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**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER OR REFLECTION .....</b>	<b>2331</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>2332</b>
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 123-20(1): SESSIONAL STATEMENT .....	2332
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>2335</b>
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 618-20(1): CONGRATULATIONS TO REBECCA ALTY, NEW MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2335
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 619-20(1): SUPPORT FOR 2SLGBTQIAA+ RIGHTS AND TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE .....	2335
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 620-20(1): SUBSTANCE ABUSE CRISIS .....	2336
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 621-20(1): STATE OF THE ECONOMY OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2336
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 622-20(1): BARGING CONDITIONS FOR 2025 SAILING SEASON .....	2337
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 623-20(1): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RELIEF FOR TERRITORIAL DIAMOND MINES .....	2337
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 624-20(1): REGULATORY REGIME FOR COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS .....	2338
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 625-20(1): ADMINISTRATION OF AND PLANS FOR THE HAMLET OF ENTERPRISE .....	2339
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 626-20(1): HOUSING PROGRAMS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2339
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 627-20(1): NUNAKPUT CONSTITUENCY AND 20 <sup>TH</sup> NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S VISION .....	2340
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 628-20(1): CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR DR. EARL COVERT .....	2340
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 629-20(1): CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR VINCENT MOSES .....	2341
<b>RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>2342</b>
RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 530-20(1): SENIOR ENVOY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA .....	2342
RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 607-20(1): COVERAGE EXEMPTIONS FOR UNINSURED MEDICAL PROCEDURES .....	2342
RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 645-20(1): SENIOR ENVOY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA .....	2343
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY .....</b>	<b>2343</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>2344</b>
QUESTION 660-20(1): SENIOR ENVOY TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2344
QUESTION 661-20(1): RELIEF MEASURES FOR TERRITORIAL DIAMOND MINES .....	2345
QUESTION 662-20(1): RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALBERTA AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2346
QUESTION 663-20(1): FUNDING OF HOUSING PROGRAMS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2347
QUESTION 664-20(1): ACCESS TO TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE .....	2348
QUESTION 665-20(1): ADMINISTRATION OF THE HAMLET OF ENTERPRISE .....	2348
QUESTION 666-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGAL AID COMMISSION CAPACITIES .....	2349
QUESTION 667-20(1): 2025 MACKENZIE RIVER SAILING SEASON .....	2349
QUESTION 668-20(1): STAFF TO PATIENT RATIOS REVIEW AT STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL .....	2350
QUESTION 669-20(1): REGULATORY REGIME FOR COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS .....	2351
QUESTION 670-20(1): MEASLES VACCINATION MANDATE FOR EDUCATION BODY STAFF .....	2352
QUESTION 671-20(1): UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL INFORMATION .....	2353
QUESTION 672-20(1): ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORT FOR HOUSING PROGRAMS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2353
QUESTION 673-20(1): MODERNIZATION OF SECTION 41 OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT .....	2354
QUESTION 674-20(1): CARIBOU HARVESTING AND WASTAGE .....	2355
<b>FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>2357</b>
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 428-20(1): IMPROVING ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE .....	2357
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 432-20(1): NAMING OF GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDINGS .....	2358
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 433-20(1): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EMPLOYMENT SATISFACTION SURVEY AND ACTION PLAN .....	2358
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 440-20(1): SAHTU WINTER ROAD RESUPPLY .....	2358
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 449-20(1): HOME INSURANCE COSTS .....	2359
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 453-20(1): SENSITIVITY AND COSTS RELATED TO FUNERAL PREPARATION .....	2359
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 466-20(1): AURORA COLLEGE CLOSURE OF COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES .....	2360
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 549-20(1): ELDER ABUSE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2360
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 479-20(1): MULTI-YEAR FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH DECHINTA CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND LEARNING .....	2360
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 485-20(1): MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR THE DEHCHO REGION .....	2361

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 513-20(1): EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.....	2361
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 514-20(1): CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN OF CARE AGREEMENTS .....	2362
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 522-20(1): FUNDING OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS .....	2362
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 526-20(1): ENFORCEMENT OF DOG ACT .....	2363
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 540-20(1): HEALTHCARE COVERAGE FOR TERRITORIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS .....	2363
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 541-20(1): FUNDING FOR INCREASED COSTS FOR YELLOWKNIFE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY .....	2364
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 546-20(1): DRIVER'S LICENCE EXTENSIONS FOR TERRITORIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS .....	2364
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 549-20(1): ELDER ABUSE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES .....	2365
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 562-20(1): INUVIK AIRPORT SECURITY SCREENING AREA .....	2365
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 567-20(1): YELLOWKNIFE EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR HOMELESS .....	2365
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 569-20(1): EXTENDED HEALTHCARE BENEFITS FOR SENIORS' PRESCRIPTION GLASSES.....	2366
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 571-20(1): ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE PROGRAM FUNDING .....	2366
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 575-20(1): DEMPSTER HIGHWAY CONDITIONS .....	2367
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 576-20(1): DELIVERY OF NEW HOUSING UNITS TO FORT RESOLUTION.....	2367
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 578-20(1): DRUG RELATED ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS .....	2367
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 612-20(1): ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF LINE 490 REPLACEMENT PROJECT IN NORMAN WELLS .....	2368
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 658-20(1): YELLOWKNIFE DRINKING WATER PIPELINE REPLACEMENT .....	2368
FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 659-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION DISTRIBUTION IN HAY RIVER .....	2368
<b>RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>2368</b>
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-20(1): OPERATING ROOMS AT STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL .....	2368
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 15-20(1): TITLE TRANSFER ISSUES IN THE TLICHO REGION .....	2369
RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 16-20(1): ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES .....	2371
<b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS .....</b>	<b>2372</b>
BILL 17: MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT.....	2372
BILL 18: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PARTNERSHIP AND BUSINESS NAMES ACT .....	2372
<b>REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES .....</b>	<b>2372</b>
COMMITTEE REPORT 22-20(1): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2023-2024 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, CARRIED .....	2372
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>2375</b>
TABLED DOCUMENT 324-20(1): NOTE TO FILE MACKENZIE VALLEY REVIEW BOARD MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES STAFF.....	2375
TABLED DOCUMENT 325-20(1): YELLOWKNIFE SHELTER INFORMATION.....	2375
TABLED DOCUMENT 326-20(1): ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN QUESTION 16-20(1): ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES.....	2375
TABLED DOCUMENT 327-20(1): THE STRUCTURED DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM FOR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL .....	2376
TABLED DOCUMENT 328-20(1): ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-20(1): OPERATING ROOM ACTIVITIES FOR STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL.....	2376
TABLED DOCUMENT 329-20(1): PROPOSAL FOR A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT .....	2376
TABLED DOCUMENT 330-20(1): COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF NURSES – NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT: NURSING COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT & ASSOCIATION FUNCTION SURVEY.....	2376
TABLED DOCUMENT 331-20(1): SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER ABOUT COSTS RELATING TO THE COMPLAINT BY JENNIFER PATTERSON THAT MR. RICHARD EDJERICON, MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR TU NEDHÉ-WIILIDEH, BREACHED THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.....	2376
TABLED DOCUMENT 332-20(1): LIST OF DECEASED NORTHWEST TERRITORIES WORLD WAR II VETERANS .....	2376
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS.....</b>	<b>2376</b>
BILL 26: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT .....	2376
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>	<b>2376</b>





**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, May 21, 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. Lesa Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer or reflection**

---Prayer or reflection

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon Colleagues, welcome back to the House. It is great to be here.

I'd like to thank interpreters Sarah Cleary and Mary Jane Cazon for opening this session with a wonderful song performance in Dene Zhatie and opening blessing in Dene Kede. Thank you very much.

I'm also pleased to welcome our pages and our interpreters back to the chamber. We are grateful for their hard work and dedication; we couldn't do this without them. Colleagues, remember to speak slowly and clearly so our interpreters can do their jobs.

Although we have not sat together in this chamber since March, I know you have all been busy with the ongoing work of committees, government and representing your constituents. Our work goes on when we are not sitting.

From April 29th to May 1st, we hosted our 21st Youth Parliament. Folks, it was a great time. I was impressed with our young MLAs and proud of the work they did during their short time here. These youth from across our territory came together in the Assembly for three days to learn about consensus government and debate in this very chamber issues important to them, their peers and their communities. Colleagues, please join me in thanking and congratulating our young MLAs for a job well done.

Thank you to the staff involved in our 21st Youth Parliament. A lot of work goes into planning and delivering this event, and they should be recognized for their efforts. Please join me in thanking our staff for planning and delivering this program for our youth.

Finally, thank you for making our Youth Parliament program a success. Many of you volunteered as pages for the model session

and met with your youth representatives during the program. It means a lot to the youth and the program. Thank you.

Colleagues, earlier this month on May 5th, we marked the 80th Anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands by Canadian forces. The domes of this Legislative Assembly building were lit orange to recognize this important milestone.

In 1945, Canadian forces played a crucial role in freeing the Dutch people from Nazi occupation, enduring harsh conditions and fierce combat to push back German forces. More than 7,600 Canadian soldiers lost their lives during this campaign, a solemn reminder of the high cost of freedom. This anniversary serves as a powerful opportunity to honour the courage and dedication of those who served and to reflect on Canada's legacy as a defender of peace and justice on the world stage.

As a symbol and reminder of the sacrifice of Northwest Territories residents during the Second World War, the Metis sash of Private Edward Powder, an Indigenous veteran of the Second World War and father of our former sergeant-at-arms, Floyd Powder, will sit in the chamber as a gift from the Powder family. I thank them very much for this honour. At the appropriate time today, I will table a list of the deceased veterans of the Second World War from or with connection to the Northwest Territories.

Colleagues, I have received the following correspondence from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Gerald W. Kisoun. It states: Dear Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the passage of the Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 1, 2025-2026; and, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2025-2026 during the May sitting of the first session of the 20th Legislative Assembly. Yours Truly, Gerald W. Kisoun.

Colleagues, let's get back down to business. Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

## Ministers' Statements

### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 123-20(1): SESSIONAL STATEMENT

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, the 20th Legislative Assembly is nearing its midpoint a natural time to reflect, recalibrate, and refocus. Over the past year and a half, we have worked hard to build the foundation for what lies ahead. We have established strong working relationships across the House, set shared priorities, and begun the important and essential work of implementing the commitments in our mandate. These early steps were about alignment, ensuring that the work of government reflects the realities, needs, and aspirations of Northerners. The challenges before us are significant. Climate emergencies are becoming more frequent and more destructive. The rising cost of living continues to strain families, businesses, and government fiscal capacity. Our health and social services system is under pressure. As both a public health and public safety issue, communities are at risk of drug and gang activity, compromising the safety of residents and families. The housing and infrastructure deficits in our territory remain one of the greatest barriers to long-term growth and resilience.

But Mr. Speaker, we are not standing still. We have made deliberate decisions to position this government to act and deliver.

Earlier this spring, we implemented a series of strategic changes to Cabinet portfolios and senior management. These adjustments were designed not only to rebalance workloads but to strengthen alignment between political leadership and the work we have been asked to carry forward. These were not just routine changes; they were about putting the right people in the right roles to get results.

We have also worked to strengthen collaboration with Regular Members. The newly created small and remote communities committee-of-Cabinet will bring the perspectives from small community MLAs directly into the Cabinet decision-making process. This collaboration will make our work stronger and more responsive to the needs of all residents.

Mr. Speaker, the groundwork has been laid. Our direction is clear, and the work to deliver on the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories is moving forward with purpose.

In our healthcare system, we are taking focused steps to fix what is not working and strengthen

what is, with the goal of ensuring healthy people and communities across the territory. Through the healthcare system sustainability unit, we have launched a territory-wide review of programs and services; one that looks not just at what is being delivered but at how it is being delivered, what it costs, and how we can do better. This is foundational work. It is the first time we have attempted to build a comprehensive inventory of health and social across the territory, along with historical spending trends. This will help us identify pressure points, inefficiencies, and opportunities for change, and will inform the decisions we make in the months and years ahead.

At Stanton Territorial Hospital, a new emergency department staffing model is being rolled out to improve coverage, reduce burnout, and create a more stable work environment for physicians. The model was co-designed with frontline staff and introduces additional dedicated physician shifts to improve flexibility and care. This will help with recruitment as well as retention, and we expect to see real benefits for both staff and patients.

Mr. Speaker, in December 2024, we appointed a public administrator to help address the evolving and complex needs of the current health and social services system. The public administrator has released his work plan, focused on improving day-to-day operations across the system. That work starts with things like scheduling, staff support, and accountability for frontline management. These are things that may not make headlines but they are critical. They help keep services running, reduce turnover, and ensure that our health and social services system remains focused on care.

One of the more exciting long-term projects is focused on integrated service delivery through the governance and service integration unit. The governance and service integration unit steers the GNWT's efforts to improve person-centered service delivery across the NWT. With an initial focus on homelessness and family preservation, the unit will establish five regional integrated service delivery sites in Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Hay River, and Behchoko. Teams in these communities will coordinate support services across sectors such as housing, mental health, income assistance, and child and family services. Central to this work is wraparound training offered to the GNWT, Indigenous governments, and non-governmental organizations, designed to create collaborative, holistic support plans for individuals with complex needs.



The new governance and service integration unit also plays a key coordinating role in anti-poverty and food security initiatives and leads the GNWT's response to strengthening the non-profit and charitable sector. Its work is supported by approximately \$5.7 million in federal funding through 2028, including funding from Public Safety Canada, Gender-Based Violence, and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada. Additionally, the unit manages the anti-poverty fund and the non-government organization stabilization fund, supporting community-based solutions and building capacity across the non-profit sector. Engagement, partnership and breaking down barriers are the core of the governance and service integration unit's mission to improve access to services and outcomes for residents across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to deliver more homes for Northerners. Since the start of this Legislative Assembly, 81 new units have been completed with 211 more underway or in the planning stages including new incremental public housing units, seniors' duplexes, and replacement units tailored to local needs across the territory. Over the life of this government, we are planning to deliver a total of 292 new housing units across the territory.

