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**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nahendeh)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, May 29, 2025****Members Present**

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland, Mr. Edjericon, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Jay Macdonald, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Ms. Reid, Mr. Rodgers, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Mr. Testart, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer or Reflection**

---Prayer or reflection

**SPEAKER (HON. SHANE THOMPSON):**

Ministers' statements. Minister for Housing NWT.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 142-20(1):  
SMOKING PROHIBITION IN HOUSING NWT  
UNITS**

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Mr. Speaker, ensuring the health and well-being of all residents in the Northwest Territories is an essential work of this government.

The NWT is falling behind other jurisdictions when it comes to implementing healthy safeguards to limit smoking. Yukon implemented a smoking ban in public and government housing in 2012, and Nunavut followed suit in 2023. Now, we must align with prevailing health advice and ensure safe, client-focused housing solutions.

There is extensive research on the negative impacts of smoking and second-hand smoke on health and social outcomes. Smoking rates in the Northwest Territories are higher compared to the Canadian average and by introducing this ban, we aim to create healthy living environments for all residents, especially children, seniors, and those with respiratory conditions. This initiative aligns with the Department of Health and Social Services' public health concerns around smoking and shows our dedication to fostering safe and healthy communities for Northerners.

During the development of Housing Northwest Territories strategic renewal in the 19th Legislative Assembly, Housing NWT consulted with Indigenous governments, elected representatives, local housing organizations and tenants about smoking in public housing units. There is strong support for measures that protect non-smokers from second-hand smoke and broad support for efforts aimed at reducing

smoking overall. It is the GNWT's responsibility to support individuals and families to stay healthy. It is also our responsibility to reduce damage to units and loss of units, as we are currently experiencing a housing crisis.

Today, I am announcing a significant step forward: the implementation of a smoking ban across all Housing NWT-owned and operated units, including market and public housing. Health and social services is working with Housing NWT to share resources and promote smoking cessation with Housing NWT tenants. We are here to support tenants as they move towards smoke-free living.

Mr. Speaker, the smoking ban will be implemented in a way that is equitable, fair, and compassionate, with a constructive approach that focuses on education and tenant support. The ban is being approached in all phases and has started with new leases and renewals. The next policy stage will provide existing tenants with a grace period to adjust before the change is fully implemented.

This policy is not just about prohibiting smoking; it is about promoting healthier lifestyles and creating supportive environments for people who wish to quit. The ban will also reduce the risk of smoking-related fires and decrease the costs of cleaning and repairing smoke-damaged units. That means we will be able to put more resources towards other critical housing needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this smoking ban will have a positive and lasting impact on our communities, and that we can create healthy and vibrant living environments for Northerners. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister for Housing NWT. Ministers' statements. Minister for Education, Culture and Employment.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 143-20(1):  
EDUCATION YEAR-END WRAP UP**

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I'm going to begin my statement in Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] as we approach the end of the 2024-2025 school year, I want to congratulate all the students of

the Northwest Territories and celebrate their successes. Whether they are graduating from junior kindergarten, high school, or post-secondary institution like Aurora College or College Nordique, the territory's graduates have so much to be proud of. [Translation Ends].

Mr. Speaker, the junior kindergarten to Grade 12 Performance Measures Report will be published in the coming months, however, I wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate NWT student successes, both data-driven and anecdotal.

School attendance is vital for student success, so I want to recognize Ecole Boreale in Hay River. Out of all regional centres and small community schools, Ecole Boreale had the highest average attendance rate, at 91 percent in the last school year. I would also like to recognize one of your schools, Louie Norwegian School in Jean Marie River, whose attendance increased by over 25 percent last year.

---Applause

Thank you, colleagues. That is absolutely incredible.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate the 94 students who enrolled in the South Slave's Phoenix School last school year. This is the highest number of Phoenix enrolments since we started tracking. The Phoenix program helps students complete their high school graduation through modularized learning on their own schedule, a flexible approach allowing them to meet their obligations at the same time, like family and work.

At Chief Paul Niditchie School in Tsiigehtchic, the school is celebrating the first graduates to complete Grades 10 to 12 at home in the community, while Mangilaluk students in Tuktoyaktuk are enjoying some of the newly renovated school facilities.

At Helen Kalvak School in Ulukhaktok, students took learning outside the classroom on a recent visit to Ottawa and the Canadian Parliament buildings, while students from East Three Secondary visited London, England this past summer.

At Deninu School in Fort Resolution, both graduates have already been accepted into post-secondary programs for next year, including Caleb Simon who will enter the HVAC trades at NAIT, and Hannah Beck who will attend Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to acknowledge Yellowknife high school students Stella

Fairman and Audrey Debogorski, who recently received the prestigious Loran Scholarship. Their applications stood out against candidates from across Canada, and they were among the 36 winners chosen from 6,000 applicants. Stella and Audrey were chosen not only for their marks but also character, commitment to service, and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, our students' success would not be possible without the support of dedicated and compassionate educators, school staff and education leaders. Among the education leaders who have made a difference in the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of students, was the former Chair of the Tlicho Community Services Agency, the late Ted Blondin.

Mr. Blondin was dedicated to preserving and sharing elders' stories and histories and helped negotiate impact and benefit agreements that provided scholarships, training and employment to the Tlicho people. Mr. Blondin also chaired the Arctic College and the Mine Training Society and was inducted into the Education Hall of Fame in 2015 for significant contribution to student learning by an elder. We will miss Ted Blondin and remember his legacy that will continue to inspire northern education leaders for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to finish today in Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik.

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, as we head into the season of convocations, milestones, and transitions, let us all take the time to congratulate our students and the dedicated individuals who helped them reach these moments, the educators, school staff, volunteers, friends, and family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation Ends]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Frame Lake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 685-20(1): RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we wind down session and Ministers turn their attention to upcoming meetings in Ottawa, I want to emphasize the biggest gap I continue to see in our economic strategy: northern education and research.

We don't yet have a cohesive economic vision but just looking at our federal engagement strategy, it's clear that our strategy is heavily focused on road and power infrastructure. Those are undeniably important and very expensive projects but, as I've noted in numerous statements in the past, we also need to be looking at investing in our people, fostering research and innovation, and building up our workforce, if we want an economic strategy that will benefit and fully realize the potential of our people. If we want to develop the North, we have to look at what we have to offer the world, Mr. Speaker.

The Northwest Territories could position itself as a unique northern research and innovation hub. We are leaders in Indigenous governance, high-latitude mine development and remediation, Indigenous-led conservation, and permafrost and climate change research, to name just a few. We could be stronger leaders in those sectors and grow others which are completely undeveloped right now if we could just muster the vision and foresight to build up our education and research capacity to fully realize this potential.

Looking at the recent throne speech, the new federal government sees the need for investment in research and innovation also. The Liberals have made promises with significant impacts for universities, including a commitment of \$2 billion for student and seniors housing, and to build Canada into the world's leading hub for science and innovation. The Liberals have promised to invest \$100 million over four years to attract leading researchers who have had their funding cut by the US government. Wouldn't it be incredible if we had the institution to attract some of those researchers to live in the Northwest Territories?

To build Canada strong, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is working to identify and catalyze projects of national significance. Projects that will connect Canada, that will deepen Canada's ties with the world and create high paying jobs for generations. I strongly believe that one of those projects should be a university in the Northwest Territories. We owe it to the people of this great territory to show them that we believe in the potential they have to offer the world and invest in them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 686-20(1):  
BUILDING STANDARDS CODE

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 3rd, 2025, I rose to give a statement on building codes, Mr. Speaker, or rather lack of building codes in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, all government buildings, as I understand, do adopt or abide by the National Standards Building Code, and that building code includes the electrical code, the plumbing code, the fire code, the energy code, as well of course as the building standards code. Mr. Speaker, however, all other developments, there is no code whatsoever. And, Mr. Speaker, we're the only jurisdiction in Canada without a building standards code.

At the time, the Minister said the department was certainly willing to do this work. It would have to be done in conjunction with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. As it so happens, Mr. Speaker, now we have a Minister that has both departments under his purview and, certainly, this work should be able to move forward even just a little quicker. I was also told by the Minister in March that there is a working group in place and the next step is to really put in place some recommendations of what it will look like to bring all the different pieces together to have a consolidated framework from the National Building Code and one that can be made in the North and applied for the North and relevant to the North, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister, back in March, had said she was committed to have a plan for a plan without a final date but did commit to say that once we leave this Assembly, the 20th Assembly, we will have our own buildings standards code. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure later. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 687-20(1):  
GLAMOUR ALLEY

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Glamour Alley is a recurring burlesque show produced by Tease Van Gams, three veteran performers of Yellowknife's Burlesque scene, who want to make the art form more accessible to performers and audiences alike. Glamour Alley is a collaboration with the Underground, which is Yellowknife's newest music and performance venue, and its artist in residence, Thunder Normz, who hosts regular drag nights. They are doing amazing and important work building and

promoting Yellowknife's up and coming drag scene.

Mr. Speaker, Glamour Alley's third show will be happening this Saturday, and I would invite you, but it's sold out. The next show will be July 4th and will feature three out-of-town performers who have sought to perform in our fair city - two of whom have never performed here in Yellowknife. They're coming from Whitehorse, Toronto, and Edmonton.

Burlesque in Yellowknife is becoming a scene and getting national attention from performers and audiences alike. Of course, Tease Van Gams is only adding to and benefiting from all of the hard work the burlesque community has done building this local scene. There's a shout out for Brrrlesque, Boolesque, Parkas and Pasties, and Glam on the Rocks, who built a sustainable following for burlesque in Yellowknife and an impressive pool of talented performers.

This wouldn't be possible without local businesses who support the scene by opening up their venues, and the sell-out audiences who will literally line up for hours to buy tickets. The art of the tease is flourishing and, as a past performer, I couldn't be more proud. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Members' statements. Member from the Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 688-20(1):  
TRADES PROMOTIONS FOR SCHOOL  
GRADUATES

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Education promotion, Mr. Speaker. Labour trades, professions, the shortages continue in all sectors is a huge concern clear across our Canadian country. However, closer to home, the geography, costs of living, the isolated inventory greatly adds to attracting staff in neither the private nor public services sector. Mr. Speaker, trade shortages, we are at the pivotal point drafting and essential planning in addressing the situation as fundamental and critical to our approach and the remaining term of this Assembly.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have tools in our toolbox. Examples could be the Skills 4 Success, career development staff allow us the opportunity to expand. Drafting an updated recruitment strategy tailored to our graduation community, including in-person engagements, speak with the school graduates directly and provide a handout package identifying the trades demand and career security. I am told that GNWT salary and benefits is very attractive.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to share the Sahtu will see 28 high school graduates this season with a land claim recipient from Fort Good Hope graduating from the nursing college here tomorrow. These exceptional ceremonies is ideal for education, career, trades promotions. Let's design a meaningful campaign. Mahsi.

In closing, this is our last spring sitting and I want to extend my great appreciation to all staff members and my colleagues, the strength behind our various governments; the interpretation staff. May you all have a safe and enjoyable spring. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 689-20(1):  
2023 WILDFIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, summer's clearly here. I think it's 28 degrees outside, and it has been for the last couple of days. And I was enjoying the beautiful summer weather and I thought to myself, for a moment not thinking of anything other than how beautiful it was, and then I thought, oh, there's going to be forest fires. And sure enough, we see smoke rolling in over the capital today, over other parts of the territory as well. And I think many Northerners, and I've seen it on social media, people texting me or talking to me that there's a lot of concern -- or people being reminded of the 2023 wildfire crisis, of the evacuations and, of course, the review that has just happened comes to mind about that, the after-action report.

I think the starkest finding of that report was the loss of trust. And in the report itself, the recognition of loss that they were able to quantify through their reporting is really profound, and their finding of -- TSI's finding of a loss of trust, safety, and security. The events have shaken the fundamental sense of security, leaving many uncertain about safety in their own lands. This loss of faith is a painful burden for a territory that has long found solace and strength in its connection to the land and each other.

Mr. Speaker, public -- from public trust erosion, trust and transparency, to issues with being able to communicate to folks who are going through these crises, all these things have been shown in sharp relief. And that trust has still not been renewed. It's one of the priorities that I hope this Assembly would take up, and I think in a roundabout way that's the work of any government, to ensure their citizens trust them.



