as Assistant Superintendent of Yellowknife Catholic Schools, Janet was responsible for the business activities of the school board. She currently has a consulting company and specializes in financial and human resource management.

Janet has lived in Yellowknife over 30 years and has been active in the community. She has volunteered for many organizations such as the Stanton Hospital Foundation and YWCA NWT. She has been appointed to the Board of the NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation. She was also the chair of the audit committee for the City of Yellowknife.

Robert C. McLeod, Member



I was born in Aklavik and raised in Inuvik's West End. I worked for 23 years as a Journeyman Carpenter, Maintenance Supervisor and Maintenance Manager in both Aklavik and Inuvik.

For 15 years, I served as the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes. For the last 11 years of my time as MLA, I was a member of the Executive Council holding several portfolios including Minister of Housing, Minister of MACA, Minister of ENR, Finance Minister and Deputy Premier.

I served as Chair of the Inuvialuit Development Corporation from 2021 to 2025.

I enjoy spending time with my family, especially my grandchildren, always reading, participating and involved in curling, badminton and fastpitch. I really enjoy being out on the land at our camps with the family.

Dian Papineau-Magill, Member



I was born and raised in a small town in Northern Ontario but came even further north almost 20 years ago. Like so many before me, I came for a job, but it's the beauty of the land and people that have kept me here.

I am an active member of the NWT TA as my school's LRO, and when a volunteer is needed in the community, you will find me behind the lines, helping to make things run. I believe that we should all do what we can, when we can. This is why I am honoured to have been chosen to help with the important work of this Commission.

Mahsi.

1.5 Commission Terms of Reference

Pursuant to Section 35.1 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, within eighteen months after the polling day for a general election, the Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, is to establish an independent commission and appoint as its members three individuals who are independent, neutral, and knowledgeable.

The last comprehensive review of Members compensation and benefits occurred in 2021, with a report provided to the Speaker on August 5, 2021.

The Independent Commission used the ICRMCB Terms of Reference as the primary guide and direction for its mandate.

The main objectives of the Commission outlined within the Terms of Reference were to:

- Review and evaluate the indemnities, additional indemnities, allowances, expenses, and benefits provided to Members to determine whether the amounts are adequate and appropriate.
- Examine specific matters referred to the Commission by the Board of Management.
- Assess the reporting requirements and procedures for Members' expenditures to establish whether they meet public expectations for accountability.
- Consider any other issues the Commission deems relevant to the compensation, allowances, and benefits provided to Members and Ministers.
- Submit a report to the Speaker outlining any recommendations for changes to Members' indemnities, allowances, reimbursements, and other benefits that the Commission determines are necessary.

For further details about the Terms of Reference and the Commission's responsibilities, please see Appendix C.

2.0 Review Process

2.1 Review Process Steps

1. The Speaker's Office provided the Commission with a comprehensive overview document on the current framework and emerging issues of the Legislative Assembly. This included: the Commission's role, Terms of Reference and responsibilities; a presentation by the Office of the Clerk; the timeline for completing the review; a copy of the 2021 Commission Report; updates regarding the status of recommendations from that report (accepted, modified, or declined); current indemnities (remuneration), allowances, and expenses; the Members' Handbook; Annual Report of the Legislative Assembly; and information about the NWT Legislative Assembly Pension Plans (2023). The overview also highlighted recurring themes within the Assembly that may require attention during the Commission's review and discussions with Members.

The Speaker provided a letter formally requesting "a review of several key items concerning the compensation, benefits, and operational support provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly".

2. The Commission then met and identified the following tasks they would complete to meet the mandate of this work, as per the Terms of Reference and the issues identified by the Speaker. The following task list was created.
 - a. Review and assess the indemnities, additional indemnities, allowances, expenses and benefits provided to Members to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the amounts.
 - b. Review and assess specific items referred to the Commission by the Speaker.
 - c. Review and assess overall compensation for Members, including benefits, pension options, transition allowance, retraining assistance, best way to adjust member's salaries and the childcare allowance.
 - d. Discuss and review the capital accommodation allowance.
 - e. Discuss and review Constituency Assistant's terms of employment and constituency budget.
 - f. Discuss and review the Speaker's remuneration.
 - g. The work and recommendations of previous NWT Independent Commissions to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits were considered. Other Canadian jurisdictions were studied, to compare (where appropriate) the way Members were compensated.
 - h. Staff at the Legislative Assembly were asked to provide additional information for clarification or edification purposes.
 - i. Provide the Speaker a report setting out any recommendations for change that the Commission determines should be made to the Members indemnities, allowances, reimbursements and other benefits.
3. A review and analysis of relevant background resources was conducted. Documents identified were used to inform and support the discussion carried out by the Commission. This information was essential when making recommendations for submission to the Speaker. The following lists the main documents reviewed for this work.
 - *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*
 - *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*
 - *Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act*
 - *Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act*
 - *Supplementary Retiring Allowances Regulations*
 - Board of Management Policies
 - Legislative Assembly Members' Handbook Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly
 - Independent Commission to Review Compensation & Benefits, Overview of Current Regime and Issues, Power Point presentation
 - 2023 – MLA Jurisdictional Survey
 - 2024 Legislative Assembly Annual Report
 - Appointment of Constituency Assistant and Employment Agreement
 - Recommendations Accepted or Rejected – 18 and 19th Assembly
 - NWT Legislative Assembly Pension Plans, March 31, 2023 (English and French Versions)
 - Pension Administration Report
4. Interviews with Members of the NWT Legislative Assembly were conducted, to obtain their input, hear their concerns and suggestions. Nine of the 19 Members were interviewed by the Commission, and two Members submitted a written response.

In advance of their interview, each Member was sent a list of questions (attached as Appendix D) to help them prepare. The questions and issues were developed from an assessment of the information, issues and other areas for consideration brought forward to and discussed by the Commission. Notes were compiled following each interview.

5. Input from members of the public was specifically solicited through media advertising and on the Commission's website. Examples of the letters, advertisements and website have been included as Appendix E.
 - a. Letters were sent on August 14, 2025, to each MLA, communities and Indigenous Governments in the NWT asking for submissions.
 - b. Cabin Radio wrote an article, "Commission Wants Your Views on NWT MLAs' Pay", posted on Monday, August 18, 2025, at 5:50am MT.
 - c. Public Service Announcements were released on August 12, 2025. They were sent to Northern Media and CBC Contacts (e.g., CBC North, Cabin Radio, CKLB, NNSL, Inuvik Drum, Moose FM, and Radio Canada (French)).
 - d. Advertisements went out in English and French on the NTLA (Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly) Facebook and Instagram page on August 12, 2025.
 - e. Advertisements were published in News North – NWT on August 11, 2025.
 - i. It should be noted that the advertisement was also to be placed in the Yellowknifer on August 13, 2025, which didn't occur due to a technical issue.
 - ii. The English version of the advertisement was then placed in the Yellowknifer on Wednesday, October 8, 2025.
 - f. Additional advertisements were placed on Cabin Radio the week of October 6, 2025.
 - g. A website was created where respondents could submit their responses using a Webform, or access information about submitting written submissions either by mail or email. Contact information to arrange a telephone or video meeting was included.

There were no written submissions received from members of the public.

6. The Commission members researched other documents as needed, to ensure they had complete information prior to making any recommendations.
7. The Commission members, through discussion and examination of the information, made the recommendations contained in this Report.

2.2 Review Limitations

The Commission supports having representatives from members across the NWT. However, the Commission recommends adjusting the budget if appointed members do not reside in Yellowknife. In the past two Commissions, all appointed members were Yellowknife residents, which facilitated regular in-person meetings throughout their terms at no additional cost.

Of the three Commission appointees this time, two lived outside Yellowknife—one in Hay River and one in Inuvik. Due to travel expenses, only two in-person meetings occurred; all other discussions happened via Zoom or email.

3.0 About the NWT Legislative Assembly

3.1 Consensus Government

The Northwest Territories is one of only two jurisdictions in Canada with a consensus system of government instead of one based on party politics. Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected as independents. After the election, which occurs every four years, all Members meet as a Caucus to set priorities for that Assembly. The Caucus remains active throughout their term as the forum where all Members meet as equals.

To have fair and equitable representation, Ministers are generally selected from across the territory – two from the north, two from the south and two from the central part of the NWT. There is also consideration of a balanced cabinet, such as having representatives who are Indigenous and/or female. Once selected by secret ballot, the Premier (also selected by secret ballot) assigns the Ministers to be responsible for one or more government departments and Boards.

Some Members choose not to accept a nomination to Cabinet because they prefer to be free to ask questions of the Ministers or before standing committees. They feel they can better represent their constituents as regular Members.

The 11 Regular Members hold the balance of power, as only seven Cabinet Ministers are elected. Consensus government does not mean that unanimous agreement is necessary for decisions to be made, motions passed, and legislation enacted. A simple majority carries the vote.

3.2 Constituencies in the NWT

There are 19 electoral districts which are geographical areas represented by a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Electoral districts are also called constituencies or ridings. Of these, 12 are located outside of Yellowknife and seven constituencies have more than one community. Five of the constituencies rely in whole or partially on access through air travel.

CONSTITUENCY	COMMUNITIES
Dehcho	Enterprise, Fort Providence, Kátł'odeeche Nation, Kakisa
Hay River North	Hay River
Hay River South	Hay River
Inuvik Boot Lake	Inuvik
Inuvik Twin Lakes	Inuvik
Mackenzie Delta	Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic

CONSTITUENCY	COMMUNITIES
Monfwi	Behchokǫ, Gameti, Wekweèti, Whati
Nahendeh	Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Sambaa K'e, Wrigley
Nunakput	Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk
Sahtu	Colville Lake, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulita
Thebacha	Fort Smith
Tu Nedhé - Wiilideh	Dettah, Fort Resolution, Ndilo, Łutselk'e
Frame Lake (Yellowknife)	Yellowknife
Great Slave (Yellowknife)	Yellowknife
Kam Lake (Yellowknife)	Yellowknife
Range Lake (Yellowknife)	Yellowknife
Yellowknife Centre	Yellowknife
Yellowknife North	Ingraham Trail (Cassidy Point, Madeline Lake East, Madeline Lake West, Pontoon Lake, Prelude Lake, Prelude Lake East), Yellowknife
Yellowknife South	Yellowknife

Members travel in their ridings often, and many live in their home community. Communities expect their MLA to attend important community events, such as attending performances, parades, anniversaries or funerals. They are often asked to open public buildings or make speeches at community events. They attend as many occasions as possible, as it helps them keep in touch with how people feel about various issues.