In Yellowknife, two new transitional housing projects are moving forward. One, a partnership with the Salvation Army, will soon open its doors to support individuals in their addiction recovery. A similar facility is expected to open in Inuvik later this year. The second project is a temporary transitional housing facility near the Yellowknife Airport that will provide supportive housing for up to 25 individuals experiencing homelessness. With on-site staff, wraparound supports, and a focus on safety and healing, it will help bridge the gap between emergency shelters and longer-term housing options. This, and other similar projects, help with our goals to break down barriers and build trust with vulnerable populations.

This spring, construction is beginning on a number of additional units, including a 50-unit mass timber building in Yellowknife and a hybrid modular-stick build in Deline. These projects reflect both innovation and a community-driven approach.

Mr. Speaker, local housing organizations remain essential partners in this work, supporting tenant safety and day-to-day operations in our communities. Through collaboration with Regular Members, an additional \$41.6 million has been committed to Housing NWT this year, bringing the total planned investment to more than \$50 million.

This work is about more than buildings. It is about stability, health, and opportunity, and we are moving it forward with urgency and partnership.

Mr. Speaker, floods and wildfires are no longer rare events in the Northwest Territories. They have become a regular part of life for many communities and their impacts are being felt more often, and more severely, each year. We have been taking decisive steps to ensure that we are ready for emergencies. To help us strengthen our emergency preparedness and response, two independent reviews were launched following 2023's wildfire season; one focused on wildfire management and the other on broader emergency operations, including evacuations and public safety.

Earlier this month, we received the broader after-action review focused on emergency management and community evacuations. It provides a detailed assessment of what worked and what did not and identifies clear opportunities to improve coordination, communication, and readiness. A formal response to the after-action review will be tabled later this year, but operational improvements are already being made.

We updated the NWT Emergency Plan by clarifying roles and responsibilities to ensure that emergency agencies, Indigenous governments, and the territorial government can work together in a coordinated and collaborative fashion from the outset of an emergency.

We launched new training to support incident command capacity, relaunched the Be Ready campaign to support community-level preparedness, and we're offering FireSmarting assessments across the territory. This is about continuous learning and continuous improvement and making sure that, when the next emergency comes, we are better equipped to respond.

We are also supporting climate resilience in the NWT's four coastal communities - Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok - in partnership with Natural Resources Canada's climate-resilient coastal communities program. These four communities face growing risks from coastal erosion, sea level rise, storm surges, and permafrost thaw due to climate change. The funding includes more than \$12 million for 13 projects in the North and across Canada to help communities develop and implement their own climate adaptation measures, including planned relocation efforts. We will work with community governments to ensure strategies are community-led, practical, and support long-term climate resilience.

In this environment of growing uncertainty and rapid change, another serious threat continues to develop, not just in the NWT but internationally: The rise of drug trafficking and substance use. Social isolation, lack of opportunity, and limited access to services often exacerbated by climate-driven disruptions, have made some communities more susceptible to the harmful impacts of drugs and organized crime. In response, protecting community safety has become not just a matter of policing but a critical part of building resilience.

As this issue continues to grow, we and our partners have adapted our response, education and supports to make sure we have safe communities for Northerners and support for healing. Our efforts focus on community-based programs, harm reduction, enforcement, and restorative justice.

The Department of Health and Social Services works with schools, non-government organizations, and community organizations, to deliver prevention education on the risks of drug use, safe consumption messaging, and access to mental health supports, as well as providing harm reduction initiatives such as access to Naloxone kits to treat opioid overdoses.

For community members dealing with addictions and trauma, the Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Fund offers \$3 million a year to communities, Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations for community-based programming tailored to cultural and local needs and land-based healing initiatives that include traditional knowledge and practices. Facility-based addictions treatment is also available to help residents access treatment outside the territory if needed; as well as dedicated aftercare, including counselling and peer support for people returning from treatment.

Through the RCMP and the Department of Justice, the GNWT actively supports drug enforcement efforts. This past February, the RCMP executed the largest drug and cash seizure in NWT history, confiscating nearly five kilograms of cocaine and over \$360,000 in cash. This operation significantly disrupted criminal networks operating in the territory. We established a territorial crime reduction unit, deployed the first full-time emergency response team in the NWT, and are developing new legislation to empower law enforcement to shut down drug houses, seize assets from traffickers, and continue to disrupt the drug networks to protect communities and keep residents safe in their own homes. We will also continue to work across jurisdictions, both

within the territory and nationally, to fight the problem.

Mr. Speaker, we know that long-term prosperity and resilience in the Northwest Territories depend on getting infrastructure right and on working with Indigenous governments and Canada to make meaningful progress. This is why we continue to advance major projects like the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Taltson Hydro Electric Expansion, and the Slave Geological Province Corridor. These are long-term investments in connectivity, energy security, and economic development, that will create new opportunities for Northerners and are critical to strengthening the North's role as a pivotal point in Canada's future.

To help drive this work forward, we have created a new ministerial portfolio focused on strategic infrastructure, energy and supply chains. The partnerships behind these nation-building projects, including with Indigenous governments and the federal government, remain central to our approach, and we will continue to advocate strongly for the funding and approvals needed to move them ahead.

We have taken practical steps to adapt existing systems. This year's winter fuel resupply was one of the most complex in recent memory, with water levels forcing major rerouting. Thanks to strong coordination across government, industry, and communities, over 9.6 million liters of fuel were delivered safely on time to eight communities. We also modernized the Public Utilities Board's mandate to better support community-driven renewable energy, improve fairness in the system, and lay the groundwork for long-term affordability and sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, during a period of global uncertainty, we have taken targeted steps to protect the territory's economy. Short-term relief for the diamond sector is helping maintain jobs, sustain local businesses, and support Indigenous contracting at a time of significant market disruption. When the federal government eliminated the consumer carbon tax, we moved quickly to align territorial policy, delivering immediate relief for residents while continuing to advance our 2030 Energy Strategy and long-term climate adaptation work.

We are also working to strengthen the foundations of our economy. The Northwest Territories is chairing the committee on internal trade, helping to lead national efforts to reduce trade barriers and unlock economic opportunity across Canada. We are doing this while remaining steadfast on the need to uphold

economic modern treaty commitments and support our developing economy.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a great opportunity in the wake of the recent federal election. After nearly two decades, the NWT has a Minister in Cabinet and for the first time ever the Prime Minister is someone born in our territory. There is a renewed sense that Canada is paying closer attention to the Arctic and the North, not just as a region in need but as strategically essential to the success of the nation. This attention brings with it opportunities to collaborate in meaningful ways on the challenges we face, whether building the economy, adapting to climate change, strengthening community wellness and resilience, or highlighting Canada's security and sovereignty. We welcome this focus and are ready to work with Canada and all of our partners to build a Northwest Territories that is stronger, safer, and more productive for Northerners and contributes to the Canadian federation.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear. We will continue working and building with Regular Members, Indigenous governments, community leaders, and residents to advance the priorities in our mandate: More homes, better health care, stronger emergency response, cleaner energy, safe communities, and a resilient sustainable economy that works for Northerners. This is the time to move from strategy to implementation, from building trust to delivering results. That is what we intend to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 618-20(1): CONGRATULATIONS TO REBECCA ALTY, NEW MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate Yellowknife's own, the Honourable Rebecca Alty, on her election to the House of Commons and further on her appointment to the Privy Council as Minister for Crown Indigenous Relations.

Rebecca was born and raised in Yellowknife in Chief Drygeese territory in the Akitcho region. After high school, she completed a diploma in film and video at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology followed by a degree in communication studies from the University of Calgary. In 2018, she was elected as 15th

mayor of Yellowknife, following two terms as a city councillor.

Ms. Alty joins a rather exclusive club of northern Ministers and is only the second from the Northwest Territories following in the footsteps of the great Ethel Blondin Andrew who was Minister of State from 2003 to 2006. [Translation] So many people from the North who are now at the most important post in the country. We would like to thank Prime Minister Carney who is originally from Fort Smith. He clearly demonstrated his engagement, won the North by naming the Honourable Bucky Bélanger, the Honourable Rebecca Chartrand, and the Honourable Mandy Gull Masty. [Translation Ends].

Northerners are often overlooked and under-utilized by Ottawa, but these appointments send a clear message that that is going to change. The NWT holds the promise of Canada's future, the Gray's Bay, Slave Geological Province strategic corridor, critical minerals, and our untapped energy potential and natural gas, offshore oil, hydroelectricity, and geothermal resources. We can be the center of North America's strategic defence and ensure Arctic sovereignty for all Canadians and the tradition of Indigenous people who have called this land home since time immemorial.

Mr. Speaker, the new federal Cabinet and its priorities represent a bright future for the Northwest Territories with growth and security for our people. I know that my friend Rebecca Alty will make good on this opportunity and be the voice of the NWT on the national and international stage. Congratulations, Rebecca. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 619-20(1): SUPPORT FOR 2SLGBTQIAA+ RIGHTS AND TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the first day of our last sitting in February, I told the trans and nonbinary community that I love and support you. As we are about to enter Pride Season, I stand today to say again that you are loved, valued, and deserve safety and equity.

Mr. Speaker, Pride is a protest. Again and again, we protest until safety and equity for everyone is achieved.

On May 3rd, the Premier released a statement with his territorial colleagues that they, quote, "discussed the alarming increase in trans phobic policies based on hate and ignorance

being passed internationally, stripping transgender and gender nonconforming people of their fundamental rights to self-expression. All three territories continue to take a strong stance to support the 2SLGBTQIAA+ community and are committed to ensuring all Northerners feel seen, safe, and supported."

In my role as Regular Member, I have the power of words and influence. And so today, I ask this Cabinet to use their active power to affect strong change and support our 2SLGBTQIAA+ community through real action. This means we must provide safe options for gender affirming health care out of territory. It also means that the GNWT must actively listen to experts in our community, especially the Northern Mosaic Network, to create real and lasting change through meaningful collaboration. I invite all Members to meet with folks outside the Assembly rallying for safe and accessible trans health care. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 620-20(1):  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE CRISIS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] Mr. Speaker, but then there are a lot of people that are saying they are destroying a lot of young people and destroying a lot of young people that are suffering due to drugs. There are a lot of things that had been said, yet not only in my community, but throughout the territories. A lot of us -- there are a lot of changes to lifestyle due to drugs. [Translation Ends] Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, drug use is out of control in NWT. Mr. Speaker, we must address the drug crisis in our communities. Two weeks ago, the Dene national chief said we are, quote, "at the crossroads in an ongoing drug crisis." Mr. Speaker, I feel we need to recognize that this recent gun and drug related crime really is a crisis.

As a parent and grandparent, I care deeply about the well-being of our people, especially our youth. They are our future leaders who will shape our communities going forward. Mr. Speaker, this drug crisis is tearing people apart. It is heartbreaking to see the toll crack cocaine and fentanyl are taking on our youth.

Two people are facing firearm and drug trafficking charges in the Sahtu. Last month, a 21-year-old received a five-year prison

sentence for selling cocaine in Yellowknife. Last week, a 22-year-old was arrested for a murder that happened in the Deh Cho in March. Yesterday, media reported that a 12-year-old was arrested in Mackenzie Delta after a shooting.

Mr. Speaker, our children are using drugs at younger ages; for example, 10 years old, and this will have a terrible impact on their future.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are calling for actions. They are asking others to report drug dealers and people involved in the drug trade. Residents are beginning to face legal consequences. We need to ensure we have the resources to meet the challenges ahead. Mr. Speaker, addiction is also a disease, and while we must protect our communities we need to show compassion. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard recently that the amount of time for legal aid clinics and services have been reduced. Our young people are entering the system, and we need to be prepared. I will have question for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 621-20(1):  
STATE OF THE ECONOMY OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, investing in our Arctic road to resources, Mr. Speaker, it's the highway north of Yellowknife, is an excellent, if not a major significant economic opportunity for the North and Canada. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the NWT's GDP alone, you'd start to wonder in this territory, is it trending that people are quietly quitting? Our GDP is shrinking and things are -- maybe no one's taken the opportunity to inform or tell the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to need some bold brinkmanship action to get in there, lock down, and get some investment in the North, because as the North starts to shrink, and continues to shrink in the direction it's going, you don't have to start to see the stark difference between when you look east or west, when you see Nunavut and Yukon, as their economies continue to grow year over year because it starts to make you wonder what's happening and where is the call for urgency. Mr. Speaker, frankly, the only growth, really, we see in the

Northwest Territories in our GDP is the public administration. And in lay terms, that's for the public to know what that means is basically that means government with more government on top of government, Mr. Speaker. Government's bursting at the seams. It's our best sifter.

Mr. Speaker, but all isn't lost. There's hope on the horizon. Mr. Speaker, recently, Canada has elected a new Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, that Prime Minister made a particularly interesting statement. I'll say it. He said build big, build bold, and build now, Mr. Speaker. So there's the message I'm sending to our Premier.

So, Mr. Premier, while you're travelling to the First Ministers' junket in two weeks from now and in between the wine, the cheese, and those fancy cute little tiny crackers, take a moment and ask the Prime Minister to help you build big, build bold, build now. We have partners here in the Yellowknife region - the Tlicho government, the Yellowknives - they want to work together to build that road north to the Bathurst port because we could build big, bold, and now, and that will help stimulate this economy.

Mr. Speaker, subjects such as the Arctic road to resources I think would be good, accelerating the Mackenzie Valley Highway is critical, and if Taltson isn't going to work it's time we pull it off the table and say let's run a power line north from Alberta because we have to start making some good choices. So I implore the Premier, do not be a Where's Waldo; be aggressive. Be big, be bold, and do it now because we can't wait any longer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 622-20(1):  
BARGING CONDITIONS FOR 2025 SAILING  
SEASON

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope all colleagues is having an enjoyable spring. Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity as recently as this past week where my wife and I drove through Fort St. John, BC, home to the Site C hydro dam facilities, a stunning and massive structure. This is also one of three facilities on the same Peace River. These are controlled waterways for commercial returns. Mr. Speaker, our journey continued to include sites at the Petitot-Liard River junction. Again, we witnessed another sight of low water conditions.