But when we look to other professions and professionals and experts who we do trust - doctors, nurses, firefighters, police, people and authority figures who help us out when we need it the most - they're also telling us we need help. And we've seen, you know, two pieces of legislation now coming forward to address those first responders. We see their concerns. We hear their concerns all the time that they're not getting enough support. And all of this is part of the same problem, which is this gap of trust that emerged and that has been building over time and was really broken during that evacuation. We need to do more, and we need to have a real effort to rebuild this, not just a set of responses to a report. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 690-20(1):  
MONFWI ENERGY

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Monfwi energy. Mr. Speaker. Whati, Behchoko, Gameti, and Wekweeti, still rely heavily on diesel power. This is unsustainable. Mr. Speaker, we need to invest in clean energy like the Whati transmission line and the Lac Le Martre Mini Hydro Project. But, Mr. Speaker, my constituents are asking when will we see progress on these projects? Communities need answers, timelines, and new jobs.

These projects are not just about energy. They will create work and opportunities. Mr. Speaker, with the right approach, we can create local jobs and build capacity in our communities -- I hope they will not whisper anymore over here; it's distracting.

This can only happen if the GNWT is working in true partnership with Indigenous governments.

I recently spoke to a young apprentice from my riding who returned home after post-secondary training full of hope who was enrolled in electrician program. He has the skills. He has the skills he needs, but no local job opportunities in his chosen trade. This young person will have to leave home on June 16th due to lack of options for his apprenticeship. That is a shame.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow our youth to be forced to earn a living elsewhere. Investing in clean energy projects and infrastructure here at home means creating good, sustainable jobs for our young people so they can build their futures and remain near their families, language, and culture. This is why timely progress on the Whati transmission line and Lac La Martre Mini Hydro Project is so urgent.

Is the GNWT working with the Tlicho government on energy planning? Are we creating opportunities for Tlicho citizens to be part of the outcome?

Mr. Speaker, clean energy must go hand-in-hand with economic development. Our people want to work. They want to build a better future. I will have questions for the Minister of NTPC at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 691-20(1):  
LITERACY OUTREACH CENTRE

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, next Thursday, here at the Legislative Assembly, a completion ceremony will be held for those adult students who have completed programs at the Literacy outreach Centre. Now, there were 39 students enrolled this past winter semester. It will be the 28th year that such a completion ceremony is held, but there's a danger it may be the last.

The Literacy Outreach Centre was a partnership involving Aurora College and Inclusion NWT. Aurora College decided, for reasons that are hard to understand, to shut down the centre as part of its closure of community learning centres across the territory. In our winter sitting, the Minister publicly committed in this House to provide, during the spring sitting, a critical path forward for community learning centres. I am disappointed that path hasn't been determined yet, even though today is the last day of session, and I am disappointed that we haven't spoken much in our committees or in this House about this issue.

It's easy to fall off the radar because adult learning and community-based literacy doesn't neatly fit into any of the government's boxes. When we talk about education, we usually think of the school system, college programs, or official credentials. When we talk about jobs or the economy, we think about mining development or maybe hiring and procurement policies. But we have a lot of adults in this territory who are missing some basic fundamental skills that are necessary for them to be successful in a job or a college program, not to mention being able to be self-sufficient in navigating everyday life, especially with this online world. We're talking about people who need to be fluent in reading and writing in any language, being able to make calculations and estimates with numbers, being comfortable on a computer, and being able to use the internet effectively. Even the younger generation, we

often assume that at least they're computer literate, but it's worth remembering that being cell phone literate is not the same as computer literacy. And yet Aurora College's plan to move forward with basic adult education is to switch to online learning. It defies logic, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that more time is needed to find out what specific kinds of training opportunities are needed in each NWT community and to work out details about the best uses of individual buildings that Aurora College has vacated. But we still need to keep refocusing on how are we delivering the fundamentals, in every community, of language literacy, numeracy, and computer literacy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 692-20(1):  
OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN THE SPRING  
SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we had more session days, I would have liked to have used my time or opportunity to talk about NWT Housing and how they could get behind the NUP Renewal Project where they supply 125 residential affordable units to people desperate for affordable housing. They're doing it at a low carbon update, and all it would take is some backing to support their initiative. And by the way, for the record, the deadline is tomorrow to get behind that, for the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, if we had more time, I would like to talk about the health Minister and how she could get behind all Alzheimer's Alberta-NWT, where they're connecting Northerners with solutions on trying to work through their problems at zero cost to this government, virtually that is, but with a little support that relationship would go a long way, but only if I had more time, Mr. Speaker.

If I had more time, Mr. Speaker, we'd be talking about with the health Minister why in goodness sakes are we trying to act like Toronto where we have health permits now required for community barbecues. I mean, my goodness, when we become Toronto, we've got some serious reflection to start considering.

Mr. Speaker, with time ticking away, if I had more time, Mr. Speaker, I'd be talking about Avens and why the government continues to ignore the fact that it's subsidizing an NGO -- or sorry, an NGO is subsidizing the GNWT. Mr. Speaker, this squabble's all over emergency pay. It's not as if they bought cars and new paintings and yadda, yadda, yadda. It's about

giving danger pay for people who took care of 57 of our most vulnerable people. But if I had more time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I had more time in this session, I'd be talking about the envoy. Boy, I don't get tired of that. You know, the Premier's buddy, appointed to a particular position for \$440,000. But we're running out of time, Mr. Speaker, to talk about an employee who has been -- you know, former employee who was then, again, a former employee and continued to be a former employee and then brought back for reasons unknown, Mr. Speaker. But we don't have enough time.

Mr. Speaker, and lastly, if I had more session days, which I would certainly love, I'd like to spend some time, again, talking about housing issues, about the barrier-free need of housing in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, I think the LHOs, the local LHOs, should be the stewards of these. When we're investing millions of dollars, we want the right partners in place who can maintain, manage, and provide safe environments because the last thing we want to do is avoid another bailout or a crisis, especially when we can see one coming. But like I said, Mr. Speaker, if I had more time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 693-20(1):  
CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATES IN  
TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, before we break for the summer, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge and congratulate the high school graduates in my Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding starting with:

- Hannah Beck and Caleb Simon

from Fort Resolution;

- Leona Lockhart from Lutselk'e.

And at K'alemi Dene School in N'dilo, I want to recognize

- Patricia Black-Quitte
- Tadeh Betsina
- Owen Charlo-Zoe
- Lora Lee Stiopu.

I also want to congratulate the Indigenous high school graduates here at both high schools in Yellowknife, starting with Indigenous graduates from Sir John:

- Sara Elizabeth Anderson
- April Ansetti
- Rhiannon Balmer
- Bianca Bates
- Keenian Logan Cardinal-Sunshine
- Kalley Chorostkowski
- Mia Ann Dokum
- Kevon Football
- Michelle Sarah Therese Gon
- Ryan Harris
- Asher Hutton
- Grayson Klein
- Hailey Zoey Kodzin
- Mikayla Godze Lafferty
- Ty Lewis
- Madison Kelly Sabet Liske
- Anica Majok-Gordon
- Tristan Aden Menacho Martin  
Crapeau
- Harley McKnight
- Talya Meserah-Zdyb
- Nico Morin
- Kenneth Lance Neyelle
- Joslyn Raddi
- Jayden Rejean
- Charles Sayine
- Megan Smallwood
- Nahze Hedley Spurrell
- Jake Steinwand
- Rex Turner
- Cyrus Lindsay Walton
- Deacon Louis Dion Wedawin-  
Edjericon
- Tamara Grimard

And finally, the Indigenous grads from St. Patrick High School:

- Denize Drygeese-Neyelle
- Dexter Edjericon
- Josef Fowler
- Phoenix Erasmus
- Sam Erasmus
- Hannah Lafferty
- Nitanis-Kaitlin Laboucan
- Keisha Harris
- Baptiste Menoza
- Rylan Nasken
- Yakeleya Ritolowski
- Florissa Wetrade

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge my wife Elita Edjericon who just completed her Master's of Education.

Also, I want to end by thanking all the interpreters here today. I want to say mahsi and for their hard work and preservation in promoting the North's official languages. As well, my constituent assistant Taylor Pagotta, Warren Delorme, as well extend a thank you to all of the support staff here who works every day keeping our Assembly running. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 694-20(1): CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATES IN INUVIK

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June is the month of graduation in Inuvik. We'll be -- you know, when I get home, I'll be able to partake in the grade 12 graduation at East Three Secondary where we have a large graduating class, so I'd like to congratulate all of those grade 12 graduates.

But we also have our kindergarten graduation which is an amazing time for the littles to be able to celebrate them moving into their primary class. And one of the other graduating classes is the grade 6 graduation. In Inuvik, we have always historically had our elementary school and our high school, so grade 6 graduation has become this elaborate graduation which they well earn because they get to cross through those big double doors and become high school students. In most places, they become middle school students but when in Inuvik, they

get to go over to the big school. And I would like to congratulate them all.

I would also like to congratulate our post-secondary students that are coming out of colleges and universities and programs throughout Canada that are returning home and, you know, I encourage, education is the way that we're going to move forward to be stronger in the Northwest Territories and I'd like to put a shout-out to a few of the local graduate nurses that are now coming home to Inuvik. And it's very exciting to see more and more of you coming into the healthcare system.

I'd also like to say to all my colleagues here, you know, enjoy your summer, you know, it's a lot of time to go and spend with constituents, with family. Although we continue to work every day, it seems like that when you're out, make sure you're staying safe, you know. A lot of people will go out on the boat. This is near and dear to my family, is to safe, wear your lifejacket, you know, make sure you're practicing safe practices out on the land, and I look forward to seeing everybody come back here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member from Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 695-20(1):  
CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATES IN  
NUNAKPUT

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commend the high school graduates of 2025 in the Nunakput riding. These young people have persevered over the last 12 years to complete their high school curriculum. Although this is the end of high school, hopefully this is not the end of their educational journey as it is my hope, and the hope of many, that our people lead in all aspects of our communities, our organizations; whatever they dream to be - including nursing, teaching, local administration, and accounting. We also need tradespeople to build and maintain our homes and infrastructure. We need everyone protecting our people, the land, and water. This is my hope, Mr. Speaker.

I congratulate from Angik School in Paulatuk:

- Kassius Green
- Misty Wolki-Ruben
- Chase Wolki.

From Helen Kalvak Elihaviik School in Ulukhaktok:

- Kaia Ehaloak
- Alyssia Irish Memogana
- Keir Anne Joss
- Thomas Kimiksana
- Krista Kitekudlak
- Alison Kuneluk
- Angel Kuptana
- Lola Nigiyok
- Mary Olifie.

From Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk:

- Melinda Elias
- Kiara Cockney
- Alicia Felix
- Isaiah Gruben
- Jobey Lundrigan
- Mickey Gruben
- Sowlaq Kuiksak Raddi
- Dominick Kimiksana.

And to add, thank you to the parents, families, and teachers for your support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Nunakput. Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 696-20(1):  
CONGRATULATIONS TO GRADUATES IN  
NAHENDEH

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, it is that time of year where I get to celebrate the grade 12 graduation of students from Liidlil Kue Regional High School in Fort Simpson and Echo Dene School in Fort Liard. It is a time we get honour not just the academic achievements of these remarkable young individuals but also the resilience and determination they have demonstrated throughout their educational journeys. This milestone marks the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and personal growth, and it is a momentous occasion for the entire community.

Graduation is more than just a ceremony; it is a rite of passage that signifies the transition from adolescence to adulthood. For those students, it represents the countless hours spent studying, the friendships formed, and the challenges overcome. Many have navigated

unique cultural landscapes, drawing strength from their heritage while embracing new ideas and experiences. This blend of tradition and innovation is a statement to their character and the diverse backgrounds that enrich our communities.

As they step into the next chapter of their lives, whether pursuing further education, entering the workforce, or exploring new opportunities, these graduates carry with them not only their academic knowledge but also the values instilled by their families and educators. They are equipped to face the world with confidence, creativity, and a sense of responsibility.

Let us celebrate their achievements, support their aspirations, and look forward to the contributions they will make as they embark on their journeys. The future is bright for these graduates, and their potential is limitless.