It is also the custom for food to be served at constituency meetings. Interpretation services are often required. This adds additional challenges and burden (time, logistics and cost) on the MLA being able to connect with and support their constituents.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of a Member of the Legislative Assembly

A Member is the face of the government and is often the first point of contact in their constituency. This role, outside the work of the Legislative Assembly, is somewhat defined by the constituents, the people living in the riding the Member has been elected to represent. MLAs are expected to support their constituents, which means they may be asked to review and deal with many situations, that lead them into legal areas, health issues, education, housing, advocacy roles or other areas that are of concern and importance. Members provide information and problem solve issues for constituents on government

policies, services and programs. This requires knowledge of how government works and the ability to determine the difference between big policies or small issues.

MLAs must be sensitive to their constituents and community's needs. To do this, they must be present and accessible in their communities, to engage with their constituents and listen to any concerns. They normally have at least one office in their riding where constituents can meet with the MLA or their Constituency Assistant, discuss issues or concerns and get information about the Legislative Assembly or various government departments or agencies, or to learn about what resources and supports might be available and who to connect with.

Members represent everyone, even those who did not vote for them, and act as their spokesperson. They research and make statements in the Legislative Assembly about important issues, and help make decisions about policy, finances, and issues of concern for the residents of the NWT. Working with their fellow Members, they debate, deliberate, introduce bills about important issues, and vote on legislation to create laws. Regular members participate in standing committees that monitor and provide advice to Minister's responsible for specific areas, such as health, social programs, economic development or government operations. There are times when Special Committees are established to deal with major issues.

MLAs also participate in Caucus, where all members are included as equals regardless of their role within the Legislative Assembly. They follow current events, read reports, attend meetings and conferences and monitor the media. At times, they are asked to present petitions from the public in the Legislative Assembly. They meet with groups who have special concerns, or interest in specific areas, talk with the media to help keep the public informed and keep in touch with their constituents to find out what they think about certain issues.

It is not easy to define the workload of an MLA. Much of that is determined by their personal contributions, the physical size of their constituency, their travel back and forth to Yellowknife and the role the Member takes in the Legislative Assembly. Some take on tasks, responsibilities and requests by constituents that would not necessarily form part of their duties. This may not be at the forefront of the MLAs thinking but this goodwill could lead to future electability by their being available for all manner of needs.

It is important that Members of the Legislative Assembly carry out their duties with integrity and honour, showing respect to their constituents, their fellow Members and to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. It is equally important that Members be seen to be carrying out their duties in this manner. Citizens require public accountability and expect the highest standards from those in positions of power. When MLAs take office, they swear to a statutory oath of allegiance, loyalty and office. They are also bound to follow the [Code of Conduct for Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly](#) and the [Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members](#).

The Commission determined that it is important to take into consideration the life and all the duties required of an MLA when reviewing and recommending any recommendations related to Members compensation and benefits and other related areas as identified.

5.0 Committees of the 20th Legislative Assembly

Committees are an essential part of the Legislative Assembly. They make the NWT Legislative Assembly more effective by allowing Members to look at issues in a detailed manner. Committees scrutinize legislation and government operations, provide detailed analysis, and give advice to the government through their oversight of ministerial performance, review of budgets, and examination of policy and legislative proposals. This structure enables thorough consideration, discussion, and review of specific issues at hand.

Functions of NWT Legislative Committees include the following:

- Committees review bills to provide advice and recommend amendments to the government, by examining proposed legislation.
- They monitor and evaluate the performance of ministerial activities and operations and scrutinize government actions as part of their oversight of the government.
- Committees review government spending by examining Business Plans and Main Estimates of the various departments and providing advice on budgets and funding that requires approval from the Assembly.
- Committees conduct inquiries into various matter of public interest.
- They provide advice and analysis of government initiatives, legislation, and other matters with the intent of holding the government accountable in the consensus-based system.
- Committees occasionally travel to various parts of the NWT, allowing members of the public to provide input and see the Legislature in action.
- They facilitate public consultation to gather input on key issues.

Committee meetings are held both during and between sessions, ensuring continuous engagement with legislative matters and providing Members with ongoing opportunities for participation and oversight.

Quorum for all Committees is a majority of Committee Members. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that all Members are fulfilling their committee obligations by:

- Attending regularly and on time,
- Preparing for meetings, and
- Participating in meetings in a productive way.

If a member is absent for six meeting days in a calendar year without a valid explanation, the Committee may recommend to the House that the Member be removed from the Committee.

There are three types of committees:

1. Committee of the Whole
2. Standing Committees
3. Special Committees

1. Committee of the Whole

This committee consists of all Members of the Assembly. The proceedings are not as formal as the Assembly and have flexible rules. The Deputy Speaker chairs this committee. There are also two Deputy Chairpersons who assist the Chair of the Committee of the Whole.

The Legislative Assembly refers various matters to this Committee. For example, all Bills are brought to the Committee after Second Reading for review that might lead to suggested changes. All business conducted in the Committee of the Whole is reported to the Assembly by the Chairperson. The Assembly then decides whether to accept the Committee's report and adopt the decisions made.

2. Standing Committees

Standing Committees carry out much of the work of the Assembly. They help to ensure that all members can voice their opinions on issues. Through Committee reports, tabled in the Legislative Assembly, Standing Committees provide input to assist the Government in moving forward with its proposals.

All MLAs, excluding the Speaker and Cabinet members, are expected to participate on a minimum of two standing committees and at least one special committee (if there is more than one special committee).

There are seven Standing Committees in this 20th Legislative Assembly.

The **Board of Management**, (BOM) chaired by the Speaker, administers the Assembly support services and advises the Legislature on matters such as Members' indemnities, benefits and allowances, and provides for the management and operation of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

The other Standing Committees are:

- Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight (SCOAO):
 - Reviews issues with government-wide implications.
- Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment (SCEDE):
 - Considers matters related to economic affairs, public infrastructure, energy policy, environment, and sustainability development.
- Standing Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO):
 - Considers matters related to various government departments, finance, workers' safety, official languages, emergency preparedness, and government service delivery.
- Standing Committee on Social Development (SCOSD):
 - Considers matters related to social, cultural, and justice policy; mental health and addictions; sports and recreation; housing and homelessness; and any other referred matters.
- Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges (SCOPP):
 - Inquiries into matters referred by the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker, or the Board of Management. Reviews reports of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Integrity Commissioner,

and implications of self-government agreements on Legislative Assembly powers. This committee also reviews Code of Conduct of Members, rules and practices of the House and its committees, and matters of privilege.

- Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) (New):
 - Reviews and provides follow-up reporting on the Public Accounts and the Auditor General of Canada's financial or performance audits of territorial entities and programs. Engages with audit partners to build capacity and best practices for audit review and follow-up.¹

3. Special Committees

Special Committees are created as needed by the Assembly. Responsibilities of each special committee are determined by the Legislative Assembly, as well as the time frame for completion of their mandate.

¹ Information about Legislative Committees established in February 2024 session found at:
<https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/documents-proceedings/news-releases/legislative-priorities-set-motion-committees-established>

6.0 Commission Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits - Recommendations

The Commission was assigned the responsibility of conducting a thorough review of the indemnities, allowances, expenses and benefits available to Members of the Legislative Assembly. The purpose of this review was to evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of these provisions for Members.

Acting on behalf of the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the Speaker formally requested a review of several key areas, including compensation, benefits, and operational support provided to Legislative Assembly Members.

Additional Areas of Recommendation

During the review process, the Commission considered feedback from Members of the Legislative Assembly and identified further areas to review. These areas are as follows:

- Capital Accommodation Allowance: The Commission examined the provisions related to Members' accommodation and considered adjustments or clarifications to ensure adequacy and fairness for those required to maintain residences in the capital due to their legislative responsibilities.
- Transitional Allowance: Recommendations were made regarding the transitional allowance provided to Members upon leaving office, with the aim of supporting their adjustment following the conclusion of their legislative service.
- MLA Base Salary: The Commission considered the base salary level for MLAs, reflecting upon Member input and current practices, and formulated recommendations concerning its adequacy and structure.
- Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning Members: The Commission reviewed the amount offered for retraining for Members who have left office.
- Children of a Member: There was discussion and review of the system and processes about accessing compensation for extraordinary events for childcare services.

The following are the areas reviewed by the Commission, their findings and recommendations.

A: Constituency Assistants (CA) – Terms of Employment

Background

Constituency work is defined in the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, S1. (1) as:

"any work directly connected with a member's responsibility as a member in relation to the ordinary and proper representation of members of the public...."

A Constituency Assistant's role is dependent on the needs of the MLA for their respective riding. Generally, a CA provides help and information to constituents regarding government issues, including resolving problems, especially in communities that do not have a Government Support Officer, and play

a role in organizing and attending local events and ceremonial occasions. They act as a first line of contact for the Member and ensure the Member is aware of community issues that may need action or support.

There are several allowable expenses related to constituency support identified in Section 11 of the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations* such as advertising, newsletters, promotional items, contributions to a community feast or event, expenses related to constituency meetings, an office and “salaries of a constituency assistant...”.

Compensation for CAs has been an issue for many years. Many past Commissions have reviewed this area of concern. The key is that MLAs have the flexibility to use their budget to hire CAs or spend their budget on other areas identified as allowable expenses under the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*.

Constituency Assistants are not employees of the Legislative Assembly or the GNWT. Hiring a Constituency Assistant is solely the responsibility of each Member. Yellowknife MLAs often share a CA so the person can be hired full-time, being paid a percentage of their salary by each MLA that formed this partnership. Other MLAs, especially those who serve many communities or are trying to find someone in a few communities, find this challenging as the budget does not allow for this expense.

Each MLA identifies the scope of work for their CA. Some MLAs indicated they require administrative and local support while others want their CA to assist with higher end tasks, such as completing research on their behalf, perform outreach, casework or assist with event planning. The focus is on flexibility for this position; meeting the current needs of the MLA during their term, which can shift with changing government priorities. There was agreement that being able to attract and hire qualified candidates made it easier for the MLA to do their job.