Mr. Speaker, these two areas are the head watersheds of the Mackenzie River and the Liard. With warmer climate conditions, controlling waterways, downstream residents in

my area, of these invested conditions is not only alarming, concerning, but, more importantly, what's in store of our future's generations on sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, I support the MTS staff and the department for taking active measures to support a resupply point at Dooley Crossing; however, challenges remain within the waterways of sailing conditions, decisions are confirmed.

Mr. Speaker, mid summer of 2023, the marine vessel vehicle, Vic Ingram, punctured a hole crossing the 12-mile ridge above Tulita. The reef extremely cautioned -- extreme caution is required when supporting the approved sailing decision. It would be a catastrophic environmental nightmare should a fuel spill occur where remoteness and response plans, personnel, are not readily available and in immediate reach.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, my ultimate and remaining support is higher north and build Mackenzie Valley Highway Wrigley to Norman Wells. We must think strategically as we transition from regulatory assessment funding permitting construction during the remaining term of our Assembly. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 623-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RELIEF FOR TERRITORIAL  
DIAMOND MINES

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, the recent Earth Day announcement of \$15 million in surprise subsidies to the three operating diamond mines has been bothering me. I certainly don't dispute that the mines employ a lot of Northerners and that Indigenous and northern businesses rely significantly on contracts with the diamond mines. What bothers me is that the subsidies are based on wishful thinking. They're not designed to actually accomplish anything meaningful when it comes to jobs or our economy. We're not getting any guarantees in return for the \$15 million besides nice but empty words like "relationships" and "partnerships." They're not even offering best efforts but commercially reasonable efforts to maintain operations. Basically, they'll do what they were going to do anyway. We don't have any independent economic analysis that shows even the probability that this token gesture will result in one more northerner being hired or that a mine will stay open for one day longer than it would have without these subsidies.

\$15 million in public funds are pretty small potatoes for those diamond mine operations, but they could mean a lot if this government instead invested that money directly in our people, in housing or education or mental health care or even in energy infrastructure projects to support future economic opportunities. Those are the investments required to build up our economic foundation, not desperately throwing money at the mines that are already on their way out the door in the hope that will slow them down on their way out.

With this so-called crisis so impossible to predict or plan for, global mineral prices famously rise and crash on a regular basis. We've known for many years these mines are reaching the end of their lifecycles, when we should expect falling profits and tighter margins. We can and should be creating transparent policy for what to do in these frequent situations. Should the government always subsidize a mine if it threatens to close? If so, for how long should we subsidize a failing operation? What proof do we need to see that a closure threat is real? Is there a minimum rate of return? How many jobs should be at stake to justify a subsidy? What should be the consequence if a company takes the money and shuts down the very next day? Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues. Finally, let's plan properly and invest in economic development based on sound evidence rather than spending reactively based on fear and wishful thinking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 624-20(1):  
REGULATORY REGIME FOR  
COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the NWT, a number of health care professions are regulated under the Health and Social Services Professions Act. Psychologists were regulated under this act in 2022 for example. Meanwhile, counselling and psychotherapy are not yet a regulated profession in the NWT, and I have been approached by practitioners with concerns about the lack of a regulatory body to these professions here.

Anyone in the NWT can currently offer counselling or psychotherapy services without

any formal education or training as long as they are not claiming to be a psychologist or social worker. Trained counselling therapists may register with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association where registration with the CCPA is not mandatory; it's voluntary. This is potentially a significant issue with severe impacts on public safety, Mr. Speaker.

Regulation protects the public. A regulatory body ensures that practitioners are held to high standards, promoting safe, ethical and evidence-based practices. When harm does occur currently, there is no avenue to report someone for unethical or dangerous care if they are not a voluntary association or regulatory body member. Unregulated, untrained individuals providing counselling care may worsen things for those already in crisis. Harm can occur due to negligence, malpractice, ethical violations, or incompetence. Regulation helps mitigate these risks by ensuring that only qualified professionals provide care and that harmful practices are addressed. We expect registered nurses and physicians to maintain up-to-date licensing, ensuring their ability to provide safe care. Why should we not hold mental health professions to the same standards? I want to -- or similar standards, Mr. Speaker.

I want to highlight that valuable education and training are not limited to colonial systems, and it is crucial that any regulatory framework developed for the NWT takes this into account. Currently, the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario has a policy entitled the Indigenous Pathway Policy which aims to support the registration of appropriately qualified Indigenous practitioners of psychotherapy through consultation and collaboration with Indigenous communities. The CRPO also recognizes that knowledge-keepers, elders, and practitioners of Indigenous traditional healing practices can provide supervision to registrants recognizing that supervision from -- sorry, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the CRPO also recognizes that knowledge-keepers, elders, and practitioners of Indigenous traditional healing practices can provide supervision to registrants recognizing that supervision from noncolonial educated and trained individuals has value. Similar policies would be essential if regulation were achieved in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'll have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member from the Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 625-20(1):  
ADMINISTRATION OF AND PLANS FOR  
THE HAMLET OF ENTERPRISE

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss Enterprise being put under administration.

Enterprise is still recovering from the 2023 wildfires which destroyed homes and businesses and displaced most of its residents. Mr. Speaker, there have been no clear plans since the fires. Enterprise lost people on its council in early 2024, and media reported widespread lack of confidence. On May 7, 2025, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs made an order declaring the hamlet of Enterprise be placed under administration due to the governance, financial, and operational challenges.

Mr. Speaker, section 159 of the Territorial Hamlets Act allows the Minister to declare a hamlet subject to administration and appoint a municipal administrator. This administrator can exercise the powers and perform the duties of a council under the Act. As a result, council is deemed to have resigned, and the office remains vacant until a new election is held.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister's orders effectively relieve the mayor and all members of the council of their duties. This measure was considered necessary to stabilize operations, ensure good governance, and address the challenges faced by the community, according to the press release.

Mr. Speaker, residents need to know the next steps. Some residents are still living in Hay River. They want to know when Enterprise will be move-in ready. My constituents are asking what plans are in place for delivering services and programs on behalf of Enterprise. Now that council has been dissolved, when will an election be held? I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 626-20(1):  
HOUSING PROGRAMS IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my constituents of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh following the spring federal

election with great anticipation, a sentiment echoed throughout this Assembly. For some time, there has been serious uncertainty about how outcomes of the federal election could affect our efforts to tackle the many challenges facing our territory, in particular the ongoing housing crisis.

The result is not clear. Mr. Carney and the Liberal party have returned to office promising a new government agency dedicated to building 500,000 new homes a year across the country. While this plan is ambitious, it is not without precedent. For decades, the federal government built homes across Canada and here in the Northwest Territories. Those efforts made real progress until the mid 1990s. Many people in the North and the small communities are still living in those homes today. Unfortunately, the beginning of our modern housing crisis can be tracked back to the moment of federal government transferred housing responsibility to the territory government. The NWT has since fallen behind by hundreds of homes a year or 7,500 in total approximately and simply do not have the resources to keep up.

Public housing wait lists grew, vacancy rates plummet, and older homes slip into disrepair. We are now at a turning point. But this moment is about more than just catching up on the housing shortages. It's about ensuring we never face a crisis like this again, and that won't happen until Indigenous housing is led by Indigenous governments. Only then, truly understand the unique needs of their communities. They have community members ready to design policies, administer programs, and construction to maintain homes. We need to give them the authority and resources to get started. My constituents can't wait any longer for the GNWT to move beyond its failing policies and commit to new Indigenous-led housing consensus.

A strong first step would be to revisit the successful historic initiative by reinstating the old HAP programs:

- Homeownership assistance program,
- Home improvement program,
- Senior assistance home assistance program, and
- Emergency repair program.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. But at this time, with the funding flowing directly to the Indigenous governments, along with funding for public housing and CRC operation and maintenance funds. My communities and I are eager to hear from firm commitments in that direction because this work can't wait any longer. I would have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 627-20(1):  
NUNAKPUT CONSTITUENCY AND 20<sup>TH</sup>  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY'S VISION

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to offer my sincere condolences to all who have lost loved ones over the last few months. Grief is uncomfortable and difficult, especially in trying times.

I rise today to speak about Nunakput, a riding and constituency that elected me to represent and advocate for those that live in the most remote communities in the Northwest Territories. Seeing people travel on the land with the return of spring and warmer weather brings me joy and hope as many families are harvesting geese and catching fish coming home with smiling faces and nice-looking tans. Communities remain resilient as many families continue to face poverty and unaffordability with limited access to health care and education systems.

I think we all have a good idea of what we need, including a locally skilled labour market, an engaged and thriving workforce, improved housing, and more frontline services with vibrant schools and health centres. The work we do, the discussions we have, the questions we ask, our priorities; this is our vision, Mr. Speaker, a better territory than what we started this 20th Assembly with.

Our territory is seeing a surge of illegal activity, including amplified heavy drug activity and health centres overrun with preventative accidents and illnesses. What can we do?

First, we need to speak the truth for our children and our grandchildren. We need healthy families, healthy communities, and healthy parents saying no more. We must be more engaged in our communities, attend events and meetings, ask questions, volunteer, and run for elected office. I continue to trust our Premier, Cabinet, and I trust Regular Members to lead and act in the best interests of this territory. But,

again, we need to remind ourselves we need to truly do what's best for this territory. As we begin this session, let's think about it. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 628-20(1):  
CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR DR. EARL  
COVERT

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, Dr. Earl Leslie Covert passed away peacefully at the Chinook Regional Hospital in Lethbridge on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at the age of 86 years. His family, while spread across Canada, has grown to include 13 great-grandchildren who are all under the age of nine years old. While these are the blood relations he left behind, there are dozens of people and families who called him a father, a grandfather, and a friend. He was predeceased by his first wife, Audrey, in 2016.

Doctor Covert was born on June 21st, 1938, in Ottawa, graduating Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, and moved immediately to the Northwest Territories, where he began serving the Lord as a doctor and leader in his church community. The legacy he leaves behind includes bringing hundreds of babies into the world, flying into remote communities to serve both the Lord and the medical field in any capacity he was able. He raised a large family and left behind a church family at Parallel Lethbridge, while not blood, are true family as any man could ask for.

Colleagues, Dr. Covert was a man who touched the lives of many people. He served his communities of Hay River, Coaldale and the Lethbridge area as a doctor for over 50 years. In the many years he served his community, he donated his time, his energy, and his love to anyone he met, serving in the Streets Alive with Foot Friday, the Gideons, and Parallel Lethbridge. He was lovingly known in Parallel as "the doc" where he served for many years as a door greeter and voice of wisdom.

Colleagues, I was fortunate to have him as a family doctor growing up in Hay River. It is not often when you have a doctor who brings you into the world and then has the opportunity to bring your children into this world. This happened with me and my younger sister.

I remember the last time we had a conversation about a potential operation. As we were chatting about various options, I asked him how long he knew me, and he said all your life young man. Then he thought about the question



further and said we'll come up with a different plan.

When you look at Dr. Covert's life, there are countless layers of people he has affected on the people which some we still don't fully known, yet what is known is that he has touched so many lives in such a positive way that his passing has left a hole in the hearts of many. His last wish, his final goal, was to see the Lord Jesus Christ praised and the gospel spread to anyone with ears to hear.

I would like to thank his grandson Dallas Covert to help with this part of the Celebration of Life; however, being reflective of the time I would like the rest of this statement be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard. This includes other parts of the obituary written by his grandson, written by his daughter and son-in-law. He will be sadly missed.

#### **Dallas Covert**

I call tell you his hobbies included genealogy research, bird watching, and stamp collecting, where he served in BNAPS from 1972 in various capacities as Secretary of the Society, and Member of the board of governors. He eventually served as Chairman, and President of the organization. He is known internationally for publishing and editing various catalogs and collectors' documents relating back to his joy of stamp collecting.

Doctor Covert is survived by his second wife Jean and her daughter Barbara, his son Lawrence (Monique) and his daughter Cindy (Robin); seven grandchildren: Orrin (Kaio), Dallas (Andrea), Tyrell (Ceara), Nakyta (James), Natasha, Makayla (Spencer), and Porscha (Mike).

A Celebration of Life was held at Parallel Church, 1 mile east of Lethbridge on Hwy 3, on Thursday, May 8, 2025 at 2:00 P.M. with Pastor Kelly Stickel and Pastor Ralph Molyneux officiating. The service was made available by Cornerstone Funeral Home webpage.

Cindy Esau (daughter), Earle Covert, the Collector. To quote the late Philip "Phil Ately", I have never witnessed a person who is more dedicated to acquiring, these funny little scraps of paper, that we call stamps, than my friend "Doc Covert."

Indeed, Doctor "Doc" Earle L. Covert was a true legend in his time. His Zeal for acquiring all things related to the Postal System, no matter how tenuous the connection, was remarkable. Besides the common postage stamps and stationery that you are familiar with, Doc was seeking out post cards, first day covers, illustrated permits, tobacco revenue stamps,

post office advertising posters, mailboxes, etc. Nothing seemed to be off limits. He once even considered moving his family into a decommissioned post office.

#### **Robin Esau (son-in-law)**

Doc was very instrumental in popularizing this obscure endeavour. The younger generations seemed to take a keen interest. Clutching their first stamp albums, they would watch Doc striding through the gilded halls of BNAPS or ORAPEX in his quest for an elusive Mark Harmon post card or an inverted error St. Lawrence Seaway 5 cent 1958 stamp. Legions, well maybe not legions but probably quite a few, children got their life journey started this way. He will be missed. How are the dealers going to Survive now?

Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

#### **MEMBER'S STATEMENT 629-20(1): CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR VINCENT MOSES**

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the permission of the Moses family to remember the late Winston Moses, a respected elder and friend to all to the town of Inuvik.

Winston's family said the world got a little brighter when their dad, grandfather, uncle, and friend Winston John Moses was born on April 6th, 1944, in Old Crow, Yukon. In his early years, Winston was raised by his sister Mary Lazarus Charlie and his godparents Ellen and Robert Booth Senior. Winston attended residential school in Old Crow, Aklavik, and then Inuvik. He later attended vocational school in Whitehorse and Fort Smith.

In 1974, while working in Inuvik, Winston met the love his life, Martha Pascal of Fort McPherson. After many weekend visits to Fort McPherson to visit Martha, he brought her home to Old Crow where they married on May 7th, 1975. The young couple moved to Inuvik in 1978 and together raised six children.

Mr. Speaker, one of his children, his son, Alfred Moses, who many in this building will recognize that name and remember who sadly passed away at the age of 45 in 2022, Alfred was elected to the Legislative Assembly here in 2011 and represented the electoral district of Boot Lake until his retirement from politics in 2019.

Winston and Martha enjoyed picking berries, setting snares and going for drives on the highway and enjoyed visiting relatives in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. When

Martha could no longer go berry picking or setting snares, he would go out and often come back with full pails of berries or a few rabbits just for her, always taking care of his wife and family like the good man that he was.

Winston was known for walking everywhere with a hello or a good day. And anyone who's been in Inuvik or lives in Inuvik would see Winston walking up and down the hill, never accepting a ride, just waving and saying hello to everyone he crossed paths with. He was a humble man who always had kind words to share. In his spare time, he enjoyed sharing his music skills in guitar or harmonica. He would often perform in talent shows. When he attended the Gwich'in Gathering in Old Crow in 2022, he had entered almost every contest they had and won first place in many of them, including in the jigging contest and his harmonica in the talent show.

The Gwich'in Nation mourns alongside Winston's family as they have lost a respected Gwich'in elder and a knowledge holder who was always so willing to teach anyone who wanted to learn. Winston lived by example, and we've all seen his traditional values in all that he did.

One of his fondest memories was his last trip to Old Crow where he spent time with his family and going to Crow Flats. He was so glad to be home. He mentioned it being his first time back there in almost 50 years. He sat quietly having tea, he shared what he remembered, and appreciated his treasured trip. Mahsi cho to the Tetlichti family for taking good care of him during their revisit.

Mr. Speaker, Winston was special to everyone who knew him. Let us each honour him and all our loved ones who passed before by living the best we can each day, remembering all the teachings and applying them to our daily lives. Let us keep learning and sharing and caring for each other, like Winston did for us, never forget the sacrifices, hard work ethic and strong faith that he carried and lived. His legacy will live on through his family who was always the most important thing in life to him. Thank you for all your work on earth, Winston, and rest in peace in paradise forever more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Just beautiful Celebration of Life of a gentleman that was well known across the Northwest Territories. My condolences go out to the family and his friends.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Mr. Premier.

## Returns to Oral Questions

### RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 530-20(1): SENIOR ENVOY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on February 25, 2025, regarding the Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada position.

The Senior Envoy position is one position within the Premier's Office and has been remunerated at the salary range of the principal secretary position which is considered a deputy head III.

As of April 1st, 2025, the salary range of a Deputy Head III position is from \$261,474 to \$326,842.

Salary ranges for the Government of the Northwest Territories' employees are available publicly on the Department of Finance website.

As of April 1st, 2025, the 100 percent maximum range for the deputy head III position, including benefit entitlements, there is an estimated cost of \$440,000 per year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Returns to oral questions. Minister of Health and Social Services.

### RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 607-20(1): COVERAGE EXEMPTIONS FOR UNINSURED MEDICAL PROCEDURES

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Range Lake on March 5th, 2025, regarding Coverage Exemptions for Uninsured Medical Procedures. The Member asked if there anything a doctor can do to convince decision-makers that an exception or an appeal is warranted if a procedure is not insured.

There is a robust process in place to assess appeals or requests for exceptions related to services that are not considered an insured service.

From the Member's line of questioning, I gather that the process was initiated through a prior approval request however the outcome of the request did not satisfy the patient.

In accordance with the Medical Care Act and the Medical Care Regulations, the director of medical insurance designates a medical advisor, who is a physician, to review prior approval requests and make recommendations. Depending on the complexity of the case, the file is reviewed by the medical advisor and any additional

Department of Health and Social Services staff or other clinicians within the territory and in consultation with the medical specialist or other experts from outside the NWT, as needed.

The review and recommendations of the medical advisor, based on clinical input and aligning with funding of medical services in other jurisdictions across Canada, are reviewed by the director of medical insurance and the decision of the director is final. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Returns to oral questions. Mr. Premier.

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 645-20(1):  
SENIOR ENVOY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF  
CANADA

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on March 12th, 2025, regarding the Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada position.

As part of an organizational shift within the Premier's Office, the Senior Envoy position was created to strengthen the Government of the Northwest Territories' federal engagement efforts. This role is designed to foster strong relationships with federal political offices in Ottawa while leveraging the renewed national interest in Canada's North. The Senior Envoy serves as a dedicated resource, ensuring that the GNWT's perspectives are effectively conveyed in federal decision-making processes whenever possible.

The success of this position will, in part, be measured by the level of engagement and resulting outcomes, including advocacy achievements and policy influences. Relationship building is an integral part of this process with progress tracked through the establishment of key connections made. Additionally, performance will also be assessed based on tangible outcomes such as new funding commitments secured and initiatives influenced. Ultimately, these measures reinforce the position's important role in expanding visibility and elevating our government's priorities on the national stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Great Slave.

#### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my

constituent Irene Roth who is here today in the House, although I can't see her because I am limited on my vision in the House. Thank you very much for being here and enjoy your Assembly.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my constituent Mr. Floyd Powder, former sergeant-at-arms here at the Legislative Assembly. Floyd is here to honour Eddie Powder, a WWII veteran who you spoke of earlier today. And thank you for being here again, Floyd. It's always good to have you in the chamber. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to -- yes, he was an arm force -- with arm force, and I know his kids, but his daughter Sherry had shared a story about his to show respect to their late dad. Their kids are here. Marie Douglas and Irene Roth, North Douglas, they're all -- and they're also both -- Martha Sundberg the granddaughter of the late Robert Douglas who was -- I'd like to say -- I'd like to show my respect and say thank you to them. Their late dad Robert Douglas was in armed forces. And also Floyd Powder was also here to show the respect, and also he was a sergeant-at-arms at one point in time who is also here. But anyways, thank you

[Translation Ends]. Mahsi.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to pay an honourable recognition of Robert (Bob) Douglas born in Fort Good Hope, and I'm glad to see the family in the gallery and the granddaughter Tanya Roth to the family as well. And Mr. Douglas is still talked about in high regard with the efforts he made in contributing to the community at the time there when he was living and working in Fort Good Hope. So I never met the individual, but I hear some remarkable stories, and it gives me pleasure, as I said, to pay my contribution. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome

Sholto Douglas, a constituent from Thebacha, to the House today. Sholto is here in honour of Robert (Bobby) Douglas, World War II veteran from the Royal Canadian Airforce combat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Marie Doyle who is in the gallery today. She is a Yellowknife Centre constituent, and she's a beloved family member of Robert Douglas, a World War II veteran. And just on that note, I want to remind people that as our veteran numbers do shrink, we still owe them a debt of great gratitude for the greetings we all shared here today and throughout the world.

And, Mr. Speaker, separately, I'd like to also acknowledge Sholto Douglas. He was a friend of mine when I was very young, and so I would say I know him well and I could tell some good stories about that, but we don't have the time today and I suspect he'd prefer they not be put on the public record. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize -- they're kind of members of my family and friends of my family, Martha Simba married to my cousin from Kakisa; Tanya Roth from Norman Wells, Marie Douglas, North, Irene, Sholto, and the family that's there but from the late Robert Douglas. Thank you, and welcome to the House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also recognize the former sergeant-at-arms Mr. Floyd Powder. I want to say mahsi and good to see you here. I also would like to recognize Irene Roth, Marie Douglas, Tanya McCauley, Sholto Douglas, North Douglas, and I have an elder there; I just don't know their name. But I just want to say welcome to the House. And Sholto, you look like a politician. So welcome. Mahsi.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Sholto Douglas in the audience as well. I have -- I was given names, but I forgot to mention; I didn't

realize he was in the audience, in the gallery. So I would like to recognize Sholto Douglas as well. Thank you.

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

Welcome, Mr. Powder. It's great to see you here again.

If we've missed anyone in the gallery here today, welcome to your chambers. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery. And thank you very much for allowing us to represent you here today and for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 660-20(1): SENIOR ENVOY TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. HAWKINS:** All right, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm excited to ask questions to the Premier regarding his upcoming wonderful trip to Saskatoon, and I'd like to know little details and hopefully, we can share this within the House. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, what is the plan or what will the Premier be proposing at this First Minister's conference with the Prime Minister of Canada that suits -- that lines up with the mandate of the NWT but also some of our major significant infrastructure projects; and, lastly, especially noting the tone of the Prime Minister to build and be bold. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had a pretty consistent approach to dealing with the Prime Minister's office. We are advancing our federal priorities. When I meet with the Prime Minister, I speak about the need to settle land claims. That was actually what we talked about the last time that I spoke with him and then the next thing I know we have the Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations is from the Northwest Territories. So I don't know if that is a coincidence or if they're listening, but I think that's very promising.

I speak about things that the Prime Minister is interested in, things like nation building projects, Slave Geological Province Corridor, Taltson Hydro Electric Expansion, the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I talk about how we work with Indigenous governments in the

Northwest Territories, how we have a co-management system that the federal government is actually part of, and they need to be more involved if we want to get things moving forward. So I do my best to put things out there that the Prime Minister can say yes to and that will stick with him so that when they go back and they make their decisions, the Northwest Territories is at the front of their mind. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the return to oral questions, the Premier had answered some of my questions with respect to the -- our Ottawa czar. So what advice is he giving us on a political tactic to approach the Prime Minister to find some yeses on our wish list at this particular meeting he's having in Saskatoon? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is political advice that is being given by the senior envoy to the Government of Canada. We don't have any czars in the government that I'm aware of, no positions at least named "czar." So I work with the senior envoy to, you know, pick his brain on, you know, what he's seen in the past, get information about past decisions made in Ottawa, some of that insight that you might not get, you know, through the media or through a briefing note. And so the type of advice that he gives is quality. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was, I think earlier in the return to oral questions, the Premier did cite that he's paid at a deputy minister III up to 300 and I think \$26,000. It was actually more than the Prime Minister gets paid, oddly enough. But out of -- I would hope that, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier could be very specific as to what advice he's getting so he can approach the Prime Minister on these initiatives -- he's already lists them, I don't need to go through them -- and what type of political advice he's giving the Premier to help work in collaboration to get the national support on our national infrastructure projects. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I've already answered the Member's question. Thanks.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 661-20(1):  
RELIEF MEASURES FOR TERRITORIAL  
DIAMOND MINES

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

So as part of the public briefing this morning, the government's presentation stated that in return for accepting this relief, the diamond mines agreed to several commitments including to use commercially reasonable efforts to maintain operations until their planned closure dates. So can the Minister explain whether the commitment to use commercially reasonable efforts to maintain operations represents any change whatsoever from the status quo or, rather, would we always expect businesses to use commercially reasonable efforts in everything that they do? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly in the Northwest Territories, we do always expect businesses to use reasonable efforts, to use local employment, local labour, and to really ensure that collectively and as a community we're really focused on benefit retention for Northerners. That said, I can't predict what would have happened but we were in the face of a very difficult decision that some of the diamond mines were facing. We know that globally it is a very difficult market for diamonds right now, and we also know that in the NWT that diamond mines provide a lot of our GDP. They provide upwards of 21 percent. They provide a lot of funding to businesses. They provide a lot of jobs to Northerners that Northerners rely on, and so what we were investing in were those jobs. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the department explained in a briefing that the property tax relief is a, quote, "temporary measure." So does this mean that if profits rebound, we should expect the mines to repay the subsidies? So by "temporary", is this meant to be kind of a temporary loan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the relief in the form of property taxes and foregoing the property taxes was a one-time, one-year-for-this-year relief measure that the Government of the Northwest Territories, under direction of Cabinet, took. It is not a long-term solution. It is a right now -- an acknowledgement of the global diamond market and cost of doing business in the Northwest Territories and also the significance to northern employers, to northern workers, that the diamond mines play. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Minister also said in her statement that these subsidies are not about supporting mines; they're about supporting people. So if that's the case, did the Minister consider investing the \$15 million directly into retraining and supporting the workers or the Indigenous development corporations so they can be better prepared to transition once the mines do close, whether that's a year or a few years from now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm all about return on investment. I think that we should be putting our dollars into places where we have a significant amount of investments.

In regards to the dollars that we did invest in the diamond mine relief, we end up with over \$2 billion in annual exports, a thousand jobs for Northerners, joint northern spend of almost \$900 million and \$69 million in tax revenues annually to the GNWT. So I feel like that's a pretty darn good investment. That being said, I do agree that we do need to have education because education does last forever, unlike our diamond mines, which we do know.

In regards to the diamond mines, they all employ apprentices, and all of the companies that contract with them, a significant number of them, employ apprentices. They're doing workforce development. The Indigenous development corporations also have workforce development plans and are working on exactly what the Member is talking about. And without the dollars from the diamond mines, they can't sustain that. They're also working on social programming, they're working on housing developments. And so, really, this is more than just supporting diamond mines. This is supporting Northerners. This is supporting Indigenous businesses, and this is in support of our future economic development as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 662-20(1):  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALBERTA AND  
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Premier welcomes the western Canada Premiers to Yellowknife, there's a lot of attention on us today around some recent decisions that Premier Smith in Alberta has made, most notably, I think, my colleague

spoke to some of the issues related to trans and nonbinary folks. And let's also talk about the constitutional crisis that the Premier's walking into for some reason. She's cut the threshold for constitutional initiatives in half in her province and is gunning towards a referendum on separation for whatever reason.