Today I would like to recognize fifteen students who have completed their elementary, junior, and senior high journey.

To the three students from Echo Dene School and the four students from Liidlil Kue Regional High School, congratulations on completing this journey, a good start on your life's journey. I know there have been some fun and challenging times, but I can tell you that it has prepared you for the next step in your life, whether it is going on to further schooling, trades, travel, or work.

As I have done in the past, I have a few words of encouragement and the list of grads which I will asked to be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard.

To the parents, families, and teachers, thank you for all the support for those graduates. You should be happy and proud of your child today.

In closing, I'd like to wish all the 2025 graduating classes across the NWT all the best and congratulations on a job well done.

#### **Echo Dene Students**

- Hunter Bertrand- Deneron
- Zachary Berreault
- Corbin Wilson

#### **Liidlil Kue Regional High School Students**

- Helena Bonnetrouge
- Gina Hardisty-Isaiah
- Amaria Tanche-Hanna
- William Tanche-Hanna

#### **Encouragement**

"Find a career that you will love. It is very important because once you do, it is not work. It is something that you wake up wanting to do and it is not work. Please remember not to settle on a career. Like love, find the one that makes you happy."

"Buckle up. Like the school adventure that you went through, there are going to be some good times and not so good times ahead of you. Enjoy each moment as they are all learning opportunities for you and part of life. Please remember it is all right to cry and laugh about things. There is going to be a lot of opportunities to do both."

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out."

"You have two ears and one mouth. Please remember it is always wise to listen and understand what you have heard before kicking your mouth into gear."

Members' statements. Member from Thebacha.

#### **MEMBER'S STATEMENT 697-20(1): CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR RON HOLTORF**

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise in this House today to pay tribute to a friend, a respected educator, and a cherished member of our community, Ron Holtorf.

Ron passed away peacefully on March 15th, 2025, at St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta. Ron was a devoted husband to Danetta, a loving father to Roger, Jolynn, and Richard, and a proud grandfather to Caitlin and Eric. He also leaves behind his sister Elizabeth and many dear friends. He was preceded by his parents, Jack and Helen, and his beloved grandson Christian.

Mr. Speaker, Ron was born in Kenora, Ontario, but it was the Northwest Territories he chose as his home, arriving in 1953. In Fort Smith, he built a life, rooted in love, service, and community. It was there that he met Danetta, and together they shared 51 years of marriage, years filled with laughter, mutual respect, and unwavering support for each other.

Ron was a passionate educator and a lifelong learner. He began his career as a teacher and later took on a leadership role at Aurora College where he eventually retired as president. His impact on northern education was profound, and his commitment to student success touched countless lives. He also served our

community with distinction as a town councillor and volunteer. Ron believed deeply in giving back, whether through public service, mentorship, or simply offering a kind word. He had a sharp wit, a generous spirit, and a kind love for the land and the people of the North.

Even after the 2023 evacuation from Fort Smith due to the wildfire, Ron's heart never left the North. Although illness prevented his return, he worked hard to regain his strength at St. Joe's in hopes of coming home, a testament to his strength and resilience.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the many healthcare workers, friends, and family members who stood by Ron through his final journey. In his memory, the family has asked that donations be made to your local food bank, a cause that was close to Ron's heart.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my gratitude for the role Ron and Danetta unknowingly played in my own life. My wife Karen first came to Fort Smith with her friend Shannon, a niece of Ron and Danetta name, and it was through that visit that Karen and I met. For that and for so much more, I will always be thankful.

Ron's legacy will live on in the community he helped shape, and in the lives he touched so deeply. We all miss him dearly as a friend, a mentor, and a true Northerner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Thebacha. Our condolences go out to the family and friends.

Members' statements. Motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 60-20(1):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
HOUSE TO OCTOBER 16, 2025,  
CARRIED

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 2.1, when the House adjourns on Thursday, May 29, 2025, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, October 16, 2025;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to October 16, 2025, if the Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier or later time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and

thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Motions. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ever so briefly, I want to recognize and acknowledge all the incredible interpreters we have here. I would certainly say to some degree they are all my favourites; however, Mr. Speaker, I have one favorite who is just a little more favorite, and that happens to be Ms. Sarah Cleary. She's here, and she interprets Dene Kede, and I'm certainly grateful to call her a friend as well a constituent, and I appreciate the hard work she does here every day we sit. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy today to recognize Inuvik Boot Lake constituency assistant, Ms. Sheila Nasogaluak here today. Her advocacy and certainly her passion and hard work for our constituents is invaluable for the work that we do up there, and I would not be able to do my job without her. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, [Translation] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank all those that are here. Also the -- especially the interpreters for Tlicho interpreter, Jonas Lafferty and Maro Sundberg and also all the outlining community interpreters, I thank them. They are the language keepers, so I am so thankful to them. And also we have all our staff. It is because of them that we do our jobs very well. I'd like to thank them. And also all the leaders here, we will be travelling home. I wish everyone a safe travel home. And we will be

thankful for that. Now it's the summer is upon us, and we won't be able to come back until fall time. So I thank you. [Translation Ends] masi. That's it. I'm done.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to take the time to recognize two of our pages that have been with us and working hard all week that are Yellowknife North constituents. We have Solomon Young and Ace Wickens, who are both from William MacDonald School. So thank you and thanks to all the pages for all of your help and patience with us this week. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Thebacha.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also thank the pages for the tremendous work they've done this week, and I'd like to recognize the pages from PWK High School in Fort Smith, Elli MacDonald-Jaque, Kyla MacDonald-Schwarzenberger, Paisley Jones, and their chaperon Jana Jaque.

I'd also like to recognize Agatha, or Aggie as she's known. My MSA will be leaving this week, it's her last week, on to a new adventure, and I just wanted to thank her for all the tremendous work that she's done for me and everyone in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Thebacha. Colleagues, it's recognition of visitors in the gallery. Please focus on that, thank you.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a visitor in the gallery who is right behind me; it's Christian Bittrolff. He's the president of the International Association of Firefighters, Local 2890. Thank you for being here today, Christian.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery and allowing us to be representatives for you here representing the people.

Acknowledgements. Member from Frame Lake.

## Acknowledgements

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 15-20(1): ECOLE ALAIN ST-CYR 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the staff and students of Ecole Allain St-Cyr on 35th Anniversary of this important Frame Lake institution.

The NWT's French- first language school got its humble beginning in 1989 with a single class in a portable classroom at Ecole J.H. Sissons on the initiative of passionate francophone parents. 35 years later, the school has grown considerably. It has its own building on Taylor Road now and is home to more than 200 French-first language students, from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. A ceremony celebrating the milestone was held last week at the school where a time capsule was opened.

I want to extend my congratulations to Yellowknife's francophone community. [translation not provided] Ecole Allain St-Cyr. Merci, you Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

## Oral Questions

### QUESTION 748-20(1): NORTHERN UNITED PLACE ENERGY EFFICIENCY RENEWAL PROJECT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in an unusual circumstance here, I gave the Minister a head's up on this particular one, so the Minister of housing won't be surprised on my question because it's so important we can't miss this opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the question is about helping Northern United Place on their renewal project. They have obtained loans and processes all on their own, and all they require is housing to support them as a backstop to help underwrite the loans, the million dollars of loans they are potentially receiving. So, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister direct her department before the May 30th deadline lapses, and they miss this energy efficiency renewal project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the

question. Yes, this is a great project, excited to hear all the good work that the NWT Community Services Corporation has done, and the exciting work around the rehabilitation of Northern United Place with the renovation project. Housing NWT at this time is still working on a response, Mr. Speaker, and I'm hoping to have something today or tomorrow with the response to the NWT Community Services Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At first, it may appear like a layout of cash but it's not. It's just a guarantee, and the GNWT will get its money back because this is a 50-year organization that is cruising to work.

Mr. Speaker, what communication has the Minister, through her department obviously, had with the Yellowknife Community Association in the context of NUP about what they're doing and how they're trying to meet their deadline of tomorrow May 30th? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Housing NWT, we cannot guarantee anything. This is a financial management board decision because we can't continue to take on debt. It reduces the borrowing capacity of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Internal discussions right now with the Community Services Corporation and Housing NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to freshen up the memory of this particular House, it was housing was supported through a move forward on \$41.6 million, Mr. Speaker. Ooh, that's a lot of money. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking is there any way to tap into that financial opportunity temporarily to support this multimillion dollar initiative they got all on their own and they're going to pay for it all on their own. And, Mr. Speaker, lastly, they've done this for 50 years without interruption, and they've served this community well. Can the Minister find a way to make this happen? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you to the Member for the emphasis on how important this project is, especially for downtown Yellowknife, affordable housing, Aurora College students. This is really important that we provide a place, and the renovation project sounds like a great renovation project and some good work by the NWT Community Services Corporation.

We're looking at the community housing initiative funding and seeing if there's any opportunity to provide some funds through the community housing initiative fund to the NWT Community Services Corporation. So, again, these are internal discussions, and I'm pressing Housing NWT for a response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 749-20(1):  
GUIDELINES FOR USE OF GENERATIVE  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had a young constituent of mine reach out to talk to me about AI technologies and how they're changing the world, increasingly becoming the norm in industries from, you know, coffee shops to the highest levels of military. So my question is for the Minister responsible for the public Service. What policies are currently in place to govern the use of AI technology in the GNWT? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the use of artificial intelligence obviously is a new area. It certainly is one that we are looking to provide better guidance to our staff on. So what we've done thus far, we looked to what the Government of Canada's doing, we've also looked at what the Government of British Columbia doing, and that is likely to be where we'll find the most alignment that can help us move this forward a little faster. And with that, we will be able to produce our own guidelines for the use of generative artificial intelligence, which I expect that and then training associated to be ready for staff in the very near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would appreciate knowing a clear timeline on that. Are we looking at the end of term or next year or something like that because this technology's moving fast every day, and faster still, it's learning a lot. So when can we expect to see those new policies come in place? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that this work is well underway. I don't have the timeline in front of me, but it certainly will be this



government and I would say, really, not the end of the government but fairly soon. So I'll certainly happily commit to get that timeline back to the Member. It is an area where we want to ensure that people are able to use this. It can be an opportunity for efficiency, creativity. But it needs to be used responsibly, and it needs to have human oversight to make sure that we remain, you know, obviously, transparent in what we're doing. So happy to provide that date as soon as I can. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you would use AI to write your own policies but let's not do that.

Mr. Speaker, there's also AI technology you could use to better manage our energy systems, our emergency management systems, and a host of other things to improve that. Is this policy also going to cover the use of those technologies that could be procured for other public policy purposes? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I mean, looking at using AI technology in areas of infrastructure and actually replacing type of different infrastructure systems is beyond what I'm speaking to here. What I'm looking at here is how the public service is using AI really more in day-to-day functions. So, again, don't want to be overpromising in terms of what it is, but it's really meant to be guidance for the public service in how we use it in a public service context and not necessarily when it comes to, for example, battery systems. Certainly open to having an opportunity to look at those as well, if it would answer questions here in the House, but this is really focused on the public service who are delivering functions to public, you know, policy generation for example, not necessarily replacing infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 750-20(1):  
ADDICTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
TREATMENTS IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's sessional statement highlighted facilities-addictions treatment and dedicated aftercare. So my questions today are for the Minister for Health and Social Services.

The Minister knows that I have had constituents who have required to go to facilities down south, and it's a very convoluted and complicated process and public-facing information is limited. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me what she is doing to improve pathfinding for addictions treatment in other territories for the people of the NWT? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question and, you know, this is -- I received BFs on this. And so one of the things that I've asked my department to do is to look at the front-facing and, you know, when a lot of times when people are looking, you know, we tend to search online and so that was the first thing that, you know, we look at is how do we find what we service providers are offering. And it is very difficult on our website to find facility-based addiction treatment and how to access it. So that is one of the directions that I've given to the department. But what I would like to say is that every one of our communities has access to the community counselling program, and that would be the first step to doing that. And if you're living in a health centre -- a community with a health centre, then it would be the health centre that you contact.