Members must enter an employment contract with staff of their constituency office. CAs can either be hired (as an employee) or have a service contract in place (contractor). They mutually agree on the wage to be paid, benefits to be offered and hours of work. Currently there is no standard wage amount set for the CA position. If the CA is an employee, they are eligible for Northern Employment Benefit Services (NEBS), if they work more than 20 hours per week and worked a full year and any other benefits provided in the employment agreement (sick leave, vacation, etc.). The CAs do not have a pension plan. All Members must register, in accordance with the *Workers Compensation Act*, as employers with Workers Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC). Everything, including deductions, must be paid by the Member.

Many MLAs have never hired a staff person before. They are not aware of the various laws and acts they must adhere to e.g., *NWT Labour Standards Act*, *Safety Act*, *Workers Compensation Act* and *NWT Human Rights Act*. Members can request assistance from Legislative Assembly staff to hire a person, assist with the contract and terms of employment.

[Request from the Speaker](#)

“We request a thorough review of the terms and conditions of employment for Constituency Assistants (CAs), including compensation, benefits, and job responsibilities. Given the vital role they play in supporting Members of the Legislative Assembly in their engagement with constituents, it is essential that their employment conditions are competitive and reflective of their contributions. The review

should also examine whether Constituency Assistants should be considered part of the public services, which could provide them with improved pay and benefits.”

Source Documentation

The following source documents - Acts or Regulations – play an integral role in guiding the Commission’s discussions and decisions regarding the terms of employment for Constituency Assistants. These legislative references inform the framework for compensation, benefits, and job responsibilities, and establish the parameters within which Members of the Legislative Assembly must operate when hiring and managing CAs.

1. *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, R-101-99, December 7, 1999, s 16. (1).

“The following expenses must be paid, on behalf of the member, directly to the person to whom the payment is owed:

1. (a) the salary of a constituency assistant and any payment that must be made pursuant to an enactment in relation to the salary;
- (b) the amount or amounts payable under a short-term service contract”.

2. *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, R-101-99, December 7, 1999, s 11. (1), g.

“The following types of expenses necessarily incurred by a member to carry out his or her constituency work may be reimbursed under section 29 of the Act:

- (g) salaries of a constituency assistant and amounts payable under short-term service contracts”.

3. 20th Legislative Assembly Members’ Handbook, Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Section 117 in the Members’ Handbook covers information about Constituency Assistants. It provides information about hiring a CA, who is eligible to be hired as a CA, terms of employment, recruitment, authority and the use of a service contract.

In Section 117.8, it states that members may request the preparation of one or more services contracts by contacting Members’ and Precinct Services. “The request must include detail of the work to be undertaken, the amount to be paid and the time period in which the project is to be completed”.

Discussion

- Members are provided supports and information about how to recruit Constituency Assistants and are made aware of their roles and responsibilities with respect to hiring practices e.g., information in the Members’ Handbook and access to an information package through the Moodle platform under the section “*Responsibilities as an Employer*”. From the information

provided by the Members, they expressed the need for additional information that would provide further clarity and support.

- MLAs are provided with information about hiring Constituency Assistants and the various components of becoming an employee, but they may need encouragement to continue to review the materials and seek additional support from Legislative Assembly staff who can assist with questions such as how to provide a salary increase each year or their responsibilities with respect to CA salary deductions.
- Most of the information about hiring CAs is provided during the Members initial orientation. There is a great deal of information provided about many topics at that time. Information about hiring a CA and all the aspects that form part of offering a service contract may not be fully understood, given all the information being provided during orientation.
- Each MLA is provided with a set budget reflective of their riding e.g. northern and more isolated ridings have a somewhat larger budget. That overall budget can include the CA salary (if hiring), costs of advertising, newsletter or printed materials for distribution, cost of purchasing information for inclusion in the member's newsletter, translation and interpretation services, professional services, and other items as detailed in the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, R-101-99, December 7, 1999, s 11. (1), (b).
- There was a suggestion that there be a set wage for CAs. This would be created by looking at comparable salaries within the GNWT Public Service.
- The *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, Section 21, "Deemed adjustment in amounts" includes information about averaging salaries. The average is based on a five-year average or the annual rate, whichever is less. This was considered for the Constituency Assistants salaries as well.
- The Commission explored whether it might be possible to second a person from the GNWT, which would provide them with improved pay and benefits.
- All interviewed expressed their support for the CA to receive benefits through NEBS and identified it would be of value if there could be a way for the CA to have a pension. "People need to have some continuity and make a commitment and not have to sacrifice their future."
- All Commission Members agreed with what they heard from the Members that flexibility is essential and there needs to be separation between the CA and the government.
- Members need to be able to do what works for them, and their constituency, including hiring the best person to act as their CA.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that MLAs are encouraged to seek support if they hire a Constituency Assistant to assist with answering any questions about the hiring process and responsibilities of being an employee or provide clarification regarding this relationship.
2. It is recommended that while each MLA continues to negotiate the salary level for their Constituency Assistant, the minimum hourly rate should not be less than \$30.00 per hour.
3. It is recommended that the contract used to hire constituency assistants be updated to include the proper names for the current statutory holidays in the Northwest Territories.

B: Speaker Remuneration

Background

The Speaker, elected by all Members, assumes the position of highest authority in the Legislative Assembly and represents the Legislature in all its powers and proceedings. The following are the duties of this office.

1. The Speaker acts as a spokesperson of the Assembly in external relations and officially greets guests.
2. They oversee Assembly sittings, enforce the rules, order and conduct of business.
 - a. They only participate in voting to present the budget or resolve a tie.
3. The Speaker manages the Assembly's daily administration.

The Speaker also attends to the tasks of being an MLA, such as responding to the concerns of their constituents.

The Speaker receives a base salary of \$117,668.00, that all Members receive. In addition to this base salary, the Member serving as the Speaker is paid an indemnity of \$57,328.00 to compensate for the additional responsibilities and duties associated with the office.

It was noted that it was and has been difficult to recruit a Member to act as the Speaker. This may or may not be attributed to the renumeration for this position.

Request from the Speaker

The Board of Management seeks a comprehensive review of the current remuneration package for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Discussion

- It is recognized that the indemnity for the Speaker is less than the Premier and Ministers' indemnity.
- In a review of amounts paid across the country, it was found that most Ministers and Speakers are paid the same amount.
- Most of the Members interviewed did not recommend an adjustment to the indemnity currently offered to the Speaker.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that no adjustments be made to the Speaker's compensation or the Speaker's indemnity.

C: Constituency Offices - Lease Agreements

Background

The Legislative Assembly pays the costs of leasing constituency office space, to enable Members the ability to provide access and services to their constituents. The office space lease cost is not part of the MLA budget but is paid by the Legislative Assembly.

The GNWT's policy for MLA constituency office lease agreements requires Members to get approval from the Board of Management for lease requests after negotiating market rental rates with a landlord, as the Legislative Assembly ultimately holds the lease. Equipment and furniture are provided upon request for each constituency office. The Member can also ask Members' and Precinct Services, Legislative Assembly to arrange for the installation of fax and/or telephone lines and telephone directory advertising.

The costs for leasing office space in the NWT have increased over the past few years. There is little control over that, as the MLA is leasing a suitable office space based on local market rate.

Request from the Speaker

The Board requests a thorough review of the policies and standards governing constituency offices, with particular attention to lease agreements.

We propose establishing maximum limits for lease agreements for constituency office spaces. Should a Member wish to lease a space that exceeds the established maximum, the Board would have the discretion to approve the use of the Member's constituency budget to offset any additional costs.

We also ask that the Commission provide a clear rationale or basis for determining the appropriate lease agreement limits for each constituency, considering factors such as regional cost variances, accessibility, and space requirements. This will ensure the decision-making process is fair and reflective of the unique needs of each constituency.

Source Documentation

The following source documents (Acts or Regulations) were relevant to informing the Commission as part of their discussion and decision-making regarding constituency offices.

1. *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, R-101-99, December 7, 1999, s 11. (1), a.

"The following types of expenses necessarily incurred by a member to carry out his or her constituency work may be reimbursed under section 29 of the Act:

(a) with respect to the establishment and operation of a constituency office...

3. 20th Legislative Assembly Members' Handbook, Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Constituency Office Space, Sections 114 to 116 of the Members' Handbook for the 20th Legislative Assembly provides clear guidance on the procedure for securing constituency office space. This framework is designed to support members in offering accessible services to their constituents.

Members are not permitted to enter into lease agreements for constituency office space without first obtaining approval from the Board. Once the Board has granted approval, the Legislative Assembly will prepare a formal contract between itself and the landlord to finalize the leasing arrangement. Should a Member wish to maintain offices in more than one community, they must provide valid justification for this request. This requirement ensures that the allocation of office space is consistent with the intended purpose of serving constituents effectively.

3. Current Lease Costs

The following table shows the current lease costs for 11 Members who have constituency offices in their communities. Yellowknife Members, until recently, have constituency offices in the Legislative Assembly.

MLA/Owner	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
Daniel Mcneeley	1,200.00	14,400.00
Denny Rodgers	5,500.00	66,000.00
George Nerysoo	812.50	9,750.00
Jane Weyallon Armstrong	3,000.00	36,000.00
Jay Macdonald	2,000.00	24,000.00
Lesa Semmler	3,906.67	46,880.04
Lucy Kuptana	3,000.00	36,000.00
R.J. Simpson	2,500.00	30,000.00
Shane Thompson	3,093.75	37,125.00
Sheryl Yakeleya	3,000.00	36,000.00
Vince McKay	2,125.00	25,500.00
TOTAL		361,655.04

Discussion

- The constituency office serves as a local point of contact for constituents to receive help with problems, provide a voice for their community and riding, and sometimes to act as a mediator.
- It is important to ensure MLAs have a local presence in their respective ridings.
- The constituency office is operated by the local MLA for their riding. The MLA must have autonomy to operate their office in a manner that best suits the needs of their constituents.
- They are places for the Member to “keep in touch” with their constituents, a place where people can go to have a conversation about their community’s priorities and needs.
- There is no standard template; no government approved floor plan for this office.
- It is difficult for those MLAs who have multiple communities within their riding to determine if they require more than one constituency office, especially given the distances between communities and the cost of travel between communities. The lease would be covered, but the Member needs to find the money within their constituency budget to hire a person to man the additional office(s).
- It is recognized that finding appropriate and cost-effective office space is sometimes difficult to find in the NWT, especially in the smaller communities. Choice is limited and lease costs are not in the control of the MLA.
- It is important to have a location that is accessible, visible and inviting, again which is sometimes difficult in their community.
- Rental rates were explored to determine a fair overall rental value that should be considered.