If this -- does the -- has the Premier discussed this with Premier Smith and what the result would be for the Northwest Territories if we lose a vital connection to Alberta? Because of course that's our logistic hub. It's a huge economic link. We really can't do without it. So has the Premier had those discussions, and can we have a position on this as a government? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our position hasn't changed on the issues the Member is speaking about. If there are medical services that are no longer available in one jurisdiction, we will work with another jurisdiction to ensure that residents receive those medical services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's more than medical services. It will be all services. But that's good to know that we'd find someone else.

Mr. Speaker, this was -- this is a controversial decision. First Nations and Indigenous leaders have risen up to say that it's not okay, it's not something they'll allow on their watch. Will the Premier support those voices if there is a court challenge at some point, the GNWT can be in a position to intervene. Even if he can't make that commitment today, will he at least support those voices that are calling for Indigenous rights to be respected in the province of Alberta? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a hypothetical question, and it should be directed to the Attorney General. So I won't be answering it on both those fronts. But I'll say that our track record here in the Northwest Territories on Indigenous rights speaks for itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Well, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I caught myself there. So I'm looking more for a political commitment from the leader of our government to support the voices of First Nations in Alberta in their struggle to keep this country together and oppose a very dangerous precedent that is

being floated by the Government of Alberta. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure exactly what the Member is speaking of in technical terms. He's looking for my support for events in another jurisdiction. So I'm quite -- I'm unclear on the parameters that he's talking about, what would I be committing to support. I'm focus on the Northwest Territories. I'm the Premier of the Northwest Territories. We have strong relationships with Indigenous governments. We are moving to a future where the territory will be covered by settled land claims and self-governing Indigenous nations, and we are continuously working towards that end. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 663-20(1):  
FUNDING OF HOUSING PROGRAMS IN  
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, prior to 1993, the Government of Canada provided funding to CMHC on an annual basis so that they could provide funding to the GNWT through the NWT Housing Corporation where they built at least 600 homes per year up to 1993 from approximately 1988 or so.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, with Prime Minister Carney coming into power now, he's asking to build 5 -- sorry, he made a commitment to build 500,000 homes per year. My question will be to the Premier.

Will the Premier seek a commitment from the Prime Minister to ensure federal housing funds flow directly to regional Indigenous governments here in the Northwest Territories, and will he ensure that Indigenous leadership and is meaningful included in the federal/territorial housing discussions so that decisions impacting housing in Indigenous communities are reflected in their priorities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years, it's been the policy of this government to support direct payments for housing, the funding, to Indigenous governments from the federal government, so we will continue to do that. I'm happy to support Indigenous governments in their advocacy to the federal government. I never want to stand in the way of funds flowing directly to

Indigenous governments. So I want to make that very clear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And some of the programs that was provided back in the early days was programs like the homeownership assistance program, the home improvement -- the homeownership improvement program, the senior citizens home repair program, emergency repair program, and they also provided public housing. And so, Mr. Speaker, and it would be -- will the Premier advocate for restoring and reinstating these programs in partnership with the federal Government of Canada and ensure the use of that -- these funds for the delivery is directed to regional Indigenous governments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we have a number of those programs. I'm not -- I won't say I'm an expert on past programs from previous decades, so I don't want to speak too much into that. But we are advocating to the federal government when it comes to housing. We're happy to see money go to Indigenous governments.

I'll also mention that the GNWT provides a lot of social housing in the territory, and we also meet our own funds. So we are doing that as well to advocate for a renewed agreement with the federal government where we'll see increased funding to support social housing at the same time that we are supporting Indigenous governments to access funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, some of the policies that are in place in government now sometimes don't really meet some of the community needs. So, Mr. Speaker, with CMHC funding set to expire with Housing NWT by 2038, there's an urgent need to build capacity with Indigenous governments immediately so they can deliver and manage their own housing.

Will the Premier work to ensure that the annual federal public housing funding, along with the operational maintenance support from CMHC, is directed to regional Indigenous governments so they can begin building and maintaining their own public housing units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is why it's so important to settle land claims and implement self-government agreements, so that Indigenous governments can begin providing, you know, appropriate social

housing, if that's what they wish to do. In the meantime, the Government of the Northwest Territories provides social housing, and so we need to ensure that we have an agreement with the federal government that is supporting our ability to provide that social housing. And like I said before, at the same time, we'll support Indigenous governments in their aspirations around housing as well, and we'll do that by going to Ottawa together and advocating together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 664-20(1):  
ACCESS TO TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over one year ago, just a few months after Alberta's government announced proposed changes to gender affirming care, Northern Mosaic Network reached out to Minister Semmler to get answers to questions. The community members shared with that organization about how to access -- how their access to gender affirming care would be impacted.

So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain what actions she has taken to -- since then, to address the concerns of our 2SLGBTQIAA+ community members on access to safe health care out-of-territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, I want to assure NWT residents that health care services for transgender individuals, including children and youth, will continue to be available within our health system. If the Northwest Territories clinical experts in transgender care cannot meet the needs of the residents, a referral can be made to an out-of-territory practitioner. What I have taken -- steps I've taken is to ensure that concrete steps to a safeguard access for NWT residents are put in place. I have directed my department to secure alternate out-of-territory care pathways for these individuals, meaning when a service is not available to the Northwest Territories -- to a Northwest Territories resident in the Northwest Territories or Alberta, physicians will refer patients to a jurisdiction where they may continue to receive the care they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, considering that the Alberta Premier's visit to Yellowknife for the western Premiers'

conference, the Northern Mosaic Network has reached out to both the Premier and the Minister to collaborate on an action plan to address the state of trans health care for NWT residents. And I'm so glad to hear that she has directed her department to secure alternative pathways. However, will the Minister also commit to meaningful collaboration with Northern Mosaic Network on trans health care for NWT residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, yes, but I'd like to explain a little bit more. So we are already -- we have an established working relationship with the Northern Mosaic Network. They helped draft the Northwest Territories guidelines in 2020 and in April 2024, representatives from ECE met with Northern Mosaic Network to discuss and review an update of those guidelines which will incorporate new research that they're conducting with the University of Manitoba. And we look forward to seeing the recommendations that come from this work, and I am fully committed to continuing our collaboration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 665-20(1):  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE HAMLET OF  
ENTERPRISE

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has noted the importance of stabilizing operations in Enterprise. Can the Minister of MACA explain what goals or targets community services would have to meet in order for the department to be satisfied that the governance and financial issues facing the hamlet have been resolved? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Deh Cho. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I would like to say that, you know, it's a last resort to put a government under public administration with the GNWT, and we've worked with the community many times throughout the last few years, including before our Assembly started, in order to maintain the government structure of Enterprise. So this isn't a new issue. This is a longstanding issue within the community.

So right now we're working with the public administrator who's in place right now to determine an action plan on what our processes are and how we're going to move through that. So one of the main issues is



getting ahold of the accounting processes. There has been no documented accounting procedures done in quite a while, and we don't have any financial statements after 2023-2024 season -- or year, sorry. So the goal right now is to determine what our path forward is and how to get to where the community's back on track again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. Can the Minister discuss what steps the new administrator is currently taking to enter into municipal service agreements with Hay River and other NWT communities to deliver or operate services, public utilities, or facilities in Enterprise? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, we are a little bit too early to determine that. We just had our administrator put in place, so it's currently -- the actions that he's doing right now is going through the operations of the community, finding out what resources are needed to operate. Currently, right now, they are operating as they were, so they've already had agreements in place or some agreements in place. So those are currently being worked on, and then obviously if there's any more that's needed, he will work those out in order to satisfy the community needs. So, again, it's just he's in the state of processing what exactly is needed and have a plan coming out with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Final supplementary. Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister say whether there is a timeline or -- yeah, a timeline for when residents should expect an election to be held for the hamlet of Enterprise? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So currently, like I stated, with the new administrator put in place, you know, the assessment is developing a work plan on how we move forward with the community and the governance structure. Currently, at the time, it's all new so there is no timeline at present; however, I will say that I would rather have the residents govern their municipality than us, and the sooner we can get to that point and have a well-oiled machine of Enterprise back in order, we will have that in place and ready for them to take over. Our goal is to have some public meetings here as soon as June, and I hope to also be a part of one of those public meetings. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 666-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGAL AID  
COMMISSION CAPACITIES

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, summer is approaching, and many of our young people will be on school break, so talking about drug crisis right now is appropriate to send a message to the young people in our communities.

So, Mr. Speaker, I noticed there is a vacancy on the board for the representative for North Slave. Can the Minister of Justice speak to the current capacities of the Legal Aid Commission? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Minister of Justice.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take that question as notice. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member from Sahtu.

QUESTION 667-20(1):  
2025 MACKENZIE RIVER SAILING SEASON

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my statement, my questions are to the Minister of Infrastructure.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure share with anticipation whether there will be a Sahtu regional sailing season, what actions are taken with or by MTS and Cooper Barging discussion. Masi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I want to thank the Member for acknowledging some of the hard work that's been done by the infrastructure staff over the last little while. Obviously navigating climate change is -- no pun intended, navigating climate change is not an easy task considering we have no control over that. However, the actions being taken by the MTS, our infrastructure staff and MTS, has many plans and layers of it to hopefully have a successful navigating system. And it's really hard to tell right now what that might entail due to the fact of we don't know what the water levels are going to be like.

So we are closely monitoring those water levels, and we're closely monitoring, you know,

the ability to get barges and tugs up and down the river. And those plans have been underway for a while now. So our goal with MTS is to have somewhat of a barging season, which includes a smaller section of barging from Dooley Crossing, as stated earlier, to the Sahtu area and potentially from north to the Sahtu area. So looking at many options. And so the goal is to work with another barging company to try to get fuel and freight into the Sahtu region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that information. I'm glad to hear that there is a preliminary sailing season, hopefully sailing season discussions.

The Minister answered my next question, so I'll skip that one there and add another couple more. If water levels permit, will the Minister, to avoid and detect hazard areas, will there be a water depth surveillance crew accompanying the barges? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. MTS wouldn't be navigating the Mackenzie River without buoys set up by the Canadian coast guard. So that's a safety thing, and that's something that we'd -- like he said earlier in his Member's statement, we don't want to risk the environment, so we will wait for Canadian coast guard to put up the buoys in order to navigate the Mackenzie River. And from previous briefings, I know that they're really anticipating getting out there and looking at our waterways. We know some of the trouble spots of getting through, like the Fort Providence rapids -- rapid area, the Sans Sault area. There's quite a few areas that are concerning, and the coast guard would go out there and navigate them and send smaller vessels through first to determine whether or not they can get the buoys out there. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Final Supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks to the Minister for that information there.

Moving along to my next final question here, is there -- can the Minister share the information, how much cargo is booked for the Sahtu, whether it's fuel or dry or modular units? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very good question. I don't know if I have the details handy yet. I know that they're waiting for a keep point to determine whether or not we would even be accepting freight in Hay River to put on the barges or whether or not they would hold off. So we'd

have to wait to determine to see what we're getting, so I'll have to get back to the Member and let him know what freight's for the area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 668-20(1):  
STAFF TO PATIENT RATIOS REVIEW AT  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not to preclude the work done by the Member for Yellowknife North, but a longstanding concern I have heard from nurses, prior to my time being a Member, is that of staff-to-patient ratios. And so my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services is whether or not she's willing to commit to do a review to staff-to-patient ratio to address a longstanding concern of frontline health care staff starting with Stanton, and present those results to all Members? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a conversation that I've been having with my staff and, you know, what happens across Canada, there are some jurisdictions that do have this, you know, and then there are areas that they -- you know, there might be some difference that they don't -- you know, they don't put it out on -- in public, so we don't have that access to the information. But what I can commit to is that looking at -- and I don't want to do a broad across the board, but what I would commit to is working with my staff to figure out in some of our higher priority areas, especially within our hospital settings and looking at rural and remote, you know, we can take a look at this and see where we -- you know, how we compare to the jurisdictions that do have public information out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's really great to hear. Is there any way that staff would be involved in that process in terms of frontline staff because that's really who was bringing these concerns to the floor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I appreciate the work that the frontline staff have been raising and, you know, we are hearing them. Again, I -- you know, I want to acknowledge that our system and our processes aren't as fast as they want

them to be. And so we do hear you. We have plans in place. With this, you know, I'll take -- like I said, I will take this back with the department and with NTHSSA, because that's our operating arm, and look at, you know, what we have across -- you know, and then, you know, the feedback from the staff can be that, you know, when we look at -- and I'll just say some of the patient ratios that I've seen online and then I compare them to our inpatient beds and our staffing, we can't use that as, you know -- and that's why I think what you're saying is we need to hear from the staff because if we have staff that they have a lot of casuals that are filling, you know, vacancies and things like that, it may impact how, you know, they're -- the pressures that are on them.

So like I said, we will take -- I'll take this back, and we'll come up with a process on how to do this work and then -- you know, and even bring this back to Members to share, you know, what the ideas are and what we are going to do. 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. And thank you to the Minister for that.