I've asked the department to try and to be able to do this and make this information a lot more clear for people that are needing this service, you know, and I -- and I appreciate the questions because I think when we have somebody who is struggling through addictions or through this type, you know, they may struggle to just try to find the energy to find the services, and so we have to make it as easy as possible. So that is what I've given the direction to my department to look into. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for the Minister for her compassion on this issue. One thing that I heard from my constituent specifically, who was dealing with this in December of last year, was the inability to secure a case manager in time for their family member to receive a path forward expediently to treatment. So can the Minister please tell me what the quickest way to connect with a case manager to make sure that people who are expediently seeking care, who don't want to relapse, can find that way to treatment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we

heard loud and clear from many users of the service is that there used to be a -- you needed a pre-approval just to be able to apply for this program. That has been removed. But what I would like to go back to is the expedient of the facility-based addiction program. There is a necessary -- you know, and I know that when people are ready to go, they might be ready today, there is a process still that can take -- you know, it can be up to -- once you have a caseworker, can take three to five weeks to get into a facility. The reason why that is that we have six facilities that we have contracts with, and those are the only contracts that we pay for. So we have six contracts outside of the territory. And there is an application process. There's an intake process. And so any community counsellor can be. In Yellowknife, Tree of Peace is an intake place. But what I would also like to share is this is not an immediate entrance into a facility. And I know when people are going through this, they're urgently wanting their family members to be put into somewhere. What we have gotten federal funding for is for detox beds. So if there is a need for detox, the process for that, though, would have to go through a practitioner and, you know, and we -- you know, so if you're in a community, you may be referred to the hospital once you're ready or you're, you know, preparing to go for intake. Some of our facilities actually have the detox so that would be something that the caseworker would work out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister also speak to what availability and communication of that availability of aftercare is available to folks who are coming back from treatment. I know that with some of the resources that are coming on in line in Yellowknife, which are fantastic -- I'm so excited that we have that, those dedicated spaces, but what information can family members receive about making sure that their loved one is coming back and has a safe place to land? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, aftercare -- this is one of the concerns that we do have a gap in and so -- but what we do have the gap in is the living accommodations. For those who go out to facility-based addiction treatment, if they're going from homelessness then they're not coming back to a home, so we -- you know, we are working on a transitional housing after recovery program. We just recently announced that the one in Yellowknife will -- you know, and then the -- we have one kind of be coming

online in Inuvik. But aftercare is just the support, so there are some of the facility-based addiction treatments that continue online in virtual aftercare once they leave. There's also our community counselling or the caseworker that they worked with that helped them send them out can also be the person that can connect them with the aftercare counselling that they may need in the community that they're returning to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu

QUESTION 751-20(1):  
SENIOR ENVOY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF  
CANADA

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the NWT have a tremendous amount of needs, as I heard from my colleague there, Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, highlight the benefits of from the Jordan's Principle program and possible jeopardy. My questions are for the Premier on advocacy.

My first question, could the Premier explain why the senior envoy to the Government of Canada role was created and what it is intended to achieve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Sahtu. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I appreciate the Member's question.

So there's been a lot of focus on the North over the past year and a half, a focus like we've never seen before I would say. There's also a new government in Ottawa. And so there's momentum right now. There's attention on the North. There's a desire to make investments in Canada, build up the strength of Canada, and take advantage of our natural resources. So there's momentum, and we need to keep that momentum going. We need to capitalize on that momentum. We need to keep the NWT at the front of people's minds in Ottawa. I think about the Council of Leaders' trip that Cabinet took with Indigenous governments from across the territory. It was a great event. We went down there, and then we left.

We made waves while we were there. Everyone knew we were coming. We had a number of Ministers show up. But then we left, and then we didn't have that constant presence. And, yes, we're up here, we're making phone calls, we're sending emails. But we need to take advantage of this moment and stay at the front of people's minds. Part of our job is educating Ottawa about the North. So having someone

there who can actually, you know, speak to the different offices about what's going on in the North, keeping them up to date, and then sending back intel, that's going to be important. And so that's the rationale behind this office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Premier for that reply. Yes, I can understand the Indigenous government participation. Over 60 percent, Mr. Speaker, of our territory is underneath a modern treaty society.

My second question is Indigenous government support is critical to our advocacy and engagement efforts in Ottawa. Could the Premier describe the approach to include governments in the federal engagement and how the envoy position will support these efforts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that that -- well, I know that that trip to Ottawa with the Council of Leaders really highlighted the importance of having Indigenous voices at the table in Ottawa. We're a small territory. Authorities are disbursed among a number of different bodies and governments and boards. And we're not going to advance unless we work together to advance, and so it is absolutely critical to have Indigenous governments support their advocacy efforts in Ottawa. We all sink or swim together. If an Indigenous government is able to go to Ottawa, get support for something, bring money into the territory, that's a benefit for the territory. And when we were down there with Council of Leaders, there were some Indigenous governments and we helped them set up meetings with federal officials, both elected and employees of the federal government, and have meetings. And in some instances, those chiefs had never had meetings with federal representatives before in Ottawa. They never -- maybe didn't know how to navigate the system, didn't have the contacts, for whatever reason, but we saw the value in that and we want to ensure that we continue to support those efforts.

So there's been a lot of positive feedback from Indigenous governments about the envoy position, and we received formal and informal requests for support in Ottawa. So I think that this is going to be good not just for the Government of the Northwest Territories but for Indigenous governments as well, and I look forward to working with them and supporting their efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Premier for that reply. Yes, I have talked to our Indigenous governments in my area. I appreciate that we are including Indigenous governments in this important work, Mr. Speaker. I know this envoy position is relatively new, but could the Premier advise the House of any results from this new position? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, yes, the position is new, and we're in a transition period in Ottawa where we had a federal election, now we have a new government who are, you know, trying to find out where their offices are. And so right now, we are educating ourselves, strategizing, but, yes, there have been successes. So the Endacho Healing Society, which is led by Roy and Gina Erasmus -- you probably know them from the Dene Wellness Warriors -- they recently announced that they received \$7 million from the Government of Canada, and my office was supporting them through that and that money is to support the development of a trauma healing lodge. You know, it speaks directly to our mandate or the priorities of this Assembly. And I will read from an article that was published in NNSL written by Roy Erasmus, quote: I want to acknowledge the support from the GNWT during our application and more specifically the recently announced senior envoy to the Government of Canada. His support, advice, and political advocacy for our project was essential, and we appreciate the Premier's commitment to providing this type of connector to Ottawa. And that's the type of feedback we're receiving from around the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 752-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDING  
CODE

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke about a building code for the North. I would like to ask the Minister, given the number of units that certainly we are planning on building through our housing corporation as well as all the work that's being done with the Indigenous governments in my region and throughout the territory, can the Minister update this House on the work that's being completed by the working group to date? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks for the question. Although the Ministers have changed, the work is still continued, and we're going to continue on with the line of work that's been completed for developing and working on the national building codes for the structures. So that being said, I know we don't have the full implementation yet. However, we do have it in had our projects. When we send anything out to RFP or anything like that, it is to develop to the national building codes. So right now, we're utilizing the 2020 National Building Codes and the 2020 National Fire Codes under the Fire Prevention Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, and I appreciate that, and I recognize that we still have guidelines that we do offer through the department; however, what we don't have is enforcement. Can the Minister commit to -- and I know the previous Minister had a plan to have a plan. Can the Minister commit to sharing that plan, workplan, once developed by the working group with the House, please. Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will commit to that, and as soon as we have it done and ready, we will share that with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we're on the topic of commitments, we love commitments and I certainly appreciate that, can the Minister -- big, huge commitments. Can the Minister please -- would the Minister commit to, then, as the previous Minister committed to, having this building code in place when we walk out of this building at the end of this 20th Assembly. Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** The goal is to have the -- all the policies developed by next summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 753-20(1):  
WHATI TRANSMISSION LINE

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mahsi. Can the Minister say what plans or energy initiatives the government has in place with the Tlicho government or get Tlicho communities off diesel power? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Better than I could do, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. This is an area of tremendous importance. First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, any work that we're doing with or for the communities in Monfwi, we're doing in consultation and in involvement with the Tlicho government. They really are leaders here in terms of where they want to see their communities go, and it's my hope that we can just be partners to them to help enable those visions to come true. There's a couple of major things and I think, in fact, the Member already mentioned them. One of them is the transmission line to Whati. This is around a 50 kilometer stretch which will connect the community into the Snare hydro system, and the hope and expectation is that it will be a project that goes to the partnership that built the same -- that built the TASR highway so -- or the Tlicho highway. That is mainly the Tlicho-Kiewit partnership. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, that will work very well with a hydro project if there is a Lac Le Martre Hydro Project. This was many years now in the making, but we're bringing that back hopefully to life. We're going to see if we can bring that up and move it forward to a stronger feasibility and get that on to the system as well. It adds -- it will add in not only for Whati, it will add into the whole system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Can the Minister provide a status update on the Whati transmission line?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Happy to do so. The only -- what we -- the stage we were at, Mr. Speaker, is we're negotiating -- there is, of course, the infrastructure cooperation agreement with the Tlicho government, and so we were working with them to negotiate the final stages of a design contract. That may well even be signed by now, but certainly the last time I had checked in on it, we were at the final stages of that. That will go to design, and then from there, we will be hopefully jointly going to help get some funding to see this project to its completion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, women and girls are often overlooked and disrespected in terms of the trades. Will the work on the Whati transmission line lead to the creation of new GNWT jobs in the Tlicho region and if this is the case, what sort of positions would be tailored for young Indigenous female apprentices? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have an answer here. What I would like to suggest is that I'm going to commit to get an answer, and a proper answer. I think that's an exceptional question. Typically, when a project comes forward of this magnitude, there will be some analysis done about potential jobs that are created, and it would include an analysis under GDA, plus it would include an analysis of whether or not there's a gender component to it in terms of who gets affected or who may benefit. So in the current cases, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest this is the exact time where I'll commit to bring back to the House further information so that we can, in fact, commit properly to making sure that the community is fully engaged and that every Member and every resident in the Tlicho region can see themselves reflected in this project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 754-20(1):  
AURORA COLLEGE COMMUNITY  
LEARNING CENTRES

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. So last March, before the end of our last sitting, the Minister committed in this House with regard to the future of community learning centres, and quote, we're going to provide a critical path and the timeline, and we're going to do that by the May sitting, Mr. Speaker, which is a pretty quick turnaround, but it is an important item and we're happy to make that commitment.

So can the Minister explain what is the status of this critical path and timeline that was promised with regard to the community learning centres? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we were all gearing up and packing up our computers to walk in here today, Members would have received an email from me with a letter that outlined what that critical path and timeline is. And in addition to that, there is a deadline in the letter by which time I would appreciate feedback from committee so that we can further this conversation together. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my next question is when will funding be confirmed

for programs to be able to move forward? If they are to move forward, how soon can we confirm that and get things going. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within that critical path, there are some items that Education, Culture and Employment is able to fund from within through money that they retained through the MOU that they did have with Aurora College, and there are additional items that would require additional funding. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So how is the Minister prioritizing continuity of access to programs, such as the Literacy Outreach Centre in Yellowknife? In other words, when will staff and students know whether programs will be offered again this September? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the letter that I've sent to committee outlines both a short-term response acknowledging that, you know, adult learning is very important in communities, and then also longer term conversation about solutions that would take us far beyond our short-term solutions. So in terms of what that looks like, I am asking committee first to respond back to the letter so I can garner their thinking and their perspectives on this. I need to reach out to Indigenous governments to advise them of short term and long-term solutions that we're looking at here, and then from there, we'll go out publicly and be able to share it with everybody. So I'm hoping that all of this can happen in short order and hoping that committee can also prioritize responding to the letter as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 755-20(1):  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal government is looking to build Canada into the world's leading hub for science and innovation. What opportunities does the Minister for ECE see for the NWT in that ambitious commitment? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd say in everything that we've heard come out of the new Prime Minister, there is an undercurrent of an education foundation, whether we're talking about trade, whether we're talking about bolstering our economy or our production across Canada. All of that has an educational foundation to it and a diverse expectation for our education system as well.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, to infrastructure funding, we also heard about the importance of economic resilience, growth, and also supporting reconciliation in the words from this new government and from our Prime Minister.