Recommendations

1. a) It is recommended that a maximum dollar limit for lease agreements for constituency office spaces be established.
 - b) it is recommended that this amount should not exceed \$50,000 for a twelve-month period.
2. It is recommended that the maximum dollar limit for lease agreements for constituency office spaces is increased each year by either the Canadian Consumer Price Index or an amount established by the Board of Management.
3. It is recommended that if a member exceeds the maximum dollar limit, that the Board would have the discretion to approve the use of the Member(s)’s constituency budget to offset any additional costs.

D: Constituency Office - Security

Background

Members are responsible for ensuring that constituency office work environments meet safety and security requirements and protect constituency office staff, office assets and information, and the public in general.

There was a recent event in Hay River where a Constituency Assistant was working alone, which raised safety concerns for all staff who often work alone in their constituency office.

Request from the Speaker

Given the unique challenges in certain regions and the remote nature of many constituency offices, we request that the Commission assess current security arrangements and identify whether additional measures may be necessary.

Source Documentation

1. The *Safety Act* identifies that every employer shall implement and maintain an occupational health and safety program for a work site as required by the regulations. (SNWT 2023, c.30, s.4(1)).

HEALTH AND SAFETY – Duty of Employer

“Every employer shall

- (a) maintain his or her establishment in such a manner that the health and safety of person in the establishment are not likely to be endangered;
- (b) take all reasonable precautions and adopt and carry out all reasonable techniques and procedures to ensure the health and safety of every person in his or her establishment; and
- (c) provide the first aid service requirements set out in the regulations pertaining to his or her class of establishment.

2. Specifically, safety for a GNWT constituency assistant includes following the GNWT *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations* (R-090-2024). In Part 3, General Duties of Employers, s.12, it states:

“An employer shall, in respect of a work site,

- (a) provide and maintain systems of work and working environments that ensure, as far is reasonably possible, the health and safety of workers.

3. S..33, “Working Alone or at Isolated Work Site”, (GNWT *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations* R-090-2024) notes the following:

“33. (1) In this section, “work alone” means to work at a work site as the only worker at the work site, in circumstances where assistance from another person who is a first aid attendant is not readily available in the event of injury or emergency.

(2) If a worker is required or permitted to work alone or at an isolated work site, an employer, in consultation with the Committee or representative or, if no Committee or representative is available, the worker and other workers, shall identify the hazards arising from the conditions and circumstances of that work.

(3) An employer shall take reasonable measures to eliminate or reduce the risks posed by the hazards identified under subsection (2), including the establishment of an effective communication system that consists of

- (a) radio communications,
- (b) phone or cellular phone communication, or
- (c) any other means that provides effective communication considering the risks involved.

Discussion

- There was agreement that Constituency Assistants have the right to work in a safe place.
- It is also noted that it is not always possible for them to work in an environment where there are other people and offices close to them.
- To date, there have been few issues with respect to security in constituency offices, but it is recognized this can change as it just did in Hay River.
- In October 2025, Manitoba Government reported incidents of recent fires and vandalism (windows broken) in two constituency offices. Police are investigating and the legislature is exploring whether or what additional measures can be put in place.²
- The Sergeant-at Arms is a permanent officer of the House responsible for the preservation of order, decorum, and security in the House. In the Sergeant-at-Arms job description, under Scope, it notes:
 - “This position requires the incumbent to provide advice and guidance or make decisions on controversial issues, particularly matters affecting safety and security. These will impact on the Legislative business, Members’ work, public access to the Legislative Assembly Building and media and government agencies.” (September 13, 2023, GNWT Job Description)
- The Sergeant-at-Arms position doesn’t have a hands-on responsibility for constituency offices but is in a position of being able to provide advice and guidance on how to ensure a safe workplace.
- It was noted by one Member that they were considering putting in a panic button in their office. Their office is situated in a secure building, but this added measure was felt to be necessary given there would be times their CA would be working alone.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that all Constituency Assistants receive health and safety training particularly on working alone.
 - a. During the CAs orientation, there should be training on working alone, such as inviting someone from the Workers’ Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC) to come and speak about health and safety around working alone.
 - b. At a minimum, all CAs should become familiar with the WSCC Working Alone Code of Practice (September 2016) as part of their orientation.
2. It is recommended that all Constituency Offices have standing operating procedures with a checklist for working alone.
 - a. The WSCC Working Alone Code of Practice has sample procedures and checklist in Appendix A. of that document. (Found at:

² Information retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/11460597/security-may-be-increased-at-manitoba-constituency-offices-after-fires-and-vandalism/>

<https://wscc.nt.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Working%20with%20Alone-%20English%20-%20NT%20and%20NU%20-%20September%2030%2C%202016.pdf>

3. It is recommended that a budget of \$1,500 is created for specific health and safety items related to the office security.

E: Member Benefit Entitlements Upon Leaving Office

Background

MLAs leaving the government can access specific benefits, including a pension based on years of service and best taxable income, a retirement allowance, and a transition allowance of up to \$10,000 for retraining, education, or to help start a new business. They can also receive information on how to continue certain benefits, such as health and dental plans.

The Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly provides a contributory pension plan for its elected Members. The plan is registered under the *Canada Income Tax Act*. The *Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act* sets out the provisions of the basic MLA Pension Plan, in which all Members participate. Members are required to join this “Registered Plan” as soon as they are elected. Members do have access to pension advisors and financial planner’s before leaving office.

Some former members have expressed mental health issues over loss of job, through losing an election or even stepping down from office. It is sometimes difficult emotionally to come to terms with the ending of this ‘career’.

It was also identified that the retraining allowance has not changed in many years.

A jurisdictional Survey of Members’ Pay (August 2023) was provided in the Commission Member’s Handbook. This has been included as Appendix F.

Request from the Speaker

The Board of Management request a comprehensive review of the benefits available to members upon leaving office, with particular attention to Members who were not previously part of the public service and are not able to obtain coverage under the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP).

Source Documentation

1. In the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, R-032-2025, s.83, the definition of the transition period of former Members is identified as:

“For the purposes of sections 83.1 to 83.5, “transition period” means

- (a) in respect to a former member who served as Speaker or as a Minister within 12 months before ceasing to hold office as a member, the 12 months after the member ceases to hold office; and
- (b) in respect of any other former member ceases to hold office.

2. In the *Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act*, RSNWT 1988m c,L-6, Ceasing to be member (s.3) is defined as:

“3. For the purposes of this Act,

- (a) a person does not cease to be a member by reason only of a dissolution of the Legislative Assembly; and
- (b) a person who was a member immediately before a dissolution of the Legislative Assembly ceases to be a member if he or she is not elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly at the general election next following the dissolution and is deemed to have ceased to be a member on the day on which the general election was held.”

Discussion

- During the interviews with the Members, it became apparent there was a lack of knowledge about their benefits and what they are entitled to receive once they leave office. It seems that this information, when given during their initial orientation, is truly not what the Member needs to hear, at that time. They are coming into office and focused on settling into their role as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. They are not thinking about leaving at that point.
- The pension, upon leaving office, provides some financial security for the Member.
- There was discussion about how Members should have some kind of reminder / refresher about benefits at the two-year mark, to ensure they are able to plan for their future financial needs.
- Having a document that provides information about the pensions plan, pay, and benefits for Members who are leaving office was suggested to have a quick reference/reminder for the Member.
 - One example of one such document created by the House of Commons, Canada, that addresses frequently asked questions can be found at:
[https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Newsroom/Articles/FAQsPensionSalariesBenefits-Dissolution2021-ENG%20\(final\).pdf](https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Newsroom/Articles/FAQsPensionSalariesBenefits-Dissolution2021-ENG%20(final).pdf)
- Retirement planning and financial needs is a conversation that should occur over time. There are many questions that need to be answered to be prepared for when the time comes for when the Member leaves office.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that a one-day training event be offered prior to the end of session for all Members. This could include information from a financial planner and a pension advisor.
 - a. Each Member could also be offered the opportunity to meet individually with the financial planner and/or the pension advisor, to have the opportunity to discuss their specific needs.
2. It is recommended that a Members' reference guide be created that covers key areas such as:
 - a. How to make an official announcement of resignation
 - b. The process for leaving the role of an MLA
 - c. Post-employment rules for former MLAs, including information about the “cooling-off” period
 - d. Benefits for departing Members e.g., retirement information, vacation pay, transition allowance, training support

- e. Information about health and dental coverage

F: Capital Accommodation Allowance

Background

Each year, the cost of rent in Yellowknife has increased, driven by factors like higher operating costs for landlords, low vacancy rates, and in some cases, adjustment to align with market rates. Some landlords have added paying for utilities on top of rent, which was included in past leases.

The GNWT (Housing NWT) in May 2025, updated its market rental rates. Rental rates have remained unchanged while the cost of operating, utilities and maintaining units, has increased dramatically over the last 13 years (since the introduction of the market housing rent scale in 2012. The increases were based on review of Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) 2023 annual report and a scan of the 2023 Yellowknife market rental rates.³

MLAs are finding the amount of the current capital accommodation allowance does not cover the total cost of their accommodation. They asked for a review of the amount and requested a reasonable allowance.

Source Documentation

Current Allowance

1. As per s. 6, of the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, (April 1, 2025), under Capital Accommodation Expenses, it states:

“6. (1) The maximum amount for which a member may be reimbursed under subsection 24(1) of the Act is \$32,000 for each fiscal year.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the maximum amount for which a member may be reimbursed under subsection 24(1.1) of the Act is \$31,000, plus an additional \$6,000 for each dependant residing in the secondary residence of the member, to a maximum total amount of \$49,000 for each fiscal year. “

A member who does not reside within commuting distance of the capital may establish a temporary residence in Yellowknife and be reimbursed up to \$32,000 annually for capital accommodation.