So last week when standing committee on social development heard from the public administrator, he spoke of a people strategy. Will this strategy be ongoing and a living document so that this piece around patient-to-staff ratios can also be incorporated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this -- the people strategy is to be released, as I get the fulsome -- you know, I had the highlights of it early on before it was being drafted. So as soon as I have the people strategy draft, and I'm more than willing to send, you know, as soon as I have it, to standing committee on social development to be able to, you know, have a conversation with them of what's in that document. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 669-20(1):  
REGULATORY REGIME FOR  
COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think my statement spoke for itself earlier.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of health. Has the health department done any work to date on regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists under the Health and Social Services Professions Act that they can report back to the Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time our efforts are being currently focused on bringing current regulated professionals under the Health Professions Act so not -- we are not considering counsellors and psychotherapists at this time. Psychologists are being brought under the Health and Social Services Professions Act. However, this is not an issue specific to the Northwest Territories. From the information that -- you know, that I've gotten from my team is that nationally there is a consistent -- there is not one consistent approach to regulating counsellors; however, for our counsellors that are employed by health and social services' community counselling program, we do have program standards that state that if they're able to be registered with a professional body that they should do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just following up on that response, I heard a "should" but that doesn't sound like a requirement to me. So can -- first of all, can the Minister just clarify for the House about that; is that a requirement or is it simply a recommendation? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He'd have to be more clear when my response of what -- which part of my -- that I said "should". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that this is simply a clarification of the second question as opposed to my third. But I simply say that the Minister said that -- something along the lines of counsellors under one of their programs -- I can't exactly remember which one off the fly -- but should register with a regulatory body. I was trying to determine if that is a requirement or simply a suggestion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. And I'm going to say it's a clarification. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And sorry, yes, it does say "should", and that means that we encourage all our staff. And, like, there are different ways that they can, under their -- like, with their -- the difference

pieces in Canada, the Canadian association, some can register through that, but then there are some social workers that are professional counsellors and so they would be under the Health and Social Services Profession Act. So there are some clinical counsellors that are being regulated under Health Professions Act, and that being social workers, but if they're not social workers and they're just clinical counsellors -- and this is a -- this is the area where, you know, we have many different levels of social work, so this is something that I would be considered to have more discussions with the Member and -- you know, and to kind of find a way to move forward with the things that he's looking for. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final Supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, and I appreciate your indulgence, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister has highlighted exactly the problem that I'm trying to raise today, and that is that we do not have a regulated counsellor and psychotherapist under the Health and Social Services Professions Act. Will the Minister commit to investigating the potential for regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists and report back to the Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would only be -- as I said before, what we are focused on are currently bringing in regulated professionals under the Health Professions Act at this time, and so that would be -- you know, at this time I'm not going to be considering that, but it's something that we can discuss further in the future. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 670-20(1):  
MEASLES VACCINATION MANDATE FOR  
EDUCATION BODY STAFF

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and it's with respect to vaccinations.

Recently, Yellowknife had an outbreak, had to close the school through the community network, making sure that the messages got out there so parents didn't drop their kids off at school and hence the measles outbreak happened, and it went through the process, and we all know measles can be very dangerous and as well, lastly, Mr. Speaker, there are

requirements for, for example, school-aged children to get their vaccinations, but the question is more -- I'm going towards is focusing in on teachers and administration and employees.

Mr. Speaker, given the recent event and potential risk that could be applied to our loved ones, is the department willing to consider a vaccination mandate; in other words, a must requirement for staff and administration at educational facilities that, again, take care of our loved ones? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's not currently a vaccination mandate for teachers outside of, you know, when we went through COVID and there was expectations around that. That was under the direction of the CPHO, the chief public health officer. And so our education bodies and our schools work very closely with the chief public health officer in events like this, and we ultimately follow the direction of the chief public health officer to ensure that we are aligned to protect residents and children. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the risks that can happen with, for example, measles and given the most recent example of what's happened by shutting a school down, Mr. Speaker, why wouldn't the department look at considering the option of legally requiring staff to -- staff and teachers to be vaccinated? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this would be, you know, a much larger conversation. I'm certainly happy always to take conversations like this back. I would also say that -- you know, recommend that people reach out to health and do their vaccinations, and then we can work together to avoid situations like this. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** You know, I appreciate the shout-out to public health. You know, they do a great job, and they certainly help ensure that people are ready. But, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the department of health -- or sorry, department of education, not the department of health and, furthermore, we're talking about schools, not that. So I would be curious on what the Minister meant by some type of conversation. Is she willing to take it

back to her department to look at is this something we could do, is this something -- how could it roll out and how could it be envisioned and certainly in the sense of timing. Because, I mean, I wouldn't expect something like this to be done before the end of May, and I would say something like this does require a fair bit of thinking and transition as well as acceptance if it was part of a process that the government ended up moving forward. So what could that look like, if the Minister would be willing to take that back to her department to evaluate or consider? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, obviously there are many other factors here. First of all, I would need to speak with the Department of Justice to find out if something like this -- you know, where the limits are. This is also a question for the public service and to find out kind of what the limits and expectations for public service. At this point, Mr. Speaker, outside of a public health emergency being declared, neither the Department of Education, Culture and Employment nor education bodies can mandate vaccinations or proof of vaccination for school staff. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 671-20(1):  
UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES OF  
PERSONAL INFORMATION

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's been some very high profile reporting on information breaches related to this government recently. You look in old filing cabinets, old desks, and find names, dates of birth, addresses, contact information, employment history, financial and credit card information, and health care numbers. So -- and, also, we hear other reports of staff snooping in medical records. The state of our information, our records system, our management of this information, seems to be in disarray.

Can the Minister of Justice, who has the access and privacy office within his department, explain why this is continuing to happen? Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a very sensitive area, and I'm unable to respond to the Member at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I know it's sensitive which is why I'm concerned about it and, certainly, the Information and Privacy Commissioner is concerned about it as well. So there's been a number of recommendations in these reports, including a clean desk policy when these things get done. Is the Minister working on implementing the recommendations of the privacy commissioner and implement things like clean desk policies, so this does not happen in the future? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is reviewing the recommendations of the report, and I can't specifically answer that question at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister know when he'll be able to answer that question? Because I think the public would like to know. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will follow up with the department and provide that information to the Member within -- before the end of the week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 672-20(1):  
ADVOCATING FOR SUPPORT FOR  
HOUSING PROGRAMS IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not often we get together here in the Northwest Territories and especially in Yellowknife with western Premiers. And I just wanted to just continue on with housing. My question would be to the Premier.

If there's a way if he could continue to work with the Premiers from -- and the three territories' Ministers -- sorry, Premiers to really push the housing issue for the Northwest Territories and operation and maintenance dollars, if you could look for support and then continue to build on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's been significant advocacy by all the provinces and territories regarding housing funding. That was a prominent theme in this last

federal election. And the federal government has been responding to that with some significant announcements and plans on housing. And so we'll continue to push that advocacy forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the Akaitcho region, this year we got funding to do homeownership inspections in our region, and thank you to the -- sorry, I want to say mahsi to the Minister of housing for helping out.

My question to the Premier, though, is that once -- this report is going to be done by this fall, and the chiefs from the Akaitcho would like to work together with the Premier to bring this report to the Prime Minister and ask for further funding for homeownership repairs in our region. Thank you. So my question to the Premier, can he help us out with Indigenous governments to knock on doors in Ottawa. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can always work with Indigenous governments to knock on doors in Ottawa, but there's more than just the Prime Minister in Ottawa, and there's more than just the Premier in the Cabinet, so I'd have to defer that question to the Minister of housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from -- oh sorry, Minister responsible for housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this question is important because the work they're doing in the Akaitcho territory, talking about the conditions of homes in their communities, this is something that housing is doing as well through our territorial housing needs assessment. Again, we've done the quantitative assessment and now we're wrapping it up with the qualitative assessment that's hoping to be done by fall of 2025. And with that engagement, we have reached out to all Indigenous governments and Indigenous leadership in communities asking if we can have conversations about this assessment. So it's important work that we hope to see results and then we bring that to Ottawa, along with Indigenous leaders, and talk about needs in communities for housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yeah, I'm very happy to hear that because it's very important on these two items.

One is to restore and reinstate the homeownership program, and also to go to Ottawa to push for funding for the homeownership repairs in our riding, and I'm happy to hear that we could probably work together with the Akaitcho chiefs, along with the GNWT leadership, to go to Ottawa, knock on doors together, so I just want to say thank you. Just a statement. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I do not want to have statements; I want questions. It's question and answer period. Please, you want to say thank you to the Ministers, do it after session. Thank you.

Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 673-20(1):  
MODERNIZATION OF SECTION 41 OF THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE ACT

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance, who is also the Minister responsible for the Public Service.

So on May 5th, the Ministers of Finance and Health and Social Services issued a joint press release announcing that the government is embarking on a second phase of changes to the Public Service Act that will focus on modernizing section 41. That's the section that defines bargaining units and prescribes who will be the bargaining agent for public servants.

First, can the Minister explain what is the objective of this modernization effort that the government is embarking on; in other words, what is the problem with section 41 that you are seeking to solve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, modernization of the Public Service Act has, in its whole, been happening now over many years. There's been much work done in this space, and we already are at a stage with most of the Act such that it is already in legislative drafting and will be coming forward to the House later this year. That is with one exception, and that was with respect to section 41. That section, of course, the Member's already detailed, does involve bargaining units and is one that is a little more complicated and so we left that aside from the rest of the Act.

What it is it does speak to a Charter right, a Charter right with respect to freedom of association which has a couple of parts to it. You have the ability to organize as a group what

kind of your group of union -- or of employees you may want to be when you decide to collect yourselves. You have that choice, and you can make that choice independently. And then also, Mr. Speaker, would be about ensuring that that group of employees can make a determination about who would represent them in a collective agreement proceeding. So, again, that choice would be independent. That choice is one that it's about choice and independence, or reflective. Right now, our section prescribes who the group of employees shall be and who their bargaining agent shall be. And so it does appear that since the time sometime ago when this Act was initially drafted, it is now out of step with what seems to be the direction of the Charter and so we are looking to bring that in line. A commitment was made to Members of this Assembly earlier this year that we bring forward an LP to make this change, and we are looking to getting that work underway. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank to the Minister for setting out a clear goal for that, the amendment to that section. For clarity, is the government committing to establish a labour relations board or similar mechanism to certifying these certified bargaining agents during the life of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the commitment I want to make really is one of fixing the problem that I just described in the last answer, and it may well be that it's -- that the solution is a labour relations board. It may well be that there's some other entity or organization that can conduct the bargaining or that can conduct a certification, if that's what is ultimately required. I'm hesitant, Mr. Speaker, to say here and with too much detail what -- where we may end up because we haven't necessarily gone out -- well, we haven't gone out yet. Certainly not to our unions currently that are in the Northwest Territories, the Union of Northern Workers or PSAC, to discuss with them. They have a lot of expertise, quite obviously, are more than simply stakeholders in this matter, and we want to have a time to engage with them as well as with the employees who are the public servants that this will be impacting. So, again, wanting to fix the problem that we have laid out but wanting to do that in the right way which is one that involves an opportunity to have discussions and engagements with those who are impacted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so I understand the government has clearly committed to collaboration and consultation with existing bargaining agents such as the Union of Northern Workers during its work to modernize section 41 of the Public Service Act. The question is, for the Minister, does the government need consent or permission from the UNW in order to complete changes to this section of the Act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, no, the government doesn't require consent or permission from other parties or -- including from the union to change the Public Service Act. That said, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated the union here certainly is more than merely a stakeholder, so certainly ensuring their involvement is quite important to making sure that we have a piece of legislation that is the best possible version of itself right now. And also, Mr. Speaker, there is certainly, I should make note, an expectation, an obligation on the government, a legal obligation on the government, in the current Public Service Act that there not be any changes to that Act which governs the relationships and governs the bargaining process when the parties go into bargaining, so once we have a notice to bargain. There is a provision in there where the parties can agree on consent to continue to work on changes such as what we might be contemplating here or as we have already done in the rest of the Public Service Act. But again -- so, again, Mr. Speaker, it's not consent or permission but certainly is one where we want to make sure that we are, you know, maintaining our relationship, maintaining fair bargaining, and maintaining our duty to engage in bargaining fairly and upholding the law as it is now in section 41. Mr. Speaker, I believe the timeline we're on and the relationships that we have will allow us to do that. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 674-20(1):

#### CARIBOU HARVESTING AND WASTAGE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in my email I got a response from the Minister of ECC regarding some caribou herd populations. I certainly was appreciative of the response. But my question, of course, that stirred the other question which was about wastage, and so I see some numbers and information, which I appreciate. My question, of course, being more specific, which is what is the department's strategy given the most recent news stories about caribou wastage? How are

they dealing with this, and public education can only go so far, so they must be able to do other types of things to address these types of problems, because it seems to be a significant sin every time we hear about more caribou wastage. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of ECC.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I also agree that, you know, it's very troubling to see the wastage of the caribou over the past season. In 2024, we had zero instances of wastage that were reported and in 2025, we currently have 11 investigations on the go. Our strategy is, you know, we put joint communiques out over the winter, engaging with the local Indigenous governments in a collaborative effort to ensure that we were messaging respectful harvesting. We've also recently engaged with Indigenous governments across the region to have meetings throughout the summer to address some of the challenges and concerns with the wastage and disrespectful harvesting on the winter road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was kind of hoping I'd also hear some information regarding enforcement. Now, I wouldn't be asking for the spy trade techniques from enforcement officers, you know, the James Bond hiding behind a fake tree or something. But the truth be told is there must be some fundamental issues with meat wastage. In other words, why? Is there any time spent on trying to diagnose why is this such a problem or why are people choosing this approach as opposed to treating the animal with respect or, you know, finding a way to deal with it better, I guess is what I'm trying to say, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. You know, recently, in some meetings that I've been involved, a big part of our conversation with the Indigenous leaders was about respectful harvesting and ensuring that that traditional knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and that our elders are being recognized for that valuable information and that they're passing it down to the younger hunters and, you know, using the tools within their community to communicate the importance of the caribou, how it is part of our traditions and our heritage and really focus on the importance of that message. And certainly that is also happening through the engagements out on the -- in the land, you know, as part of how our officers interact with hunters as well as ensuring that we're recognizing that traditional knowledge is a big

part of how we communicate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to sound silly in any way -- it's serious -- which is we're not born with a gun in our hand nor with the knowledge how to use it. It's a learnt skill, whether you'd call it that or not. You're not born with a knife in your hand. Again, similar. So when you look at caribou dressing and those types of things, can the department maybe look at holding community clinics, in other words, in regions and over the summer or in the fall, of saying this is how you do these types of things, and this is -- you know, more engagement in the sense of hands on showing people because, you know, maybe folks -- I'm not here to answer all the questions; that's your job. But I can't answer all the questions in the sense of my assumption is sometimes people just don't know what to do, and some people don't care. And it's the people we want to enforce on that don't care, but some people just don't have the skills. Is there a better way to get hands on through community clinics, engaging elders, engaging wildlife officers for a better relationship? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I agree very much with what the Member said. I think that that engagement with the communities and ensuring that, you know, those traditional practices, how to properly use a gun to hunt safely, to respect the animals, how to properly, you know, deal with the -- all of the useable parts of the animal, ensuring that that -- if you're -- as a harvester aren't using those particular components that, you know, you're sharing with other members of your communities and, you know, ensuring that that's happening. And a big part of that learning effort is also there are many programs that ECC has - Take a Family on the Land, Take a Kid Trapping. There's other different programs that support community hunts, etcetera, that are resources that the community and Indigenous governments can access to provide these opportunities across the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Colleagues, our time for oral questions is up. Mr. Clerk.