So there are multiple ways that our post-secondary education system can support the federal mandate, and I very much look forward to having that same undercurrent in education in all of my conversations that happen next week. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister perfectly segued into my next question. I was going to ask, Mr. Speaker, how is education going to figure in our upcoming federal engagement knowing that this changed mandate has come about; how are we going to centre our post-secondary education and education system in general in our negotiations with the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly any time that we are writing to the federal government, speaking to the federal government on the phone, or having virtual conversations with Ministers -- I hosted a virtual FTP earlier today with a federal Minister on the line, two federal Ministers on the line, and so any of these opportunities are great for relationship building, and we carry those forward in conversations about post-secondary as well.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, the Aurora College board of governors does have a deliverable mandate item that's found in the mandate agreement that is due in 2025, and that is their federal engagement strategy. And I have offered to support them in that any way that I can, including travelling with them to Ottawa. But a lot of our post-secondary institutions also have their own relationships with the federal government and have been very successful in garnering investment in the territory with their relationships. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I note that Aurora College has a newly appointed board chair. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister talking about the mandate. Mr. Speaker, how does the Minister plan to work in concert with the new chair to promote post-secondary investment in our territory? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. So, Mr. Speaker, the new board chair and I do have a very close working relationship. We are only ever a text message away, and I can say we are not shy to text one another often. We've already met multiple times since he assumed this role, and I very much appreciate his energetic drive and the vision that he brings to this role. I really look forward to working with him and the entire board of governors as we advance the mandate agreement for the transformation of Aurora College. Mr. Speaker, I can say that the board chair is not shy about forming their own relationships and has a long history of doing so, both in business and through their other involvement with different organizations. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 756-20(1):  
SUPPORTING NORTHERN BUSINESSES  
AFFECTED BY TARIFFS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, small business owners in Range Lake are being hit hard by tariffs. I'm hearing some unfair costs as high as \$80,000 that they didn't have to pay before. Some are even leaving their goods in the US to avoid tariffs, hoping for a break if there's yet another arbitrary change of what's going on. So Range Lake businesses need financial support to offset the tariffs. Will the Minister commit funds -- Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment commit funds to support northern owned and operated businesses as they navigate these changing trade relationships? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of ITI.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at Industry, Tourism and Investment, we certainly believe in supporting northern business, and we are very transparent about who we support in the

territory. We have multiple different programs across the department, and we publish the contributions to business through our contributions agreements very, very transparently, and certainly happy to look for any form or mechanism that we continue to support business in a greater way in the territory. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. I think the issue is not that we don't support businesses; I know we support businesses. But this is a very specific prop moment challenge. They're meeting -- the Yukon government has set aside \$2 million for this. Will the Minister bring forward an appropriation specifically to cushion northern businesses who are paying additional costs due to tariffs? We've seen other jurisdictions do this; it's time we did it as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point we're certainly working with the business community mostly through our chambers to decipher any increases in costs that we're seeing to northern businesses. We did recently see implications to our diamond industry for multiple reasons, one of which was tariffs. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, always happy to have the conversation, but I could never agree to that on the floor of the House because we have processes where I would need to, of course, have the support of all Cabinet. It's not a one-person decision. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Okay, thank you. So what can the Minister do if the Minister can't commit to -- because money's what's needed here. That's the support that's being asked for. That's the thing that's hurting bottom line that's going to lead to job losses, businesses closing, all of that. So what can the Minister do to cushion the impact of tariffs? If it's not money -- or how can we get to the point where we spend money -- I'm trying to get to the point we need to help these businesses. That's an extraordinary amount of money, and I'm not hearing any solutions being offered today. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly, the GNWT has responded in the area that we have seen direct tariff impacts to business which was to our diamond industry and from there, Mr. Speaker, certainly we'll continue to work with our chambers to find out what data they have in order to show what the impact is to business. Because I need the data to be able to decipher what our response, if it all needs to be from the

GNWT, and certainly when we're in Ottawa next week I'll also be sitting with Ministers responsible for internal trade, and we'll be able to have conversations in relation to tariffs and national responses as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

#### QUESTION 757-20(1): HEALTH PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Member's statement, we're running out of time so I'm going to try to squeeze a couple extra questions in here through this process.

Mr. Speaker, I was just simply gobsmacked when I heard that NGOs and community groups have to now get a health permit to have a barbecue. And, Mr. Speaker, could the Minister maybe enlighten how this process came along and what are we fixing? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the only -- within the legislation, but don't quote me because I don't have it in front of me, so I won't go into details. I know that there's traditional feasts that are exempted through this, otherwise I would have to get back to the Member. There isn't apparently any changes that it is -- or it hasn't been enforced previously. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, when I was speaking to this generous gift to the community, the purveyor of it, that is, Mr. Speaker, they told me that they were cornered at the Yellowknife trade show the week before when they were giving out popcorn to people in the community and they -- the health inspector cited where's your hand wash station, you know, and they went on this long list. Mr. Speaker, simply put, would the Minister find a better way to -- for us to work through these community generous gifts without turning them into permitting exercises. And by the way, the permit's free, which it's just an administrative loop and process. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Member for bringing this to my attention today as I am currently dealing with the traditional feast one, so I will add that to the list that I will follow up and bring, and if there's more that you want to discuss this, I'll be willing to have this conversation further, if

there's other things that we need to look into under this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister willing to work on this. I would ask in the context of urgency and zeal, because I mean, it's burger season, you know. So I don't want anyone in trouble. That's why I would ask the Minister to find a way to pull it back as reasonably as possible and would she be willing to make sure that this is done sooner than later because we don't want generous gifts to the community penalized by kind people helping others. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will be having this conversation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 758-20(1):  
IMPLEMENTATION OF MISSING AND  
MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND  
GIRLS CALLS TO ACTION

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, Indigenous women across the North are looking for meaningful action. The Calls for Justice from MMIWG are not optional; they are obligations. Our women deserve real change, not just words. My questions are for the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs relating to the implementation of the calls that specifically address safety, health, and rights of Indigenous women and girls.

Can the Minister state how many of the Calls for Justice relating specifically to Indigenous women and girls have been implemented by this government? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very important question but very technical. I don't have that level of detail, but this is one where I'm more than happy to provide a written response back to this House and to the Member because I want to make sure that that information is getting out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yeah, that's what I was going to ask next. Can the Minister explain how the department is actioning these calls. Well that, and then will the

Minister commit to tabling an update in this House. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm more than happy to table an update in this House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, and he didn't answer the second question. Can the Minister explain how the department is actioning these calls? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in other jurisdictions in Canada, the Calls for Justice are to highlight a segment of the population that is ignored often and underserved. Here in the Northwest Territories, we're an Indigenous territory, and the policies that we put in place when it comes to health and social services, to justice, they better be focused on addressing those Calls for Justice. That's always at the forefront of our mind. When we -- you know, we're amending pieces of legislation right now to help address some of those issues. So everything we do, we keep that at the forefront of our mind. And if we're -- if departments aren't, then we as Ministers are doing what we can to ensure that they do. And if we're not doing it, the MLAs need to ensure that they're holding us to task on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 759-20(1):  
HEALTHCARE STAFF RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, we've talked a lot about health care in this Assembly in the past sitting. Can the Minister talk to us about healthcare staff recruitment and retention, what is her department been doing and achieving with relation to bringing healthcare staff into the territory? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we in the last government set up what's called the health recruitment unit. This is an entity that works in concert with a team lead from the health authority. So we have a human resource specialist and an authority specialist working together specifically focused particularly nurse recruitment. Mr. Speaker, they are seeing some significant outcomes and benefits. For



example, we are now consolidating competitions, which means it's a much more efficient process. Rather than hiring individually, we can actually bring nurses into a competition for any and all available positions, much more efficient this way and more targeted. But, really, the big thing, Mr. Speaker, compared to last March to this March, we already are projecting to have boosted indeterminate staffing by 13.6 percent, so a significant number, and dropping the number of days it takes to turn around from the time of application to the time of making an offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along a similar thread, I'm curious to hear from the Minister about our summer student hiring. What are our hiring numbers like? Is there anything that she has to deliver related to this and how it might relate to health care as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** New topic, Member from Frame Lake. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 760-20(1):  
DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS  
PROCUREMENT POLICY

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. I know the Indigenous Procurement Policy is in in the consultation stage. I know they've been in Inuvik. I talked to some business owners up there who have reached out to me with some questions around how that's going. I wonder can the Minister of Finance give an update on how those -- how the consultation process has been going and where they are in the procurement policy? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Member's quite correct, this -- the Indigenous Procurement Policy is meant to be really the culmination and completion of a procurement review effort that began in the last government with a number of updates, a number of consolidations of our purposes and principles, modernizing and bringing all these things into a place that are more effective, having dashboard, and having an Indigenous Procurement Policy, recognizing this a jurisdiction with 50 percent Indigenous population and a great many Indigenous businesses that we want to see flourish. So it's really looking at the public side of what we do and whether we can do better to reflect those businesses that we have. So that consultation

process is happening right now. It began last month. It's going into this month. It will wrap up over the next month. I'll also be making some outreaches directly to Indigenous governments myself in addition to the opportunities that they've had -- they or their officials may have had. Still open, I believe, on the portal for feedback from folks and would certainly like to hear. There's a number of different ways this could go. We need to find a way to define an Indigenous business and then find whether or not there are opportunities to better support them in the procurement processes so that we are really maximizing the dollars of the government for the people and residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Minister. And certainly I support this important work. I live in a riding with two Indigenous governments, well established, both with well-established development corporations. So my next question is there going to be -- is there any consideration -- I had originally had thought to potentially, for example, Mr. Speaker, if there was \$2 million worth of government contracting work to be done in my region, is there any appetite to, say, carve out 10, 20, 30, 50, whatever the percentage would be, of that work and then have that work then with qualified businesses within the Indigenous development corporations versus direct businesses. Is that any -- been given any consideration? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a second component of what's happening right now in this space, and that is led, really, by staff at Executive and Indigenous affairs is to have discussions with modern treaty holders, specifically to determine whether or not there are opportunities to create MOU arrangements so that there can be more formalized agreements as to how procurement might happen on the land -- on the lands for modern treaty holders. That may well end up in something of the way that the Member is describing. Obviously, it's premature for me to conclude what that would look like without knowing how those discussions go.

On terms of public procurement, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of options we put forward, and one of them is to do work packages. So not necessarily region by region but by project by project that you can ensure that's particularly on a large projects that there could be set aside amounts that we say, look, this is intended to be for a specific group or particular type of business to ensure that we are, again, maximizing local capacity. And, again, I encourage people to give us feedback if they

think that would be helpful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister. I know there are -- I mean, the whole purpose of this is to increase capacity in Indigenous employment in the regions, you know, give opportunities for Indigenous businesses to grow. I'm wondering -- and it's a question I've been asked -- there's also some non-Indigenous ran businesses that employ many Indigenous employees in the region as well. They've asked is there going to be any kind of a -- is there going to be any opportunity in the new policy to account for that as well, account for that to have -- if you, you know, and again, it's all about the teeth, right, Mr. Speaker. You got to be able to enforce it just like we do with the Business Incentive Policy. But is there any opportunity in the discussions on the new policy around that hiring of Indigenous people?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple things. Firstly, is that, again, our existing procurement policies do, to the extent that we look at BIP and use BIP as a key tool, we are now enforcing through vendor performance management the opportunity to ensure that when someone says they're hiring northerners, and ultimately Indigenous Northerners, that we'll be monitoring that so that they do the things they say they're going to do. But secondarily, Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest folks take a look at the proposed definition around Indigenous business that we've put forward. It's really a question of saying, you know, what -- whether or not it's majority ownership, whether it's majority benefit in terms of economic benefit. Is it majority control by Indigenous people, and should it be exclusively Indigenous people who are recognized Members of northern Indigenous nations, should it be Indigenous peoples of Canada? Those are exactly the questions we're out to look at right now. The North is a place of -- you know, again, we have a lot of different cultures and different regions, and we're trying to do our best to see that we reflect that in this future definition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 761-20(1):  
MONITORING AND REVIEW OF  
PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my questions are for the Minister of Finance. On

May 7th of this year, the NWT health authority announced a new air ambulance contract with Access Air Ambulance, so that's a joint venture between Advanced Medical Solutions, Air Tindi, Aklak Air, Det'on Cho, and Tlicho Investment Corporation, but a few -- oh, it was also mentioned in the press release that through the contract Access Air Ambulance committed to achieve substantial levels of NWT content as per the Business Incentive Policy. And a few days later, we saw in the news that Advanced Medical Solutions was actually taken over by a non-northern based company.