³ From: Housing NWT Adjusts Market Rental Rates for Sustainable and Equitable Housing. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/housing-nwt-adjusts-market-rental-rates-sustainable-and-equitable-housing#:~:text=Why%20the%20adjustments%20are%20needed,teachers%2C%20and%20other%20critical%20workers.>

Where a member establishes a secondary residence in Yellowknife, they may be reimbursed up to \$32,000 plus an additional \$6,000 for each dependent residing in the secondary residence to a maximum annual total of \$49,000.”

Research

2. The Northern Housing Report 2023 on page 28 states:

“The median rent for all bedroom types [in the three territories] was \$2,835 in 2023. This was an increase of 3.1% since the last survey was taken in 2021.”⁴

Using the base amount from 2023 of \$2,835 per month, the yearly total comes to \$34,020.00.

Taking the 2023 yearly amount, and multiplying it by the 3.1% increase, the amount for 2024 and the current 2025 amount are:

2024: \$34,020 x 3.1% - \$35,074.00
2025: \$35,074 x 3.1% = \$36,127.00

Discussion

- The Commission members are aware that the previous Commission (2021) recommended that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife, if required, should be increased by \$1,000.00 to \$32,000.00 per year. This motion was accepted (Motion 272-19(2)), and the new rate was included in the amendment of the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*.
- There was a second recommendation that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife should be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, to ensure it remains in line with the current rental market. This was also accepted as Motion 273-19(2).
- Members are allowed an additional \$6,000.00 for each dependent living with them, to a maximum amount of \$49,000.00 per year, as per the Regulation. The maximum for capital accommodations was calculated based on the previous yearly amount of \$31,000.00 plus a maximum of \$18,000.00 for up to three dependents.
- It was noted the total did not reflect the new rate of \$32,000.00 per year, which would increase the maximum amount to \$50,000.00.
- According to the Northern Housing Report (2023), it shows that the median rate for all bedroom types is about \$36,000.00 per year in 2025.
- One Member reported that a two-bedroom unit, with no cable or power was \$2,200 .00per month. This has increased to \$2,500.00 per month plus utilities and cable as additional charges.

⁴ From: Northern Housing Report 2023, Housing Market Information. Retrieved from: https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/professional/housing-markets-data-and-research/market-reports/northern-housing-report/northern-housing-report-2023-en.pdf?rev=cfbde89c-8dba-4309-b3d3-9e1346b1c115&_gl=1*1eixl4e*_ga*NTg0NzAwMTgwLjE3MDQ0ODMyMjc.*_ga_CY7T7RT5C4*MTcwODcyMTIzNC4yNS4wLjE3MDg3MjEyMzUuNTkuMC4w*_gcl_au*MTM0OTA0ODM5NC4xNzA0NDgzMjI3

- The Commission members determined that the current accommodation allowance should be increased to better reflect the reality of the rental market in Yellowknife, to ensure Members who require this support are able to find suitable, safe housing.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife, if required, should be increased from \$32,000.00 per year to \$35,000.00 per year.
2. It is recommended that the additional amount for the dependent remains at \$6,000.00 per year for each dependent residing in the second residence of the Member. However, the maximum total amount will change from \$49,000.00 to a maximum total amount of \$53,000.00 per each fiscal year.
3. It is recommended that the basic allowance for maintaining a second home in Yellowknife should be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, to ensure the allowance remains in line with the current rental market rates.

G: Transitional Allowance

Background

There was a past issue of timing of the start of the transitional allowance for Members. The question was whether being a member ends when the legislative assembly is prorogued or when the Minister is done doing their work.

Source Documentation

1. In the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, R-032-2025, s.83, the definition of the transition period of former Members is identified as:

“For the purposes of sections 83.1 to 83.5, “transition period” means

 - (a) in respect to a former member who served as Speaker or as a Minister within 12 months before ceasing to hold office as a member, the 12 months after the member ceases to hold office; and
 - (b) in respect of any other former member ceases to hold office.
2. When session begins and ends if defined in the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, s. 3.1 as:

“3.1. (1) A session begins on the first day of the first sitting following prorogation of the Legislative Assembly and **ends on the day on which the session is prorogued.**”
3. Ceasing to hold office is defined in the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* (April 1, 2025), s.31. (1): as:

“A member, other than a member to whom subsection (2) applies, shall be paid a transition allowance equal to one-twelfth of the annual indemnity for each consecutive year of service, if he or she

- (a) resigns his or her seat as a member of that Legislative Assembly; or
- (b) is serving as a member immediately before that Legislative Assembly is dissolved or is ended by the passage of time and does not become a member of the next Legislative Assembly.

4. Also, in the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, s. 13.1:

“A member who is entitled to be paid a transition allowance under section 31 of the Act shall have the option of receiving the transition allowance in the form of

- (a) one lump sum payment on entitlement; or
- (b) monthly payments, that are, to the extent possible, equal in amount, with one monthly payment for each of the member’s years of service.

Discussion

- In discussion, upon review of s. 83 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, the definition of the transition period was not completely clear to the Commission. When a Member ceases to hold office was difficult to determine.
- Another question asked by the Commission was when Session is prorogued (under s.3 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*), does that mean that the regular members are officially done on that date and no longer hold office.
- The Commission received the following clarification from the Legislative Assembly about when a member ceases to hold office:
 - A Member does not cease to hold office during prorogation (between sessions). They **do** cease to hold office as an MLA following dissolution when the Writ of Election is issued by the Commissioner.
- This is in line with other jurisdictions in Canada e.g. a Member of Parliament ceases to hold office when Parliament is dissolved by the Governor General (Federal), Lieutenant Governor (Provinces or Commissioner (Territories). This is a formal ending of the session, and a general election follows.
- It was decided by the Commission to recommend changes based on the response to the question about no longer holding office.
- There was additional discussion with respect to an MLA who holds one term and is done at the end of that term and whether the transitional allowance was adequate in that situation. After four years in office, the member is currently allowed one month per year of service; a total of four months transition allowance.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the definition of “transition” found in Section 83 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* includes clarification of when a Member ceases to hold office.
2. It is recommended that the Speaker, Minister and all other Members cease to hold office when the Writ of Election is issued by the Commissioner and parliament is dissolved.

3. It is recommended that a Member, who has served only a four-year term, shall be paid a minimum transition allowance of six months.

H: Members of the Legislative Assembly Base Salary

Background

Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of the Northwest Territories receive an annual salary of \$117,668.00, as per s. 17 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*.

“17. (1) Every member shall be paid an indemnity in the amount set out in Part 1 of Schedule C.”

The base salary has not been changed in the last two years.

In March 2023, the Chair of Caucus introduced Bill 73 to amend the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*. The Bill amends the way MLA salaries and allowances are adjusted each year to the average percentage increase or decrease in the Canadian Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canada in the previous five years. MLA salaries and allowances were adjusted automatically on April 1 of each year in accordance with the Canadian CPI from the previous calendar year. The CPI for 2022, for example, was 6.8%. It was felt that using a five-year average would smooth out large spikes in inflation. Using a five-year average changed the annual 6.8% CPI to 3.02% for the previous five calendar years average.⁵

Other jurisdictions are looking at the basic compensation for an MLA. For example, the increase slated to come into effect on April 1, 2025, for British Columbia MLAs was withheld by decision of the Legislative Assembly Management Committee.

Source Documentation

1. A jurisdictional survey of Members’ Pay across Canada has been included in Appendix F.
2. The *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, in Section 21, “Deemed adjustments in amounts” states:
 - a. “21. (1) On April 1 of each year, the amounts set out in Parts 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Schedule C are deemed to be adjusted by the average percentage increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index of Canada in the previous five calendar years.”
3. There are five parts in Schedule C, Indemnities and Allowances of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* with information about indemnity payable to Members, Office Holders, Expenses, Northern Allowance and Transition Allowance. The corresponding section in the Act is identified in the title of each Part.

⁵ From: MLAs introduce a bill to amend how salaries and allowances are adjusted. Retrieved from: <https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/documents-proceedings/news-releases/mlas-introduce-bill-amend-how-salaries-and-allowances-are>

- Part 1: Indemnity payable to every member: Subsection 17(1)
- Part 2: Indemnity payable to office Holder: Subsections 18(1) and 1.1)
- Part 3: Allowance for expenses: Section 19
- Part 4: Northern Allowance: Section 20
- Part 5: Transition allowance augmentation: Subsection 31(7)

Discussion

- It is difficult for Member's to talk about salary, but some did note that the basic allowance was not enough, especially with the cost of living increasing so rapidly in this past year.
- Some MLAs did note that the salary is much lower than what they could make in other jobs.
- One Member noted that they "strongly believe if we want the best people to run for these roles, there is a need to compensate better – to get people who have skills versus interest."
- Upon review of the jurisdictional scan re: Members' pay, it was noted the GNWT basic salary is the third highest if one does not include the Senate and House of Common, below Quebec and then Alberta.
- Member's pay in Ontario starts at \$116,000.00 and has been frozen since 2008.
- In comparison to the other Territorial Governments, the Yukon and Nunavut basic salaries were both lower than the GNWT Members' basic salary. Yukon's base salary is \$88,215.00 per year and Nunavut's base salary is \$109,123.05 per year.
- The indemnity amounts for the NWT were mid-range as compared to all the jurisdictions.
- A sample of positions and salaries within the GNWT were reviewed. Director's positions start at \$139,000 to \$142,000 per year. A Manager's position is at the Union of Northern Workers (UNW) pay level 18 to 20. UNW18 starts at \$116,259.00 per year, UNW19 starts at \$121,641.00 per year and UNW20 starts at \$127,238.00 per year.
- The Manager's position, UNW19 pay level is comparative to the Member base salary.
- There was discussion about needing some type of criteria to determine how and when the Member base salary would be changed.
 - For example, use the current CPI of 1.7%.
 - Pension is determined based on a two-year average of the CPI.
 - Could possibly look at using whatever is the minimum amount of the five-year CPI average, the two-year CPI average or the current CPI average. This did seem confusing, having three potential options.
- It was felt by the Commission that some adjustment to the Members' base salary was indicated, to reset the bar minimally to ensure there will be less of a pay gap created over time between a Member and Minister.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the base salary change to \$120,000.00 per year.
2. It is recommended that a plain language document outlining how MLAs are paid should be added to the website so the public can have a clear understanding of the compensation received by MLAs.
3. It is recommended that increases for the base salary are determined based on the lower of the average percentage increase or decrease in the Consumer Price Index for Canada in the previous five calendar years or the Consumer Price Index for Canada on December 31st.