## Follow-up to Oral Questions

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 7.27, I received follow-up information for the following oral questions from the first session of the 20th Assembly:

Oral Questions 428, 432, 433, 440, 449, 453, 466, 479, 485, 513, 514, 522, 526, 540, 541, 546, 549, 562, 567, 569, 571, 575, 576, 578, 612, 658, and 659.

Mr. Speaker, these follow-ups will be printed in full in today's Hansard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 428-20(1):

#### IMPROVING ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

Mr. Rutland: Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife North on February 5, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Department of Health and Social Services, or DHSS, Business Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28 identifies actions to support the mandate commitment: Access to health care- Deliver equitable access to sustainable primary care in all NWT communities. As part of this commitment, action is being taken to develop an integrated primary and community care framework with performance measures by December 2025.

Within DHSS, a dedicated team is leading Primary Health Care Reform, or PHCR, efforts and the development of the framework with performance measures. This builds on the work of the Caring for Our People: Cultural Safety Action Plan (2018-2020). The team is comprised of a majority Indigenous staff who have been working to facilitate system transformation through co-design and collaboration across the health and social services authorities, with staff, clients and other shareholders since 2019.

In 2020, the DHSS partnered with Hotiì ts'eeda: NWT SPOR Support Unit and the Institute of Health Economics to develop a research and evaluation plan to understand if the team-based approach to PHCR in Fort Smith and Yellowknife regions was working for patients; to understand if patients experience respect for Indigenous culture when they receive care; and to conduct an economic evaluation of the Integrated Primary Care Team model in the Northwest Territories. The findings of this research are published.

As part of PHCR, standard indicators for service access and use are available including median time to the next available appointment, number of booked appointments, number of attended appointments, number of no-show appointments, number of self-cancelled appointments, which can be disaggregated by practitioner and by team. Other indicators, including chronic and communicable disease indicators such as number screened for sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections and congenital syphilis during pregnancy, and number of diabetic patients screened as per Diabetes Canada guidelines, are also available to inform our reform efforts.

In 2024-25, as part of the changes to the structure of integrated primary care teams in the Yellowknife Region, additional evaluation tools are being piloted to understand patient experience and the impact on collaborative practice, including:

1. **Patient Reported Experience/Outcome Measures:** A patient feedback survey has been developed and is being implemented in Yellowknife region and is expected to provide real-time data to inform improvement efforts. Additionally, the DHSS administers the Patient Experience Questionnaire every two to three years to better understand the quality of inpatient and outpatient care provided across the NWT health system.
2. **Queen's Collaborative Practice Assessment Tool:** This tool provides an assessment for members of collaborative practice teams within health care settings to understand strengths, limitations, and to guide improvement and education efforts.

In alignment with the mandate commitment, the performance measurement plan for PHCR will be updated to reflect best practice in measuring both process and outcomes related to team-based primary and community care to get us closer to the vision reform: A territory where Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQIPA+, enjoy optimal physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness. This will include a comprehensive and holistic approach to monitoring, evaluation and continuous quality improvement, including measures for patient experience, health system performance, health and wellness outcomes, staff well-being and team-based function, and health equity and cultural safety.

The DHSS seeks to inform the development of the framework and updated performance measures through staff engagement and consultation with professional associations, public engagement, and administration of the

Our Care, [www.ourcare.ca](http://www.ourcare.ca), survey within the territory.

The team leading this work at the DHSS continues to participate in national forums, including the Canadian Institute for Health Information and Canadian Primary Care Research Network Best Brains Exchange, tasked with developing indicators for team-based care and an evaluation framework, respectively. Additionally, members of the team also participate in a national committee with other Indigenous leaders to define indicators for cultural safety and anti-racism within health systems in a Canadian context.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 432-  
20(1):  
NAMING OF GOVERNMENT OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BUILDINGS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife Centre on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

Housing NWT will continue to have discussions and examine the naming of new and renewed buildings throughout the Northwest Territories.

Housing NWT will need to work through the appropriate Government of the Northwest Territories processes, including receiving support from the potential honoree's family, discussions with Indigenous Governments, and ensuring that Housing NWT follows the GNWT's operational guidelines for selecting names for Government of the Northwest Territories' buildings. If and when the GNWT elects to name a GNWT owned building, they will follow *Guidelines for Selecting Names for Government of the Northwest Territories Owned Office Buildings* from page 142 of the Executive Council Submission Handbook. In alignment with these guidelines, the promotion of the Northwest Territories heritage and culture will be a primary consideration. These guidelines also require a cabinet submission to seek approval to name a GNWT owned building. Cabinet will consider whether the proposed name reflects the historical, cultural, and geographic significance of the Northwest Territories. Cabinet may also approve a public engagement process to solicit naming ideas for GNWT owned buildings.

These procedures have been developed to ensure fairness and appropriateness in the naming of any building. Housing NWT will commit to bring forward a decision before the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 433-  
20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES EMPLOYMENT  
SATISFACTION SURVEY AND ACTION  
PLAN

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife North on February 5, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey, or EESS, provides the Government of the Northwest Territories with valuable insight into employee engagement levels and overall satisfaction in the workplace. Departments and agencies received individualized guides that provide in-depth analysis of the 2023 EESS results, designed to support them in interpreting their individual survey results and effectively using this information to improve employee engagement and satisfaction within their department.

Additionally, each department and agency are required to develop Human Resources Implementation Plans to set performance measures and milestones and to track progress relating to action items developed based on their specific EESS results.

I am pleased to confirm that a technical briefing to the Standing Committee of Government Operations on the 2023 EESS results is scheduled for June 10, 2025.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 440-  
20(1):  
SAHTU WINTER ROAD RESUPPLY

Further to the response provided to the Member for Sahtu on February 6, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The previous Minister of Infrastructure committed to providing the Member for Sahtu and the public advance notice on when modular classrooms would be transported on the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road to Colville Lake. Due to the restructuring of the Department of Infrastructure announced on March 31, 2025, I am now the Minister responsible for this project, and I am following up on this commitment.

The modular classrooms for Colville Lake were not able to be transported on the winter road in 2025. These three units – two that will serve as classrooms and a third that will house a washroom and mechanical room – are large and complex to move and significant permitting and planning is required.

The Alberta-based contractor responsible for supplying these modular classrooms informed the Government of the Northwest Territories on February 20, 2025 that its subcontracted hauling company, which had been working on permits for the transportation of the modular buildings, did not have the capacity to deliver them to Colville Lake during the 2025 winter road season.

The GNWT continued to have dialogue with the contractor on potential options to complete this work during the 2025 winter road season. The contractor contacted other heavy haulers, but none were able or available to arrange the necessary logistics and permits and complete the haul before the end of the winter road season. Due to the height, width and weight of these portable units, specialty equipment and significant logistical arrangements and experience are required to safely transport the portables to Colville Lake.

The GNWT recognizes the impact this delay has on students, staff and the community and we appreciate the patience being shown as we work through these challenges. The Department of Infrastructure, in partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, is currently working toward a timeline and a plan to ensure safe delivery of the modular classrooms on the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road in 2026.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 449-  
20(1):  
HOME INSURANCE COSTS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Great Slave on February 7, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

During our exchange, I committed to exploring whether best practices from other jurisdictions could help inform potential legislative changes to the *Insurance Act*.

The Department of Finance participates in several national regulatory forums, including the Canadian Council of Insurance Regulators and the General Insurance Statistical Agency, which provide opportunities to monitor developments in other jurisdictions. Learning about best practices from other jurisdictions will be an important part of the legislative review of the *Insurance Act*. I would be happy to share any relevant information that emerges from this research as the review progresses.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 453-  
20(1):  
SENSITIVITY AND COSTS RELATED TO  
FUNERAL PREPARATION

Further to the response provided to the Member for Tu Nedhé - Wiilideh on February 7, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Funeral, Burial and Cremation Program Guidelines are in place to assist with the costs of cremation, funeral and burial for deceased NWT residents who are verified of having no income or assets to pay for these services at the time of death.

Adult Services Case Managers within the Health and Social Services Authorities, or HSSAs, provide assistance to next-of-kin in accessing the funds in accordance with the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Program Guidelines, dated July 17, 2014 available online at <https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/resources/md-funeral-burial-cremation-program-guidelines.pdf>

There seems to be a gap in communication to the public as currently, most families are referred to a HSSA Case Manager by a private funeral services business, which has resulted in some challenges and concerns for next-of-kin. Families are not required to use the services of the funeral home business, and the policy does allow eligible families to be reimbursed for purchasing their own caskets locally and to provide for a more traditional or culturally appropriate burial of their family member. DHSS will consider ways to improve communication in this area and the NTHSSA has developed guidelines to support increased flexibility.

The total budget for the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Program for the Health and Social Services System, which includes all three HSSAs, is \$880,000 for 2024-25, having been increased this year to address a shortfall. \$880,000 is the budget for 2025-26 as well.

The Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Contract was awarded to the sole proponent, McKenna Funeral Services Ltd. on January 6, 2024, and is in effect until October 31, 2026, with the option of two additional one-year extensions. Further, the department intends to review the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Program policy before the next RFP process goes out to competition.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 466-  
20(1):  
AURORA COLLEGE CLOSURE OF  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES

Further to the response provided to the Member for Mackenzie Delta on February 10, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

As highlighted by Aurora College leadership during the public briefing with the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, Aurora College will reduce the number of indeterminate and term positions by a final total of 31 employees. Aurora College continues to collaborate with Human Resources to advance the Staff Retention Policy to ensure one-on-one support for all affected employees in order to increase the number of staff who may possibly be retained in the public service.

Under the *Aurora College Act*, the Board of Governors is responsible for operational decisions of the College, including proceeding with the decision to close Community Learning Centres. The legislation also provides direction to the Minister around “non-interference”, which supports the arm’s length relationship between the College and Government of the Northwest Territories.

I recognize the impact that this decision is having on potentially affected staff that support the delivery and operations of Community Learning Centres. The significant strain that this decision places on individuals, families and communities is acknowledged.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 549-  
20(1):  
ELDER ABUSE IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

Further to the response provided to the Member for Monfwi on February 26, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Seniors and Continuing Care Services Division within the Department of Health and Social Services maintains a dedicated Elder Abuse and Neglect website which offers supports and services available to residents if they are experiencing or witnessing abuse of older adults.

Webpages with general information, links and resources that can be downloaded:

Protecting Elders from Abuse and Neglect:  
[www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-neglect](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-neglect)

Getting help for Elder Abuse:  
[www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-neglect)

[elders-abuse-and-neglect/getting-help-elder-abuse](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-neglect/getting-help-elder-abuse)

This webpage identifies specific help resources, such as the Family Violence Helpline, 811, or RCMP with phone numbers and/or links to websites such as the NWT Community Counselling Program.

Further, residents can also phone the NWT Seniors’ Society Information Line for relevant information at 1-800-661-0878.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 479-  
20(1):  
MULTI-YEAR FUNDING AGREEMENT WITH  
DECHINTA CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND  
LEARNING

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife North on February 11, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The *Post-Secondary Education Act* outlines the required steps for establishing a private college in the Northwest Territories. The Act establishes the framework to recognize post-secondary education institutions in the NWT, including universities, colleges and private training institutions. It also formalizes a quality assurance system for the accreditation of certificate, diploma, degree programs, and institutions.

The establishment of a college includes the need to engage in a quality assurance process. This process includes a self-evaluation, which is to be conducted by the institution and is meant to provide the necessary information to the Quality Review Advisory Committee to assess and make a recommendation on the institution’s readiness to operate sustainably within the NWT post-secondary education system. Self-evaluation seeks details in several different areas including, but not limited to, institutional governance and administration, academic policies and support for academic freedom, appropriate financial management procedures, and human resource capacity. The Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning has been meeting with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment about this process, and is currently developing their self-evaluation.

If the prospective institution meets the requirements of the self-evaluation and receives approval, the Act then requires the development of legislation in order to be recognized as a private college. As members are aware, this begins with a legislative proposal and concludes when a Bill receives assent in the Legislative Assembly.

As the first potential private college in the NWT, the necessary self-evaluation and quality assurance process and subsequent legislative process would take considerable time. It is anticipated that this process could take up to two years, which may land outside the life of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 485-  
20(1):  
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR THE  
DEHCHO REGION

Further to the response provided to the Member for Dehcho on February 11, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

How many residents from Fort Providence, Enterprise, and Kakisa currently access community counselling services.