Can the Minister explain, in a situation like this, where a 10-year contract has just been awarded based on certain understood levels of northern content, can a contract like this be reviewed if circumstances like this change around northern content or ownership? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not in a position to speak to a specific procurement event here on the floor of the House. Certainly would be happy to find the details. We do, if there's a procurement event, obviously we are monitoring now to make sure that contracts are complied with and that commitments are applied with, whether it's to northern hiring, northern spends. That is part of vendor performance management now, and so certainly happy to make the commitment that we will do that. If there's fundamentals that have changed in a contract and they're not being met, again, that too can be something that may be dealt with. But probably wouldn't be dealt with here on the floor of the House. So, again, you know, really, making those assurances, again, that we want to hold people to the commitments that they make and told them particularly to the commitments that they make under BIP. Without knowing in front of me whether or not -- what commitments were made and whether or not they've been complied with, that's all I can say is to ensure that we will make the effort to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand we can't speak to details of any particular contract on the floor. But just in general in terms of the process or how it works, can the Minister explain whether the department would be proactively checking and enforcing, you know, northern content and ownership or whether it would be sort of reviewed on a complaints' basis only. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So a couple of the departments are involved. I can say that for in terms of BIP component and whether or not a business complies and continues to comply with BIP, that is monitored regularly through folks at ITI, and whether or not there's -- and then on the procurement side, Mr. Speaker, obviously, sometimes people like to suggest that we should move our procurement processes faster. One of the things we do try to do, of course, is to verify whether or not when someone is bidding on a contract that they are, in fact, providing information as necessary and as is required in order to ensure that we're satisfying ourselves that when they've made a bid that they are -- that they do have the necessary information. And then beyond that, once they've done that, again, we've introduced vendor performance management so that those who have made certain commitments in their contracts do, in fact, actively achieve them, and that is monitored regularly by the project officers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain what would be the government's recourse if it found that a contractor was not living up to its commitments, you know, under the BIP policy in this case. What would be the government's recourse or what would be the process that would happen from there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a host of different opportunities -- or possibilities here too. And certainly could be anything from, you know, looking at whether or not there's been a breach of contract in a more extreme circumstance, and then that could then lead to a number of different potential outcomes. There's also certainly, under our procurement policies, the ability -- or possibility that someone can, in particularly egregious situations or repetitive situations, someone could actually be named or noted as being a non-responsible contractor which could then lead to them having -- you know, being notified that they may not be permitted to make future bids. So, again, depending on the severity and on where the error might arise. If they're -- again, you know, if they're not achieving the goals that they have under vendor performance management and we can see that, we've also introduced the ability for holdbacks, greater holdbacks in certain type of contracts, and they may not get their holdback if they're not, again, meeting their commitment. So it depends a little bit on the circumstance and the type of contract, but

there are a number of tools in the toolbox. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 762-20(1):  
FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier. As he may recall, in the last operational budget review when we were speaking in Committee of the Whole, I asked him about a functional communications review that is no longer on the business plans. He wrote back later to explain that yes, indeed, EIA is looking at functional communications review in this fiscal year; however, I'm curious, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier speak to what the scope of that review will look like. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, the Member has raised this before and she's well aware that we have had a number of reviews, I guess, in the past number of years here, and so instead of doing another review what's happening is we're looking at those reviews. You know, the past four years, during COVID and the floods and the fires, there wasn't a lot of time for communicators to do that type of background work. They were out there trying to do their best to communicate with ever-changing information. So we're now looking at those two -- or those reviews, doing an analysis of them, and then trying to determine how do we implement the changes that make sense that are recommended. We're going to do that by -- you know, maybe I'll stop there because there's more to say, but I don't want to take all the Member's questions.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier for that. If I might be so bold, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier would commit to how we communicate to the public and looking at that very specifically. Because it's very clear to, I think, all Members in this House that, you know, with the after-action review, we are not doing a good job about communicating to the public appropriately and in the way they want to see communications come from government. I wonder if the Premier could speak to that.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in 2023, we had a contractor to go out and engage the public and talk about how they feel that we communicate with them. And there were issues obviously. Even with things like the

website -- in normal times, most searches for government information starts on the website, and so we got a lot of feedback on that. And so we're going through a process of updating that website, and that means looking at all the content that's on there, tens of thousands of pieces of information, reviewing all of those. Writing them in plain language as opposed to using jargon, writing for residents, not writing about government. And so we've heard that feedback and we're going out and we're making those changes.

Another valuable thing we're doing is going and talking to the communicators in the departments to get their perspective on things. They see what's happening. They see the issues. And so how do we work with them so that they can do their job better. And that means things like eliminating some of the administrative burdens that they're dealing with, making sure that they are engaged at appropriate points in the development of new initiatives. There's always an opportunity to communicate, and we need to make sure that our communicators are able to -- we put them in positions to take advantage of those opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Premier for that. One more suggestion, if I may be so bold, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Premier could speak to the fact that we have quite literally dozens of Facebook pages. As everyone in this House is aware, Cabin Radio had acted as an aggregator during a public emergency. Will the Premier commit to, when they're updating the website, consider an aggregation of information of all departments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so one of the things -- speaking specifically about the website, reorganizing that website is one of the key things that we want to do. Group things by topics and themes that residents care about. So if they want to find something out, they just go to that topic. They don't have to try and figure out what department it's from and then go there. And in terms of the social media, I'm happy to get back to the Member on that one. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Colleagues, our time for oral questions is up. Mr. Clerk.

## Follow-up to Oral Questions

### FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 671-20(1): UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

#### **CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 7.2(7), I've received follow-up information for Oral Question 671-20(1). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Further to the response provided to the Member for Range Lake on May 21, 2025. The Department of Justice is actively implementing all five recommendations from the Commissioner's Report Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner file 22-438-4 as outlined below:

#### Finalize and implement a Clean Desk Policy

The Department will implement an internal Clean Desk Policy by June 27, 2025. Additionally, the Office of the Chief Information Officer's online Information Security Training contains modules specific to the Clean Desk Principle. Department of Justice employees will be encouraged to complete the *Information Security Awareness Training Refresher* course which contains a section on the "Clean Desk Principle". Messaging will be provided to Justice employees by June 27, 2025.

#### Finalize and implement a Furniture Moving Policy.

The Department's Furniture Moving Policy that speaks to the responsibilities of employees managing items stored within furniture, which may include records containing personal information, has been finalized in consultation with the GNWT Access and Privacy Office and was shared with DOJ employees on May 20, 2025.

Ensure that its employees receive privacy training commensurate with their roles in the collection, use, disclosure or disposal of personal information. Access to Information and Protection of Privacy General Awareness training was updated in 2023 to reflect the 2021 amendments made to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. These updated learning modules include information specific to the protection of personal information and privacy breaches.

The Department plans to formally recommend the training for all employees by June 27, 2025.

Ensure that desks and filing cabinets used to store records containing personal information are secured with locks, and that the employees

who work at those desks are provided with keys and are instructed to keep records containing personal information reasonably secured at all times.

This recommendation will be integrated into the Department's Clean Desk Policy and implemented by June 27, 2025. Additionally, the *GNWT Enterprise Information Management Handbook* includes sections specific to managing and securing paper records. Messaging indicating this will be circulated to Department employees no later than June 27, 2025.

Develop a comprehensive records management policy that provides clear direction to all employees on how to secure paper records containing personal information.

This recommendation will be integrated into the Department's Clean Desk Policy and implemented by June 27, 2025. Additionally, the *GNWT Enterprise Information Management Handbook* includes sections specific to managing and securing paper records. Messaging indicating this will be circulated to Department employees no later than June 27, 2025.

Protection of privacy and personal information is of the utmost importance to the Department and the Government of the Northwest Territories. I hope you find this overview of actions taken in response to the Commissioner's recommendations useful.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Oral questions. Written questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 17-20(1): STAFF TURNOVER AND VACANCY RATES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a couple written questions. And I should say thank you to the clerk's office for their assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the first written question is: Staff Turnover and Vacancy Rates. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services:

1. What have been the annual turnover rates and vacancy rates for physician specialists, including orthopedic surgeons, in the Northwest Territories since January 2023?
2. Please break down the total vacancies by:
  - a) Resignations;

- b) Retirements; and
- c) Unknown reason departures.

3. Indicate the average time to recruit replacements; and.
4. Indicate the number of positions budgeted against those actually filled annually.

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 18-20(1): SURGICAL WAIT TIMES AND BACKLOGS

Mr. Speaker, I have another written question. It's called Surgical Wait Times and Backlogs.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services provide the following details with respect to the current waitlist for surgeries and procedures, between January 1, 2022, to May 30, 2025? Please provide details based on the following years:

1. The number of patients currently on the waitlist;
2. The average wait times;
3. The median wait times;
4. The number of surgeries cancelled or delayed in the past 24 months and the reasons;
5. The breakdown of patients by community and age group.

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 19-20(1): EMERGENCY ROOM STRAIN AND OVERCAPACITY

Mr. Speaker, I have some more written that have been touched up by hand, edits. Mr. Speaker, the next question is Emergency Room Strains and Overcapacity. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services:

1. What are the monthly emergency room admission numbers for each hospital in the Northwest Territories between 2020 to 2024;
2. Provide the number by breaking down by:
  - a) community;
  - b) age group; and,
  - c) number of visits resulting in admissions.

3. Provide the average wait times to see a physician.
4. Provide the instances of ER overcapacity or patient diversions.

And number 5,

- a) describe how often a full complement is not met in the ER with respect to staffing levels.

Almost done. I believe that's two more.

Mr. Speaker, the next question is regarding surgical wait times and backlog. Mr. Speaker, can the health -- sorry, I'll try again.

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 20-20(1): ACCESS TO REHABILITATION SUPPORTS

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services provide the following detail with respect to the current waitlist for surgeries and procedures, between January 2, 2022 -- oh, my apologies, I think I may be reading -- my apologies, I already read that one.

Mr. Speaker, strike that last piece. The last question I have, Access to Rehabilitation Supports, that's my last written question.

1. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services detail what rehabilitation services were available to patients in recovery; and furthermore, what has been the patient experience from January 1, 2022, to May 30th, 2025.
2. List each of the rehabilitation therapy supports by positions, which health care centre, include the staffing levels of each.
3. What is the average vacancy rate of each position in providing rehabilitation services.
4. The average wait times between referrals and actual direct support through these services (i.e. a doctor refers on January 1 but the patient doesn't receive an appointment until September 23, equating to 265 days). That's what that means.
5. How many positions, by positions, provide services outside of where their position is located, list the positions:
  - a. If they are in territory, how many days are they away on average?
  - b. If out of territory, how many days, how many days gone; where do they

go to and what is the average cost; and lastly

c. If out of territory,

i. What is the average cost recovery; and,

ii. What is the financial loss or gain for providing these services provided on average.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Member from Range Lake.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 6 on the order paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Range Lake is seeking unanimous consent to go to item 6 on orders of the day. Any nays? Seeing no nays. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just to recognize some firefighters in the audience, Justin -- I'm going to say this wrong -- Justin Zawyrucha, Zach Landry, Foster Bartel, Mike Bessette, Catlin Moffatt, Taylor Clarke, Tyler Gould, and my very favorite firefighter of all time, my dad Terry Testart. And I'd also like to recognize my mom, Maureen Marshall. I'm not sure if I've recognized her before in the chamber, but it's always good to see you guys and thank you for coming here as well. And if I missed any other firefighters in the audience, thank you very much for your service. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Terry Testart, with his wife. And also firefighters, I want to thank them. And sometimes you work as a volunteer, and I know how hard the work is, so I just want to thank them for their hard work in firefighting.[Translation Ends]. Masi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River South.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would also like to acknowledge the visitors in the gallery from the Yellowknife fire department, first responders, RCMP, and also Mr. Testart up there who is also a MACA employee at times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Hay River South. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Mr. and Mrs. Testart. Thank you for being here. And I also would like to thank all the firefighters that are here in the gallery. Thank you for your services. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Nunakput.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Mr. Terry Testart and his wife Maureen Marshall, former residents of the Nunakput riding and a mentor of mine with the hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk. Also recognizing all the fire department members, all the emergency responders, thank you for your service.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Nunakput. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize the firefighters in the gallery here. Thank you for your service and your safe comfort. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think you could say it enough. Thank you to the first responders up here in our gallery today. I also see some RCMP members, so I want to make sure that they are recognized as well as the firefighters. These are callings and special people answer that call, so thank you and much appreciated. So to all of you, thank you.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I wish to acknowledge the Testart-Marshall family. Yesterday I think I acknowledged my colleague's spouse for being the brilliance. I would also, then, will have to have a conversation later about some of his less shininess and troublesome days. He helps be feisty here with me. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Returns to written questions.

Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 356-20(1):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 28:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT, NO. 2

TABLED DOCUMENT 357-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
28: AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT, NO. 2

TABLED DOCUMENT 358-20(1):  
CANADA ENERGY REGULATOR'S 2024-25  
ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES UNDER  
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES' OIL AND  
GAS OPERATIONS ACT

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, No. 2; Statement of Consistency for Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, No. 2; and Canada Energy Regulator's 2024-2025 Annual Report of Activities under the Northwest Territories Oil and Gas Operations Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and ITI. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 359-20(1):  
2025-2026 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
AUTHORITY BUDGETS SUMMARY

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: The 2025-2026 Health and Social Services Authority Budgets Summary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for WSCC.

TABLED DOCUMENT 360-20(1):  
WORKERS' ADVISOR OFFICE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND  
NUNAVUT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Workers' Advisors Office Northwest Territories and Nunavut 2024 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 361-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
29: FIRST RESPONDERS WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for WSCC. Tabling of documents. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Statement of Consistency for the First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 362-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY RECONCILIATION ACTION  
PLAN 2025-2030

TABLED DOCUMENT 363-20(1):  
SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' ABSENCES FOR  
THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 5, 2025, TO MAY  
20, 2025

Colleagues, I wish to table Preparing to Change, the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Reconciliation Action Plan 2025 to 2030. As well, pursuant to section 5 of the Indemnities Allowance, Expenditures Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Summary of Members' Absences for the period of February 5th, 2025 to May 30th, 2025.

Tabling of documents. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 364-20(1):  
PRESS RELEASE – AVENS ADDRESSES  
DEFICIENCIES IN GNWT WILDFIRE  
EVACUATION REVIEW

TABLED DOCUMENT 365-20(1):  
DRAFT MOTION – REMUNERATION OF  
ESSENTIAL STAFF DURING AN  
EVACUATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I have two documents I would like to table. The first document is a press release from Avens community for seniors, and it's the press release regarding the concerns about the -- articulated through their after-action reports. And of course, the second set -- back of the page is contact names, where you can contact them directly for the actual report. So I'd like to table their press release.

The second item I wish to table before the House today, Mr. Speaker, is a draft motion. It's called Remuneration of Essential Staff During an Evacuation. It's a motion -- a draft motion for this House. So I'll be tabling that as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Tabling of documents. Colleagues, being cognitive of the time, we need to give our interpreters a bit of a break. We'll have a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of Motion. Member for Range Lake.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 61-20(1):  
REMUNERATION OF ESSENTIAL STAFF  
DURING AN EVACUATION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 16th, 2025, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Tu Nedhe, that the Legislative Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories reimburse Avens \$400,000, which is the portion of costs incurred from their assistance to the government during the 2023 Wildfire Evacuation, and it is not covered by the federal disaster fund;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories, in its response to the 2023 Wildfire Emergency Response After-Action Review, provide guidelines on how to address remuneration of essential staff during the evacuation, particularly for non-governmental organizations providing contract services to the Government of the Northwest Territories;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to this motion -- they're already calling in with an answer.

So furthermore that the government respond to this motion within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, just wait. Just wait a few seconds, folks.

Member from Yellowknife Centre, we need a correction. You need to give two days' notice. You have Thursday, October 16th. On your motion, you need to have it as Friday, October



17th, 2025. Can you please make the amendment, please.

**MR. HAWKINS:** (audio).

**MR. SPEAKER:** Just that first line, please and thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Not a problem, Mr. Speaker. Not a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, October 17th, 2025, I will move the motion already read earlier today; is that correct? Thank you, sir.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 31:  
BILL 31, SUPPLEMENTARY  
APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE  
EXPENDITURES) NO. 1, 2025-2026.  
DEEMED READ

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 31, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 31 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills.

My notes are not as good as I normally have them. Second reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 28:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT, NO. 2,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, No. 2, be ready for the second time.

The proposed, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, No. 2, would amend the student loan fund (also called the revolving loan limit) in the schedule of the act from \$45 million to \$55 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 28 has been read a second time and is referred to a standing committee of the Assembly for further consideration.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Member from Range Lake.

BILL 29:  
FIRST RESPONDERS WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT.  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife Centre that Bill 29, First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, be read for a second time.

This bill proposes to make amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act that expands presumptive disease coverage for firefighter cancers and heart diseases and creates new presumptive disease coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder cases affecting first responders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. The motion is in order. To the principle of bill. Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first responders are the courageous men and women who go to work every day to put their lives on the line to keep us safe when we need it the most. This bill aims to create the most comprehensive workers' compensation coverage for firefighters in Canada by covering all types of cancer and heart disease.

The bill also gets rid of latency periods for these diseases and makes the sole requirement employment for two years in a fire department.

The bill also applies to full-time, part-time, and volunteer firefighters. The 24-requirement for presumptive coverage for cardiac arrest after an emergency response is also being eliminated.

The NWT and Nunavut are the only jurisdictions in Canada that do not provide presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder for all first responders. This bill will change that, if passed, making it easier for firefighters, nurses,

police officers, paramedics, continuing care assistants, sheriffs, correction officers, emergency dispatch coordinators, and members of search and rescue organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the origin of this was a simple conversation. I attended the Yellowknife Fire Department to learn about their Wounded Warriors announcement where they would be working with that organization to provide support for first responders who were in crisis. We heard powerful stories that day. We also -- we live in this territory. We see these first responders every day, and we see their stories. We know them. And we certainly feel their loss when they are taken from us prematurely due to workplace illness that arises from their very difficult professions or the -- or mental illness, including PTSD, that comes from the tremendous strain they're under all the time.

That conversation led to looking at this legislation and seeing how this Assembly could work to help them to bring forward some comprehensive changes and catch up with the rest of Canada because, as I said, we're very -- Nunavut and Northwest Territories are the only jurisdictions without PTSD coverage, and this has been asked for a period of time. But I'm not really interested in looking at the history of this. I would like to move forward instead.

The bill is before us now and proposes to do things that would make it, you know, world class in terms of its ability to care for first responders in our communities. This is getting ahead of some other jurisdictions, especially in regard to firefighters, that have made political commitments but haven't yet materialized as legislation. And I hope that this bill ultimately will pass. Of course, today we're just discussing sending it to a committee, but that this bill will eventually pass and will be an inspiration for other jurisdictions to do more for their first responders as well.

Another thing that we've done some media on this and talked about it already. One oversight we made was we forgot about search and rescue workers, those who are members of search and rescue organizations. I've spoken in this House about those great individuals, whether they be volunteer members of the armed forces or RCMP, search and rescue is a really crucial function that is vital to safeguarding Northerners from, you know, very challenging circumstances when they do go missing in our vast and often unforgiving territory. And this bill will make sure that those folks are taken care of as well if PTSD is something they are struggling with.

So I don't have many more comments than that. This bill is small but impactful, and I hope we can make a difference in people's lives. I don't want to see anyone come to harm, mental or physical or otherwise and certainly when that does happen, we need to be there for our first responders, and that's exactly what this bill aims to do.

And I have a personal connection to this. I used to be a first responder. I was a sheriff for several years. My father was a volunteer firefighter for close to 30 years. So this has always been part of my family. And I've seen how stressful and difficult it can be and want to make sure that we take care of our first responders as best we can. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hope we'll hear other Members step up and support this important initiative and, at the appropriate time, I would like to request a recorded vote. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Hay River South.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the second reading of Bill 29, First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, introduced by the Member for Range Lake.

On the onset, I want to express my deep respect and appreciation for the work of our first responders and firefighters. I know firsthand what this job entails and that these individuals -- and what these individuals face in traumatic events, dangerous conditions in their service and in our communities. After all, this is something I've done for 30 years.

Bill 29 proposes important amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act to establish presumptive coverage for post-traumatic stress disorder, for all first responders, to expand presumptive cancer and heart disease coverage for firefighters. I acknowledge the appreciation and the intent behind this bill, and I want to thank the Member for advancing this issue.

As mentioned in my May 21st email to the Member, this bill aligns with a broader discussion that has already started with the Workers' Compensation Commission regarding the enhanced presumptive coverage for firefighters and first responders in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, in 2023, direction was provided to the Workers' Compensation and Safety Commission to begin work on the legislative proposal to expand presumptive coverage for firefighters, including additional cancers, types of cancers, and PTSD. Also in 2023, the Nunavut Minister responsible for the Workers'

Compensation and Safety Commission expressed support for this work, highlighting our shared commitment and modernization for the workers' compensation system in both territories.

Since then, the Workers' Compensation and Safety Commission has undertaken extensive research and completed an interjurisdictional review. As a result, a discussion paper is currently being finalized that outlines several policy options for expanding presumptive cancers and PTSD coverage. The intention is to engage with stakeholders in both territories during the summer and fall of 2025.

This engagement will be critical to ensuring that any changes to the act are informed, effective, and reflective of stakeholder inputs. It is important to note that presumptive coverage streamlines access to benefits, PTSD and cancer diagnoses that are already presumptively covered can be and are often approved through the standard claims' adjudication process. The proposed engagement will include options to expand cancer coverage for firefighters to include nine additional types which would bring the total to 23, making it the most comprehensive presumptive cancer coverage in the country. Similarly, three distinct policies options are being presented for presumptive PTSD coverage for firefighters and other first responders.

Mr. Speaker, while we fully support the spirit of this bill, I must emphasize the importance of following legislative development process that supports our shared governance model with Nunavut. The Workers' Compensation and Safety Commission is a joint body serving both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut with matching legislative frameworks. Careful and considered coordination to align our legislative projects is essential. For the legislative amendments to move forward, they must be approved by both Cabinets before any drafting of bills can occur. This ensures the continued viability of our shared compensation system and an interjurisdictional partnership that is unique in Canada and a testament to our northern partners. Given the timing of the 2025 General Election, Nunavut has anticipated that the final legislative proposal will be ready to advance in early 2026.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member from Range Lake for his advocacy on behalf of first responders. The work of this Assembly, in conjunction with the Workers' Compensation Commission and our Nunavut partners, will help ensure we provide appropriate and modern protection for those who protect us. I look forward to ongoing discussions on this

matter and continue work that has already been started to ensure that the eventual legislation reflects both evidence-based policy and lived experiences of our first responders in our communities.

With that said, although we support the bill, we will be abstaining from this vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Hay River South. To the principle of the bill. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleague from Range Lake for bringing this bill forward. Recently, Mr. Speaker, in Inuvik, we had a community feast held by the town of Inuvik for its first responders, the first of its kind in Inuvik, and it was a wonderful event and obviously the firefighters were there as well, and I was honoured to be able to speak and thank them on behalf of the residents of Inuvik Boot Lake and certainly the community of Inuvik as well.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I'm a bit of a poster child for first responders in the last three or four years having had -- in need of our amazing fire department in Inuvik and certainly the deep respect I have for what they do, Mr. Speaker, is -- you know, I can't put into words. Quite simply, they run into danger, Mr. Speaker, as we're running away from it and that's really, I think, all you need to say. With that, Mr. Speaker, I agree with everything that the Member from Range Lake had said, and I wholeheartedly support this bill. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. To the principle of the bill. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think support for this bill is very -- how do I put it -- it's very easy to give, and so I don't have a lot to say and to build upon what the Member already said what my colleague just said right now.