I: Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning Members

Background

The Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning Members is designed to support former Members as they transition from public service to private life. This benefit is available to individuals who have completed at least one full term in office and have departed due to either retirement or electoral defeat.

Eligible former Members may receive funding for retraining purposes. The amount provided is \$1,000 for each year of service, with a maximum entitlement of \$12,000 per individual.

To benefit from the Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning Members, eligible individuals must submit their application within one year of leaving office. Upon approval of the application, the funding may be accessed over a two-year period, starting from the date the application is approved. It is important to note that access to this program is limited to a single occasion during the lifetime of a Member.⁶

Source Documentation

1. Section 73 in the Members' Handbook provides information about the retraining assistance program for non-returning Members, including how to apply for this funding.

Discussion

- It was noted that Members find it difficult to transition into other work once they leave government. "A person who has a trade might not find the transition as difficult, but if the Member has come from the government, it is difficult to go back there to work".
- Some Members expressed concerns that the retraining assistance amount available under the program may be insufficient for those who have served only a single term. For example, a Member who has held office for four years would be eligible for \$4,000 in retraining support. Members noted that this sum may not adequately cover the costs associated with professional development or career transition, as many training opportunities and courses exceed this amount.
- Further discussion highlighted the unique needs of younger former Members. These individuals, who are likely to re-enter the workforce and pursue new careers outside of the public service, may require training in entirely new fields. Members observed that the current retraining benefit may not be sufficient to support such significant transitions, particularly given the length of time these individuals may continue working in other sectors.
- Note: It is recognized that NWT residents may be able to receive support through the Student Financial Assistance Program.
- Some Members raised concerns regarding the current requirement that eligible former Members must access the Retraining Assistance Program within one year of leaving office. It was argued that this timeframe may not provide sufficient opportunity for individuals to assess

⁶ Information from the Members' Handbook, 20th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Retrieved from: https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/sites/default/files/legacy/images/2023_members_handbook_web.pdf

their career goals or determine the specific training they require. In many cases, former Members may need more time to fully develop a plan for their future and identify appropriate retraining opportunities.

- Despite these concerns, the Retraining Assistance Program is valued, and important in supporting career transitions. To enhance the program's effectiveness, it was suggested that access should be made more flexible. Specifically, Members proposed that eligibility for retraining assistance be tied to the individual and offered at a time when they are ready to proceed with their career plans, rather than being restricted to the current one-year window.
- One Member did suggest that the Retraining Assistance Program be eliminated. They would rather see that money become part of the transition fund for Members leaving office.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that the Retraining Assistance Program for Non-Returning members increase from \$1,000 in program funding for each year of service to \$1,500 in program funding for each year of service, up to a maximum of \$18,000.00.

J: Children of a Member

Background

During this review, there was discussion about compensation for extraordinary events and compensation with respect to childcare expenses. It was identified that the process of accessing this support was difficult and complicated, leading the Member to be reluctant to apply for this support.

Source Documentation

1. In the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, R-032-2025, s.30.1, Children of Member, Reimbursement of expenses for children of member, it states:

“A member may be reimbursed, in accordance with the regulations, for expenses incurred in respect of a child of the member resulting from performance of the member’s duties of office.”

2. As per s. 12.01 of the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, (April 1, 2025), under Children of Member, it states:

“12.01. (1) For the purposes of this section, section 12.02 and section 30.1 of the Act, “child of the member” means a child under 18 years of age to whom the member is a parent or stands in the place of a parent, including a child placed in a foster home operated by the member;

“extraordinary expenses” means expenses incurred by a member, beyond expenses normally incurred for the care of a child of the member.”

“(2) A member is eligible for reimbursement for extraordinary expenses incurred in respect of a child of the member if

- (a) the child of the member is reasonably required to travel with the member while the member is performing his or her business as a member;
- (b) the member is required to travel from the member's ordinary place of residence to perform his or her duties of office; or
- (c) the member is required to attend to his or her duties of office outside of regular business hours."

"3) If a member wishes to be reimbursed for eligible expenses under this section, the member must, prior to incurring any expenses, submit an application for approval to the Clerk, including

- (a) the name and age of each child for which the member intends to seek reimbursement;
- (b) documentation establishing that each child referred to in paragraph (a) is a child of the member; and
- (c) any other information the Clerk determines to be necessary to evaluate the application."

3. In the Members' Handbook, in Section 68, Childcare Allowance, it notes that Members will be reimbursed for actual expenses upon submission of receipts. Eligible expenses are further defined, including travel, accommodation, meals and incidental costs, daycare and caregiver fees.

Discussion

- Concern was expressed about the perceived stigma if a Member accesses this benefit. One member reported that they have heard comments expressed by the public who question why this is a benefit for MLAs, but not for other groups such as nurses who are required to work evenings, nights and weekends.
- The process of accessing childcare funding is not clear, for example, is the Member expected to give the babysitter a T4 for their work?
- In the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*, s. 12.01 (5), the Clerk has the authority to impose conditions on the approval of expense reimbursements, specifically relating to the type and amount that are eligible. This has contributed to a lack of clarity among Members about what expenses are eligible for reimbursement.
- A Member suggested this allowance was meant for Member's who have small children.
- It was felt that there is a need to accommodate those with children, so people are not discouraged from running for office. "Would like to have those who want to run to be able to run."
- It was suggested that it would be good to have a brief, simple guide that explains how to access the fund. The guide could also include:
 - How to make a claim
 - A sample receipt and information about when this is needed.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that comprehensive information be made available to all Members, detailing the process for preparing a claim for extraordinary expenses related to the care of a Member's child. This document aims to ensure that Members have a clear and thorough understanding of when it is appropriate to claim childcare expenses and the steps required to apply for reimbursement. By providing explicit guidance, the process will be more transparent and accessible, reducing uncertainty and helping Members confidently access the support to which they are entitled.
 - b. The information found in Section 12 of the *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations* needs to be written in plain language with sample forms and templates included as needed.

Appendix A: Section 35.1, *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*

Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, S.N.W.T. 1999, c.22
In force April 1, 2024

Independent Commission to Review
Members' Compensation and Benefits

Section 35.1

Establishment of independent commission	35.1. (1) Within eighteen months after the polling day for a general election, the Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, shall establish an independent commission and appoint as its members three individuals who are independent, neutral and knowledgeable.
Chairperson	(1.01) The Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, shall designate a chairperson from among its members.
Remuneration	(1.1) A member of the commission is entitled to remuneration for his or her services at the rates prescribed by the Board of Management.
Expenses	(1.2) A member of the commission is entitled to reasonable travelling and living expenses while absent from his or her ordinary place of residence in the course of his or her duties under this section, at the rates determined by the Board of Management.
Duties of commission	(2) The commission shall, within 10 months after its establishment, (a) review the indemnities, allowances and reimbursements for expenses payable, and any other benefits available, to members and to members holding offices; and (b) provide to the Speaker a report setting out any recommendations for changes that the commission determines should be made to the indemnities, allowances, reimbursements and other benefits.
Laying report before Legislative Assembly	(3) The Speaker shall cause the report provided under paragraph (2)(b) to be laid before the Legislative Assembly as soon as is reasonably possible.
Termination of commission appointments	(4) An appointment of an individual to a commission terminates on earliest of (a) six months after the day on which the report is laid before the Legislative Assembly under subsection (3); (b) the day the Legislative Assembly is dissolved, or the session is prorogued prior to the report being considered; or (c) the day the appointment is revoked or otherwise terminated.

SNWT 2002, c.3, s.5; SNWT 2006, c.22, s.16; SNWT 2011, c.11, s.8; SNWT 2019, c.10, s.8; SNWT 2022, c.17,s.9.

Appendix B: Letter to the Commission from the Speaker



December 11, 2024

Dear Members of the Commission,

On behalf of the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, I am writing to formally request a review of several key items concerning the compensation, benefits, and operational support provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The following areas require your attention:

1. Constituency Assistants: Terms of Employment:

We request a thorough review of the terms and conditions of employment for Constituency Assistants (CAs), including compensation, benefits, and job responsibilities. Given the vital role they play in supporting Members of the Legislative Assembly in their engagement with constituents, it is essential that their employment conditions are competitive and reflective of their contributions. This review should also examine whether Constituency Assistants should be considered part of the public service, which could provide them with improved pay and benefits.

2. Speaker Remuneration

The Board of Management seeks a comprehensive review of the current remuneration package for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

3. Constituency Offices: Lease Agreements

The Board requests a thorough review of the policies and standards governing constituency offices, with particular attention to lease agreements. We propose establishing maximum limits for lease agreements for constituency office spaces. Should a Member wish to lease a space that exceeds the established maximum, the Board would have the discretion to approve the use of the Member's constituency budget to offset any additional costs. We also ask that the Commission provide a clear rationale or basis for determining the appropriate lease agreement limits for each constituency, considering factors such as regional cost variances, accessibility, and space requirements. This will ensure the decision-making process is fair and reflective of the unique needs of each constituency.

4. Constituency Offices: Security

Given the unique challenges in certain regions and the remote nature of many constituency offices, we request that the Commission assess current security arrangements and identify whether additional measures may be necessary.

5. Member Benefit Entitlements Upon Leaving Office

The Board of Management requests a comprehensive review of the benefits available to Members upon leaving office, with particular attention to Members who were not previously part of the public service and are not able to obtain coverage under the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP).

Should you require any further details or clarification regarding the issues outlined above, please do not hesitate to contact Kim Wickens, Deputy Clerk Members and Precinct Services.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to your recommendations.

Sincerely,

Hon. Shane Thompson
Speaker

- c. Kim Wickens, Deputy Clerk, Members and Precinct Services
- c. Glen Rutland, Clerk, Legislative Assembly

Appendix C: Terms of Reference, ICRMCB



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to Section 35.1 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, within eighteen months after the polling day for a general election, the Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, shall establish an independent commission and appoint as its members three individuals who are independent, neutral, and knowledgeable.

The last comprehensive review of Members' compensation and benefits occurred in 2021 with a report provided to the Speaker on August 5, 2021. The recommendations from this report resulted in several changes to legislation, regulations and Board of Management policies.