Mr. Speaker, quite simply, as put to me by one of the firefighters I was just chatting with, dealing with a cancer diagnosis or PTSD, the last thing that you want or need to be dealing with is advocating for yourself with the WSCC, and that's primarily what this bill is looking at, is just taking that stress away from the situation and knowing -- helping people focus on what really matters, on themselves, on their families, and on fighting illness. And so that's, I think -- I deeply appreciate the Member for Range Lake bringing this forward. I think I probably speak for many Members in that as well and appreciate the supportive comments from the Minister as well, and I'm very happy to support

this. This is a very personal one that touches home for me and, yeah, I look forward to voting in favour of this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the principle of the bill. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be supporting this bill, and I can't say enough or any more that hasn't been said already by previous speakers other than to say thank you to the first responders, and we've had discussions earlier, and this will be applicable to the smaller communities and the volunteers that we have out there. They face many challenges, and I've seen that firsthand as well. And I want to say a huge thank you to the gallery crowd. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. To the principle of the bill. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank the Member from Range Lake for bringing this bill forward. This bill is very important to all communities in the Northwest Territories, in particular small communities, and we know the work that goes into this position of fighting the fires in the communities, etcetera, and so, no, Mr. Speaker, I don't have an issue with supporting this bill, and I just want to thank all the frontline workers that are here today and throughout the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. To the principle of the bill. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do support moving forward with this bill. Certainly, it's a change that first responders have been pushing for many years, and I remember a discussion about this back when I was a city councillor at the city of Yellowknife as long as ten years ago, so it's been a concern for a long time. We know that first responders, including paramedics and firefighters, are exposed to disturbing and dangerous and sometimes traumatic things on a daily basis that most of us can't even imagine facing, and we know that as a whole, this group of responders suffers from mental and physical health struggles at a much greater rate than the rest of us, and I think that we know that both from statistics and trends and, you know, at a personal level with some of the people that we know. So I certainly support making NWT one of the leading jurisdictions in Canada with regard to our presumptive coverage and support. When first responders suffer from heart disease, any kind of cancer, or post-traumatic stress disorder, I think these

are all necessary changes and we've -- yeah, we've been waiting for too long already. So I want to sincerely thank my colleagues for bringing this forward and for speeding up the timeline on this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the principle of the bill. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I want to thank union firefighter Chris Bittrolff for initiating this initiative, I guess I'll say it that way, by bringing it to my colleague from Range Lake. Once that dialogue got started, you know, it was easy to understand how important this particular initiative is. We tend to forget and just maybe sometimes take certain industries for granted. And it's no one's fault, which is you always know they'll be there when you need them, but sometimes we have to ask ourselves are we there when they need us. So, you know, as we hear the fire or the alarms or the sirens go by, you know, take that moment to pause for a second and say, you know, is there ways that we could be there for folks who are the first responders.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, first responders, that is a calling. I mean, I wish I could rise to that type of level. I acknowledge and say, tip my hat, to anyone who does. It is a demanding career. And I find it interesting where people join the career when they're young or join when they're late because they've always had the passion to do so, and I admire people who step up for something. Because the excess of challenges they face, the demands they face through any call, they know that these calls aren't literally struggling over a paper cut. These are calls that could go badly, terribly, and beyond, and then they have compounding affects that last not days, not weeks, months, years. And so this is an industry that people knowingly go into these careers, and I admire their strengths to do so, that they step up and face.

So when they're faced with challenges such as cancers beyond the current list or the concerns of PTSD, we have to ask ourselves what are we doing for them? Again, they're there for us when we need them. The hesitation is not there. They fully throw themselves committed to the cause to be there. So we should be there to close the gap by helping enabling better coverage and step away from prescriptive coverage.

Now, the public may not appreciate what prescriptive coverage is, Mr. Speaker. And I'll just basically say the old method is, or technically the current method is, if it's on the

list it's covered. But if it's not on the list, it's not covered. And that's where the burden starts.

Where do we want our friends or family members or community heroes, our first responders, fighting? We want them fighting for us, and I want to be fighting for them. And I know everybody in this House wants to be fighting for them. So by shifting to enabling coverage means we allow people to put their energies. You know, God forbid, we've already heard about potentially one person, there may be more, who are struggling with cancer. I don't want their energy devoted to filling out forms, reading those, going to get another doctor saying another review. Is it covered? Can we link it? Like, it spends enormous amount of energy when you're faced with that Sisyphean task about trying to reach that point of finally someone saying yes. And sometimes people struggle, and the struggle takes over before the result and it comes too late. And for those, that's why this coverage means a lot. That's why it means a lot to my colleague from Range Lake. We work together with our colleague from Tu Nedhe because it matters both in Yellowknife, the regions, and the communities, such as our good colleagues.

This is drawing attention to sometimes a topic we don't want to talk about, but we should never be afraid of asking the question how can we support these people and our community that support us in a stronger way? We need to draw these types of attention. Sometimes they're uncomfortable conversations. Our gallery today, Mr. Speaker, is proof that this -- this bill means something to them. This is not getting them nicer t-shirts or a better wax on the fire truck, Mr. Speaker. This will change their lives. It may just mean emotionally which means they know we're here for them. But for those few, unfortunate few, that need this extra coverage, this will change their lives to the fact that proves that the system is working for them.

I won't wade in the conversation about how frustrating insurance can be. I mean, I'm sure that's not news to anybody in this building or anyone listening. But the fact is that we can do something here today, and we can demonstrate to this community of first responders that we will turn every stone over to ensure that they know they're appreciated, respected, and hopefully covered by the end of this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the principle of the bill. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. I, too, would support this bill. You know, in the past, many of our people

pass on due to cancer. It's been well documented. Many, you know, work in unhealthy environment, especially mine, and in small communities we have only volunteer firefighters. And in the past, same thing with forest fire, but I know this bill is going to help with many of our volunteer forest -- firefighters in small communities so therefore I do support it, and I thank my colleague here for introducing this bill. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Member from Range Lake has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand. Sorry, Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quick to want to get this done but, Mr. Speaker, I just want to -- one thing I want to do is recognize the honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and his 30 years of firefighter service, and I want to reassure the public and folks in the gallery, folks on the floor as well, that he has been supportive 100 percent of the way. He has responded positively, you know, in question period to emails. He's even sent me text messages saying, keep going. So he is fighting for firefighters, for first responders, and there should be no doubt in that. This is his passion, and his commitment really shines through. So I thank him for that, and I thank him for his supportive words today.

On the question of process, the bill is intentionally designed to come in one year after the Nunavut election which gives them time to review the changes and work with the commission to bring about similar legislative changes over there. Even though we do have a shared jurisdiction which started, of course, prior to division in 1999 and has continued because it's a bigger pool of coverage for northern workers, we can still have our own regime that's separate from Nunavut. Not that that's intended. Again, we want everything to eventually come together seamlessly, but we also want to move quickly, and we've heard the frustrations, again, that this has been a time consuming and long-awaited process. Again, I don't want to focus on the past; I want to move forward. But moving forward is passing this bill and getting that coverage in hopefully the fall of this year if the committee is able to endorse the bill going forward. And, honestly, this is a perfect example of our consensus government working well to complement both the government's resources and the resources of Regular Members. We can often move more

nimbly, more quickly, to solve challenges than some of our processes. And that's not to disparage against them. I think there's been a huge body of research here. But we know these changes have been coming and that they're -- it's very important we make them. So I think this is -- this should be seen -- and we're seeing more of this, quite frankly, in this Assembly, that Private Members' bills are being -- are being used to solve these kinds of challenges.

So yes, to the principle, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to conclude by saying structural fires are going down but firefighter deaths are going up. You know, that shows we do need to do something. We do need to expand coverage. And firefighters shouldn't be fighting for coverage when they get sick. They should be fighting cancer and heart disease instead, and first responders shouldn't be fighting for coverage when and if they're suffering from PTSD. This bill changes that. And I thank all my colleagues for that support. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Member from Range Lake has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour, 9. Opposed, zero. Abstentions, 7. The motion is carried. Bill 29 has been read a second time and is referred to a standing committee of the Assembly for further consideration.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

#### BILL 31: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES) NO. 1, 2025-2026, CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 31, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. The motion is carried. Bill 31 has been read a second time.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

#### Third Reading of Bills

#### BILL 31: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES) NO. 1, 2025-2026, CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput that Bill 31, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. To the principle of the bill. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the principle of the bill.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House here today to speak about the bill, and I don't know where to start but the best way for me to talk about this is that I want to say small communities do matter. We got 33 communities in the Northwest Territories, and we all have our own needs and wants and ask, and I got to work with our own Indigenous governments that are bringing their issues to me all the time. And I get calls every day, evenings, weekends, and I continue to advocate for them.

Mr. Speaker, in the 19th Assembly I came in through a by-election, and at that time I brought

my wish list forward to this government. And I was told that the wish list for my Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding was that we're going to try to put your wish list on the train, but the train left two years earlier on a four-year mandate. And it would appear that the -- my wish list for my riding was put on a suitcase and they tried to throw it on a moving train, but it bounced off. And the issue there is that the issues of my riding at that time never was addressed in the 19th Assembly --

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, you're not talking -- you're not speaking to the bill. We're not talking about past experience. Please speak to the bill, please and thank you. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the bill, at this time, there's no -- there's nothing there for my small communities from the 19th and 20th Assembly. I got a letter that was brought in with all my issues. Two years in this mandate, I don't see anything there. And March of this year, I brought it up. But anyway, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, I don't support this bill. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Member from Yellowknife South has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. All those opposed, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining, please stand.

All those in favour, 13. Opposed, 3. Abstentions, zero. The motion is carried. Bill 31 has had its third reading. Thank you.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Clerk, can you please determine whether the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Gerald Kisoun, is prepared to enter the chamber and assent to the bills.

---SHORT RECESS

#### Assent to Bills

**THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Gerald W. Kisoun):** Please be seated. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Premier Simpson, Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and staff, and visitors in the public gallery. [Translation not provided]. Welcome.

I wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather are treaty lands and the home to many Indigenous peoples, including the Akaicho Dene, Tlicho, and Metis. We are grateful to be on this land. As we enjoy these warmer months, I would like to wish each of you a safe, healthy, and happy summer as you take your break and enjoy quality time with your families. Please travel safely on the land, on our waters, in the air, and on our highways. But you continue working for the betterment of all Northerners. Encourage and remind your families, friends, and people in your communities to be safe out on the land and to wear personal flotation devices, PFDs, when travelling by boat on our waterways.

As this sitting comes to a close, I wish the Members of this House good health and happiness as you enjoy the summer and continue work in your constituencies.

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 17: Municipal and Community Affairs Statutes Amendment Act;
- Bill 18: An Act to Amend the Partnership and Business Names Act;
- Bill 30: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization) No. 1, 2025-2026;
- Bill 31: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2025-2026.

Mahsi cho. Thank you. Quyananni. Hiyah. Merci beaucoup. Quana.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I'd like to thank the Commissioner, the Honourable Gerald

Kisoun for joining us here today to assent to our legislation. It is always a pleasure to have him join us in this chamber. Thank you, Commissioner.

Members, please join me to thank everybody that makes it possible to do our jobs here. We have and rely on a wonderful team of public servants and supporters. I want to let them know that we appreciate all they do for us. Our staff do everything from keeping the building open and operating safely to ensure that we are seen and heard on television, computers, and radios across the territories, to provide research and procedural advice.

As always, a special thank you to your interpreters and our pages. They remind us of where we came from and where we are going. I want to thank our interpreters for their participation in our elders' tours. Their presence help ground us, then when passion or politics take things too far.

Colleagues, this House is not scheduled to sit again until October. I know you will be hard at work during these months ahead. Use this time to reconnect with people in your communities, returning this fall with respectful, engaged debate, and some hard work. Our territory faces great challenges. It is our job to rise to these challenges. Thank you, colleagues. Now, let's go home to our friends and families. Don't forget to let them know how much we support and encouragement matters to you.

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

#### CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, October 16th, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Motions
5. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Oral Question 666-20(1), Legal Aid Commission of the Northwest Territories
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions

11. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, October 16th, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:47 p.m.