1) PURPOSE

The Commission shall:

- 1) Review and assess the indemnities, additional indemnities, allowances, expenses and benefits provided to Members to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the amounts provided by way of:
 - *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*
 - *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*
 - *Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act*
 - *Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act*
 - Board of Management Policies
- 2) Review and assess specific items referred to the Commission by the Board of Management.
- 3) Review and assess the reporting requirements and procedures for Members' expenditures to determine the level of accountability acceptable to the public.
- 4) Review any other matter that the Commission considers relevant respecting the compensation, allowances, and benefits provided to all Members and Ministers.



- 5) Provide to the Speaker a report setting out any recommendations for change that the Commission determines should be made to Members' indemnities, allowances, reimbursements, and other benefits.

2) GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1) No Member should seek to serve in public office for purely financial gain. Although reasons may vary considerably, the underlying motivation for election must be to serve and improve the well-being of the people of the Northwest Territories.
- 2) The system of remuneration must be transparent, open, and provide an easy-to-understand system of remuneration to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, while providing a high degree of accountability to the people they serve.
- 3) Remuneration packages, particularly with respect to living, travel and transportation costs, need to be sensitive to the regional differences of job-related expenses to ensure these factors do not become prohibitive for any Member to represent their constituents.
- 4) The requirement to be available and accountable 24 hours a day, seven days a week, coupled with the lack of job security associated with an election every four years, ensures that only certain individuals can consider running for public office. A position of such importance in our democratic system, with such wide-ranging responsibility, should be fairly compensated to attract qualified and committed individuals.

3) COMPOSITION

The Commission shall consist of three individuals who are independent, neutral, and knowledgeable. Preferably, the Commission shall consist of a former Member, a professional with relevant financial or legal designations and experience, and an interested member of the public. Appointment to the Commission will also consider regional representation within the NWT.

The Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, shall appoint one of the three Commission Members to serve as Chair.

4) RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission will be responsible for:

- 1) Collecting and analyzing research materials from previous Commissions, other legislative jurisdictions and positions of comparable responsibility within the public and private sectors.



- 2) Seeking public input and soliciting Member's submissions.
- 3) Reviewing and making recommendations on the following areas of Members' remuneration or any other areas the Commission considers relevant, including, but not restricted to:
 - Indemnities Payable to Every Member
 - Indemnities Payable to Office Holders
 - Taxable Allowance for Expenses
 - Constituency Work Expense Allowance and Permissible Expenditures • Duty Travel & Meals
 - All Travel Allowances
 - Northern Living Allowance
 - Leave and Vacation Allowance
 - Transition Allowance
 - Pension & Benefits Entitlements
 - Telecommunications & Computer Equipment Allowances
 - Acquisition of Office Inventory Items on Expiry of Office
 - Capital Accommodation and Furniture Allowances
 - Constituency Assistant Compensation and Benefits
 - Automatic Adjustment to All Allowances
 - Specific Items Referred by the Board of Management

5) REPORT

The Commission shall, within ten months after the day the Commission is established to:

- Review the indemnities, allowances and reimbursements for expenses payable, and any other benefits available, to members and to members holding offices; and
- Provide to the Speaker a report setting out any recommendations for changes that the commission determines should be made to the indemnities, allowances, reimbursements and other benefits.

6) FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly will provide administrative services and support to the Commission as required. The Commission may seek the assistance of consultants to provide it with advice and analysis and to ensure an arm's-length relationship with the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker, on the recommendations of the Board of Management, will approve funding for the Commission. The Commission will ensure expenditures do not exceed the allotted funds.



7) REMUNERATION

The Speaker, on the recommendations of the Board of Management, may approve honoraria and reasonable expenses to attend meetings for Members of the Commission, including the Chair.

8) REPORT

The Commission shall, within ten months after the day the Commission is established to:

- Review the indemnities, allowances and reimbursements for expenses payable, and any other benefits available, to members and to members holding offices; and
- Provide to the Speaker a report setting out any recommendations for changes that the commission determines should be made to the indemnities, allowances, reimbursements and other benefits.

9) FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly will provide administrative services and support to the Commission as required. The Commission may seek the assistance of consultants to provide it with advice and analysis and to ensure an arm's-length relationship with the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker, on the recommendations of the Board of Management, will approve funding for the Commission. The Commission will ensure expenditures do not exceed the allotted funds.

10) REMUNERATION

The Speaker, on the recommendations of the Board of Management, may approve honoraria and reasonable expenses to attend meetings for Members of the Commission, including the Chair.

11) TERMINATION

The appointment of an individual to the Commission terminates on the earliest of:

- a) six months after the day on which the report is laid before the Legislative Assembly under subsection (3)
- b) The day the Legislative Assembly is dissolved, or the session is prorogued prior to the report being considered; or
- c) the day the appointment is revoked or otherwise terminated.

Appendix D: 2025 Commission – Questions for MLAs

Compensation for Members

- Are there any areas where you feel you are not properly compensated?
- Are there any benefits that you are not receiving that you believe you should receive?
- Are the amounts that you pay for benefits such as dental and long-term disability appropriate?
- Are the amounts paid to Committee Chairs appropriate?
- Are the meeting and travel entitlements you receive fair and reasonable?
- Are you able to operate within the current budgets?
- Will the pension options available to you when you leave the Assembly be appropriate for you?
- Is the transition allowance you will receive when you leave the Assembly appropriate?
- Is the retraining assistance you will receive when you leave the Assembly appropriate?
- Is using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) the best way to adjust member's salaries and benefits?
- Is the childcare allowance amount appropriate?
- Should the childcare amount be capped at a maximum amount per year?
- Should any of the allowances you receive be made available to your constituency assistants?
- Is your constituency work budget appropriate?
- Is the list of eligible and ineligible constituency budget expenses appropriate?
- Is the mechanism for employing constituency assistants fair?
- Are the wages and benefits that constituency assistance receive appropriate?
- Should there be pay ranges established for constituency assistants?

Capital Accommodation Allowance

- Do you think there should be any changes to the current allowance?

Constituency Assistance and Constituency Budget

- Should any of the allowance you receive be made available to your constituency assistants?
- Is your constituency work budget appropriate?
- Is the list of eligible and ineligible constituency budget expenses appropriate?
- Is the mechanism for employing constituency assistants fair?
- Are the wages and benefits that constituency assistants receive appropriate?
- Should there be pay ranges established for constituency assistants?
- CA office space – do you think there should be any changes to the constituency office lease agreements?

Member Benefits upon Leaving Office

- Do you think there should be any changes to the current entitlements upon leaving office?

Transition Allowance

- Do you think there should be any changes to the current transition allowance?

Speaker Allowance

- Is the renumerations for the speaker adequate?

Appendix E: Requesting Public Input

Letter to MLAs, Communities and Indigenous Governments



The Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits want to hear from you.

Do you have comments on the pay, allowances and benefits of the Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly?

The Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits has been appointed by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to review the current salaries, allowances, expenses and any other benefits provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly. This is a requirement of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*.

The Commission has three members. Mr. Robert C. McLeod, Ms. Dian Papineau-Magill and Ms. Janet Toner as Chair. The Commission will review and assess MLA salaries, and benefits, and recommend changes to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

For additional information regarding the Commission, please visit our website at:
<https://nwtmlapay.ca/>

The Commission wants to hear your comments. You can provide them to the Commission in a number of ways.

1. **Written:** please send any written submissions to the Commission by **September 19, 2025**, to:

Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits
c/o NWT Legislative Assembly
PO Box 1320
4570-48TH STREET
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 2L9

2. **Email:** Please send any submissions to: info@nwtmlapay.ca by **September 19, 2025**.

3. **Telephone or video meeting with the Commission:** Please contact Ms. Larissa LeMouel, Office of the Clerk at 867-767-9130 extension 12010, or e-mail info@nwtmlapay.ca by August 25, 2025, to arrange a mutually agreeable time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Toner".

Janet Toner
Chair

Public Service Announcement



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Public Service Announcement

July 29, 2025

The Independent Commission to Review Members Compensation and Benefits is interested in what Northerners think about MLAs salaries and benefits.

If you have any views on MLA Compensation and Benefits that you want to share with the Commission, please let us know by **September 19, 2025**.

You can contact the Commission at info@nwtmlapay.ca

You can also visit our website: nwtmlapay.ca

If you want a telephone or video meeting with the Commission, please contact Ms. Larissa LeMouel, Office of the Clerk at 867-767-9130 extension 12010, or e-mail info@nwtmlapay.ca by **August 25, 2025**, to arrange a meeting with the Commission.

If you wish to utilize any of the official languages of the Northwest Territories, other than English, please contact the Commission before 5 pm on **August 25, 2025**.

News North and Yellowknifer Advertisement, English and French

- Ran the week of August 11, 2025, in the News North
- Ran in the Yellowknifer on October 8, 2025

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

The Independent Commission to Review Members Compensation and Benefits is interested in what Northerners think about MLAs salaries and benefits.

Contact the Commission:

info@nwtmlapay.ca
nwtmlapay.ca



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LA COMMISSION INDÉPENDANTE SUR L'EXAMEN DE LA
REMUNÉRATION ET DES AVANTAGES SOCIAUX DES DÉPUTÉS

If you have any views on MLA Compensation and Benefits that you want to share with the Commission, please let us know by **September 12, 2025**.

For a telephone/video meeting with the Commission, please contact **Larissa LeMouel** by August 25, 2025. **867-767-9130 ext. 12010** or info@nwtmlapay.ca

If you wish to utilize any of the official languages of the NWT please contact the Commission before 5pm on August 25, 2025.

DONNEZ-NOUS VOTRE AVIS!



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION^{TO REVIEW}
MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

LA COMMISSION INDÉPENDANTE SUR L'EXAMEN DE LA
RÉMUNÉRATION ET DES AVANTAGES SOCIAUX DES DÉPUTÉS

La Commission indépendante sur l'examen de la rémunération et des avantages sociaux des députés souhaite connaître l'avis d'Éléusines au sujet du salaire et des avantages sociaux de leur élus.

Communiquez avec la Commission:

info@nwtmlapay.ca
nwtmlapay.ca

Si vous avez des opinions à nous faire part au sujet de la rémunération et des avantages sociaux des députés, vous pouvez nous écrire jusqu'au **12 Septembre 2025**.

Si vous aimeriez rencontrer la Commission par téléphone ou vidéoconférence, veuillez contacter **Larissa LeMouel** au plus tard le 25 août 2025. **Tél. : 867-767-9130 ext. 12010** ou courriel : info@nwtmlapay.ca

Si vous souhaitez utiliser une langue officielle des TNO autre que l'anglais, veuillez prendre contact avec la Commission avant 17 h le 25 août 2025.

Additional Advertisements – for Week of October 6, 2025, Cabin Radio

TELL US
WHAT YOU THINK

info@nwtmlapay.ca
nwtmlapay.ca

**Do you have views on
MLA Compensation and
Benefits? Let the Commission
know by October 24, 2025.**



INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW
MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

LA COMMISSION INDÉPENDANTE SUR L'EXAMEN DE LA
RÉMUNÉRATION ET DES AVANTAGES SOCIAUX DES DÉPUTÉS

Web Page 2025: nwtmlapay.ca

10/2/25, 11:03 AM

Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits

législative et le Conseil exécutif. Vous pouvez trouver le mandat de la Commission indépendante ici.

Commission Members / Commissaires

Mr. Robert C. McLeod
Member / Commissaire

Ms. Dian Papineau-Magill
Member / Commissaire

Ms. Janet Toner
Chair / Président

The Commission will review and assess MLA salaries and benefits, and recommend changes to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The Committee is required to provide its recommendations to the Speaker by January 17, 2026.

La Commission évalue et analyse la rémunération et les avantages sociaux des députés et recommandera toute modification nécessaire au président de l'Assemblée législative. Le Comité est censé communiquer ses recommandations au président d'ici le 17 janvier 2026.

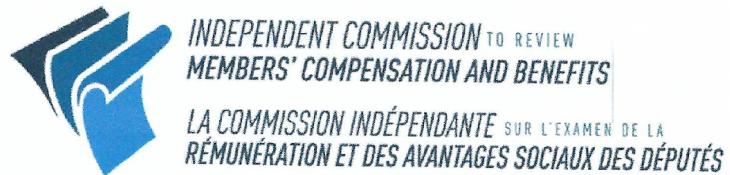
Interested in submitting a submission? / Souhaitez-vous envoyer un commentaire?

Do you have comments on the pay, allowances and benefits of the Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly?

The Commission wants your comments. You can provide them to the Commission in a number of ways here.

Avez-vous des commentaires au sujet de la paie, des indemnités et des avantages sociaux des députés de l'Assemblée législative des Territoires du Nord-Ouest?

La Commission veut savoir ce que vous pensez. Vous pouvez communiquer vos commentaires à la Commission de diverses manières ici.



**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND
BENEFITS**
C/O NT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
PO BOX 1320
4570-48TH STREET
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 2L9

867.767.9130 EXT 12010

✉ INFO [AT] NWTMLAPAY [DOT] CA

**COMMISSION INDÉPENDANTE SUR L'EXAMEN DE LA RÉMUNÉRATION ET
DES AVANTAGES SOCIAUX DES DÉPUTÉS**
A/S DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DES TNO
C. P. 1320, 4570, 48E RUE
YELLOWKNIFE, TNO X1A 2L9

**2025 © INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO REVIEW MEMBERS' COMPENSATION AND
BENEFITS**

**COMMISSION INDÉPENDANTE SUR L'EXAMEN DE LA RÉMUNÉRATION ET DES AVANTAGES
SOCIAUX DES DÉPUTÉS, 2025**

SUBMISSION FORM

FORMULAIRE DE PRÉSENTATION

Appendix F: Jurisdictional Survey Members' Pay (August 2023)

	JURISDICTIONAL SURVEY MEMBERS' PAY - AUG 2023														
	BC same as April 1, 2022	AB	SK	MB	ON same as April 1, 2008	QC June 7, 2023	NB	NS	PEI Jan 1, 2023	NL same as Apr 1, 2022	YT	NU April 1, 2023	NT April 1, 2023	Senate	HoC
Basic Salary	\$115,045.93	\$120,936.00	\$106,384.00	\$102,998.00	\$116,550.00	\$131,766.00	\$86,700.00	\$89,234.90	\$78,541.00	\$95,357.00	\$88,215.00	\$109,123.05	\$117,986.00	\$169,600.00	\$194,600.00
Speaker	\$57,522.97	\$60,468.00	\$54,164.00	\$56,390.00	\$36,364.00	\$98,825.00	\$53,666.28	\$49,046.51	\$54,885.00	\$48,665.00	\$44,119.00	\$84,632.33	\$51,354.00	\$67,700.00	\$92,800.00
Deputy Speaker							\$26,833.14						\$17,620.00		
Prime Minister (HoC)															\$194,600.00
Premier (First Minister)	\$103,541.34	\$65,244.00	\$77,375.00	\$96,312.00	\$92,424.00	\$138,354.00	\$80,580.00	\$101,545.19	\$85,302.00	\$65,168.00	\$71,193.00	\$100,542.00	\$89,736.00		
Deputy Premier			\$61,899.00											\$92,586.09	
Ministers	\$57,522.97	\$60,468.00	\$54,164.00	\$56,390.00	\$49,301.00	\$98,825.00	\$53,666.28	\$49,046.51		\$48,665.00	\$47,501.00	\$84,632.33	\$63,148.00		\$92,800.00
Ministers without Portfolio		\$27,216.00		\$47,529.00	\$22,378.00			\$40,290.00	\$49,046.51					\$84,632.33	
Minister of State (HoC and BC)	\$40,266.08														\$92,800.00
Parliamentary Secretary (HoC and BC)	\$17,256.89						\$26,353.00								\$18,800.00
Legislative Assistants			\$15,828.00	\$4,989.00	\$16,667.00										\$69,400.00
Secretaries of State (HoC)															
Govt. House Leader		\$15,828.00	\$11,636.00	\$21,329.00	\$98,825.00	\$26,833.14	\$10,506.00	\$14,800.00							\$92,800.00
Leader of the Gov't in Senate (Senate)											\$14,018.00*				
Deputy House Leader			\$7,916.00		\$21,329.00	\$32,942.00		\$5,253.00							\$18,800.00
Deputy Leader of the Gov't in Senate (Senate)															\$43,900.00
Government Whip	\$23,009.19	\$12,096.00	\$15,828.00	\$8,310.00	\$21,329.00	\$46,118.00	\$26,833.14	\$5,253.00							\$13,200.00
Deputy Government Whip	\$17,256.89	\$9,072.00	\$7,916.00		\$14,569.00	\$26,555.00									\$6,500.00
Government Caucus Chair	\$23,009.19		\$15,828.00	\$7,164.00	\$14,569.00	\$32,942.00	\$8,000.00	\$10,506.00				\$5,725.31	\$3,682.00	\$7,500.00	\$13,300.00
Deputy Government Caucus Chair			\$7,916.00												
Leader Official Opposition	\$57,522.97	\$60,468.00	\$54,164.00	\$56,390.00	\$64,336.00	\$98,825.00	\$56,406.00	\$49,046.51	\$54,885.00	\$48,665.00	\$47,501.00				\$43,900.00
Off. Opp. House Leader	\$23,009.19	\$15,120.00	\$15,828.00	\$8,310.00	\$21,329.00	\$46,118.00	\$20,124.86	\$10,506.00	\$7,400.00	\$24,330.00					\$48,000.00
Deputy House Leader of Official Opposition			\$7,916.00		\$10,489.00	\$26,353.00		\$5,253.00							\$18,800.00
Deputy Leader of the Opposition			\$15,828.00												\$27,700.00
Off. Opp. Whip	\$23,009.19	\$9,072.00	\$15,828.00	\$6,650.00	\$16,317.00	\$39,530.00	\$20,124.86	\$5,253.00	\$4,312.00						\$7,500.00
Deputy Official Opposition Whip	\$17,256.89	\$7,260.00	\$7,916.00		\$10,489.00	\$26,353.00									\$3,200.00
Off. Opp. Caucus Chair	\$23,009.19		\$15,828.00	\$7,164.00	\$14,569.00	\$29,647.00	\$8,000.00	\$10,506.00							\$6,500.00
Off. Opp. Deputy Caucus Chair			\$7,916.00												\$13,300.00
Leader 2nd Opposition	\$28,761.49	\$27,216.00	\$27,081.00	\$47,529.00	\$41,608.00	\$46,118.00	\$20,145.00	\$24,523.25	\$27,443.00	\$24,330.00	\$23,595.00				\$43,900.00
2nd Opp. House Leader	\$11,504.59	\$12,096.00	\$7,916.00	\$6,650.00	Is	\$32,942.00	\$2,500.00	\$10,506.00	\$4,884.00	\$12,166.00					\$18,800.00
2nd Opp. Opposition Deputy House Leader								\$5,253.00							\$6,600.00
2nd Opp. Whip	\$11,504.59	\$7,260.00	\$7,916.00	\$4,989.00	\$14,685.00	\$26,353.00	\$2,500.00	\$5,253.00	\$4,312.00						\$7,500.00
2nd Opp. Deputy Whip															\$3,200.00
2nd Opp. Caucus Chair	\$11,504.59		\$7,916.00		\$13,170.00			\$10,506.00							\$6,600.00
Permanent Chr - max per year	\$17,256.89		\$15,828.00	\$4,989.00	\$16,317.00	\$32,942.00		\$2,101.00	\$12,166.00*						\$7,362.00
Permanent Chr - max per year (Accountability & Oversight)															\$13,300.00
Permanent Vice Chr-max per yr.	\$11,504.59		\$7,916.00	\$4,159.00	\$9,324.00	\$26,353.00			\$9,300.00*						\$6,600.00
Temp. Chair of Standing Committee (Quebec)						\$19,765.00									
Member of Office of the National Assembly						\$19,765.00									
All Party Committees		\$200.00/mtg for Chair Only	\$126/day	No add'l pay	No add'l pay	\$125 per diem	\$124/committe e; \$200 committee for Chair			No add'l pay			No add'l pay		
Other Committees															\$ 4,858.22
Government Committees			\$126/day	No add'l pay	No add'l pay	No add'l pay	n/a	n/a		No add'l pay	\$ 3,340.56	No add'l pay			
Changes			no change for April 2023; no adjustment until the 180th day following the day on which the 31st Legislature commences									3.02% change effective April 1, 2023 as per the Consumer Price Index.	sessional allowance increase April 1, 2023	MP Index 2.7% MP Staff Index 2.6%	