Data for the Community Counselling Program, or CCP, does not allow for unique identifiers, so it is not possible to identify the number of unique residents from Fort Providence, Enterprise, and Kakisa as well as Kátł'odeeche First Nation, or KFN, currently accessing CCP services. Statistics for communities within the region are also rolled up into one data set due to system capabilities, capacity, and service user confidentiality. We can report that from April 2024 to December 2024, there were 288 visits to the CCP in the Dehcho region.

We also know that residents from KFN, Enterprise, and other communities sometimes travel to Hay River and access the CCP, in which case their visit would be captured in the Hay River data. From April 2024 to December 2024 there were 654 visits to the Hay River CCP.

Because the CCP is meant to reduce access barriers, people are not required to show proof of residency to access services and do not have to advise counsellors or CCP staff where their home community is. The CCP is also still a paper-based program without the technological support to capture data more comprehensively, for example data that shows where a person received services and where that individual's home community is etc.

Do residents leave their home community to access community counselling services or is there a counsellor who travels into the Dehcho communities.

There is a counsellor based in the Dehcho region that travels to Kakisa, Enterprise, and KFN as well as other communities where counsellors are not located. Residents are also able to connect with the CCP in their region through telephone and/or virtual services.

Statistics for these virtual or distance-based services are captured regionally. Travel to access community counselling services is not covered through the GNWT Medical Travel Policy.

The Hay River CCP travelled to Enterprise twice in November 2024 to meet with Child and Family Services and Community Wellness staff as well as to attend a town council meeting to discuss the different ways they could provide support to the community recognizing the close distance between the two communities. Plans are being finalized in consultation with the community for regular visits throughout 2025 to provide more in-person support.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 513-  
20(1):  
EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIGENOUS  
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN THE PUBLIC  
SERVICE

Further to the response provided to the Member for Dehcho on February 12, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

During our exchange, I committed to providing a breakdown of Indigenous employees hired through the Career Gateway Program, or ICGP, in the Dehcho region, confirm the availability of data tracking their career progression, and to provide an update on the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework, or IRRF.

In response to the question regarding the number of employees hired through the ICGP in the 2024-25 fiscal year the Department of Finance can confirm that there were eight new hires with five carried over that were also funded during the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Additionally, the Department of Finance can confirm that over the lifespan of the ICGP there have been 81 hires that have reached conclusion since the launch of the program. Of the 81 ICGP concluded hires, 41 hires, or 50.6 per cent are still active with the GNWT as of March 31, 2025. Of the 41 active employees, 38 or 92.7 per cent are indeterminate.

The Report on the Indigenous Employment Plans Results 2023-2024 will be tabled during the May 2025 Sitting of the Legislative Assembly. The Report provides a high-level overview of the results of all departments within the Government of the Northwest Territories with respect to their Indigenous Employment Plans goals, as well as provides an update on the action items and deliverables within the Indigenous Recruitment Retention Framework and Action Plan. The Report can be found on the Department of Finance website at

<https://www.fin.gov.nt.ca/en/services/diversity-and-inclusion/indigenous-recruitment-and-retention-framework> once it is tabled.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 514-20(1):

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN OF CARE AGREEMENTS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife North on February 13, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child

The importance of embedding United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC, within child and family services has long been recognized through its legislation, standards and training.

Section 2 of the Northwest Territories' *Child and Family Services Act*, or CFSA outlines the 14 principles to follow in the administration and interpretation of the Act. These principles align with articles in the UNCRC, and specifically includes "consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child."

Article 3 of the UNCRC states that the "best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration." The "best interest of the child" clause is embedded in the NWT CFSA and *Federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*. Section 3 of the CFSA outlines the factors to consider for the "Best Interest of the Child," which align with the applicable articles within the UNCRC. Article 12 "Children's Right to be Heard" is embedded in legislation, standards and training, requiring the views of children/youth be incorporated throughout various agreements and court processes. Applicable sections within CFSA include Section 3(i); 3.1; 5(2)a; 12.3(1)b; 14(1)a; 14(2); 15(2)b; 18(1); 19(5); 25(1)d; 27(2)a(v); 28(5.1); 31(7); 34(1)d; 49(1); and 84(2).

**Neglect**

The term "maltreatment" is an overarching term that covers both "abuse" and "neglect." Based on the NWT CFSA (Section 7(3)), harm to a child/youth is categorized into five main areas: Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Sexual abuse, Exposure to family violence, and Neglect.

The Structured Decision Making, or SDM, Policy and Procedures Manual defines neglect as "the lack of action by a parent/caregiver in providing for the adequate care and attention of the child's needs, resulting in harm or substantial risk of harm to the child." The

Manual also provides definitions of subcategories of neglect found on pages 16 to 21, and assessment tools. Prior to receiving their appointment, Child Protection Workers are trained in the SDM® Manual assessment tools to support their decision making if a report meets the threshold to investigate and/or substantiate a report of abuse and/or neglect. The SDM® Manual and Statutory Child Protection Worker Core Training distinguishes that neglect is different than a parent/care provider/caregiver of the child/youth being unable to provide basic needs due to socio-economic conditions, such as poverty or lack of adequate housing. The SDM Policy and Procedures Manual will be tabled.

To align with the SDM® Manual and national best practices, the Child and Family Services Act Proposed Amendments Discussion Paper published in April 2022 proposes new amendments to assist in the distinction within Child and Family Services to assess child/youth protection concerns due to neglect versus the inability of a family to meet the basic needs of a child/youth due to socio-economic conditions.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 522-20(1):

FUNDING OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Range Lake on February 25, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is conducting a review of two distinct funding programs: the Anti-Poverty Fund and the Non-Governmental Organizations, or NGO, Stabilization Fund.

The Anti-Poverty Fund supports initiatives across the Northwest Territories that demonstrate tangible efforts to reduce poverty. Recognizing the vital role NGOs play in delivering essential services aligned with Government of the Northwest Territories', or GNWT, policy objectives, the NGO Stabilization Fund was established to help stabilize or strengthen the capacity of NGOs that provide critical GNWT-funded programs and services to Northwest Territories residents, including, but not limited to, those related to homelessness, addiction support, and shelters for individuals and families.

As part of this program review, engagement with stakeholders is scheduled to take place between now and the end of June 2025. Engagement will be an integral part of the program review process to determine how both funds align effectively with broader service

integration goals and mandate commitments of the GNWT. Indigenous governments and NGOs, including the Northwest Territories Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal, or SPCA, will be contacted directly to provide their input.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 526-  
20(1):  
ENFORCEMENT OF DOG ACT

Further to the response provided to the Member for Range Lake on February 25 regarding enforcement of the *Dog Act*, the following additional information is provided:

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs fields questions from community government staff, such as Senior Administrative Officer, Bylaw Officer and/or Dog Officer, if there is a situation where bylaw officers are unsure of their authorities under the *Dog Act*. There is no official training course for officers with authorities to enforce the *Dog Act*; however, there are references in the Bylaw Officer course offered by MACA that provide guidance to a bylaw officer on actions that may be taken under the *Dog Act* related to incidents involving a dog.

The *Dog Act* has several provisions to support bylaw officers in addressing dogs in distress, running at large or abandoned dogs. Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and bylaw officers appointed under the *Charter Communities Act*, the *Hamlets Act*, the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*, and the *Tłıchǫ Community Government Act* are officers under the *Dog Act* by virtue of their office.

The *Dog Act* provides that an officer has the ability to relieve the distress, as defined in the Act, of a dog. An officer, in certain circumstances, has the authority to take any action he or she considers necessary to locate a dog and relieve its distress, which includes the authority to arrange for the necessary transportation, food, water, shelter and veterinary care.

For this purpose, an officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a dog is in distress in any place, premises or vehicle may obtain a warrant to enter that place, premises or vehicle for the purpose of relieving the distress of a dog. An officer may also take any action to enter a place, other than a dwelling-house, to relieve a dog's distress if the conditions to obtain a warrant exist but, by reason of exigent

circumstances, it would not be practical to obtain a warrant.

The *Dog Act* provides for the ability to deal with dogs that are abandoned. If the conditions for an abandoned dog are met, then an officer is able to take the dog into custody and may act as a caretaker or may deliver the dog to a caretaker.

There are several other enforcement mechanisms set out in the *Dog Act* that allow officers, in certain circumstances, to take actions such as taking custody of dogs running at large or, if unable to capture them, to destroy the dog; to sell or gift a dog to any person if unable to locate an owner or to destroy the dog if the officer is unable to sell or give it away; to inspect any place or premises other than a dwelling-house where dogs are kept for sale, hire or exhibition and to stop vehicles for the purpose of this inspection; to make a complaint on oath before a justice of the peace that a dog while running at large has pursued, attacked, injured, damaged, killed or destroyed a person, another tethered dog, a food cache, or certain other animals for the purpose of seeking an order for the destruction of the dog.

In addition, officers may lay charges against any person who contravenes a provision of the *Dog Act* for which, if prosecuted and convicted, punishment may include fines, imprisonment, destruction of a dog for humane reasons or protection of the public, and/or an order restraining the owner from having or continuing to have dogs for such a period of time as specified by the court.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 540-  
20(1):  
HEALTHCARE COVERAGE FOR  
TERRITORIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM  
PARTICIPANTS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Great Slave on February 26, 2025, the following additional information is provided, which is intended to provide guidance for new applicants for healthcare coverage as participants in the Territorial Nominee Program and those who require renewals:

**For new applications** the process is as follows:

New applicants must complete the Application for Health Care, provide their "Legal Right to Be in Canada" document for each person applying, such as a Work Permit, Study Permit, front and back of a Permanent Residency Card, Canadian birth certificate or Passport,

Canadian Citizenship Certificate, and two Proof of Residency documents.

A Work Permit or Study Permit must be for a period of 12 months or longer and the location must be Open or for a location, employer or school in the NWT.

Convention Refugees are eligible for NWT health care and must provide whatever Immigration documents they have as well as the Application for Health Care and two proof of residency documents.

Refugee Claimants are not eligible for NWT health care as they have coverage through the Interim Federal Health Program, or IFHP. If they receive a 'Notice of Decision' confirming they have been deemed a Protected Person or Convention Refugee, they may be eligible for NWT health care and may apply. They are provided with 90 days of IFHP coverage once a Notice of Decision is received. If they are eligible for NWT health care, it will begin after the 90 days.

For those who wish to renew their coverage the process is as follows:

Visa clients who have been registered with NWT health care will receive a health care card with the same expiry date as their Work Permit, Study Permit or Visitor Record. Please note Visitor Records are only accepted for minors whose parents have valid Work Permits or Study Permits.

Individuals with a Permanent Residency or PR card will have their health care card expire on their birthday every three years.

Prior to their health care card expiring, they must submit a Health Care Card Renewal form with a copy of their new Immigration document, such as a Work Permit, Study Permit, front and back of a PR Card or Confirmation of Permanent Residency document.

If they do not have their new Immigration documents prior to the expiry date, they may request an extension. They must complete a Health Care Card Renewal Form and provide a copy of the letter from Immigration Canada confirming their application has been received as well as a brief explanation that they are still waiting for their new documents. The application will be reviewed, and a 90-day extension may be granted. If the applicant still has not received their new documents after the 90 days, another 90-day extension may be granted; another Health Care Card Renewal form and copy of their letter will need to be provided.

I trust this information will be helpful and recommend that all applicants be proactive with applications to ensure continuity of coverage.

#### FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 541-20(1):

##### FUNDING FOR INCREASED COSTS FOR YELLOWKNIFE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Further to the response provided to the Member for Range Lake on February 26, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

I committed to working with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, or MACA, to identify federal funding opportunities, and to keep the mayor of Yellowknife apprised of these efforts.

MACA distributes all of its budget for community infrastructure directly to community governments and does not have an extraordinary funding budget.

MACA is aware that the City of Yellowknife has been approved for \$26 million under the Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada has another program currently open for applications, the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund, or CHIF. This program has a budget of up to \$1 billion over eight years for municipalities and Indigenous communities to address pressing infrastructure needs and enable more housing. CHIF will fund either capital or planning projects aimed at building new, or expanding or rehabilitating existing, drinking water, wastewater, stormwater or solid waste infrastructure to enable more housing. Information on this program is available on the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund website <https://housinginfrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/chif-fcil/index-eng.html>

#### FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 546-20(1):

##### DRIVER'S LICENCE EXTENSIONS FOR TERRITORIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Great Slave on February 26, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

I committed to coordinating with my colleagues to work to minimize delays in driver's licenses extensions required by participants in the Territorial Nominee program whose work visas are expiring.

All NWT driver's license holders may receive a one-time extension of 90 days from the date of expiration of a driver's licence. This provision includes participants in the Territorial Nominee



Program with expired work visas. In addition, there are many ways the Department of Infrastructure assists clients with immigration concerns who hold expired driver's licences.

If a client presents a letter from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, confirming their permanent residence application is complete and they are now a permanent resident, their licence may be extended by one year from the issue date on the letter.

If a client provides an IRCC letter confirming receipt of their application, their licence may be extended until the date indicated on the letter, which may be beyond the 90 days. This letter must indicate the work permit number, the date to which they are authorized to work, and must be attached to their work permit.

If a client has a Confirmation of Permanent Residence document or a physical Permanent Residence card, they are eligible for a 1-, 3-, or 5-year renewal of their driver's licence.

If a client presents an updated work permit, study permit, or visitor record, their license may be renewed until the expiry date on these documents, provided the request is made more than 90 days before the document's expiry.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 549-  
20(1):  
ELDER ABUSE IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

Further to the response provided to the Member for Monfwi on February 26, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Seniors and Continuing Care Services Division within the Department of Health and Social Services maintains a dedicated Elder Abuse and Neglect website which offers supports and services available to residents if they are experiencing or witnessing abuse of older adults.

Webpages with general information, links and resources that can be downloaded:

Protecting Elders from Abuse and Neglect:  
[www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-neglect](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-neglect)

Getting help for Elder Abuse:  
[www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-and-neglect/getting-help-elder-abuse](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/protecting-elders-abuse-and-neglect/getting-help-elder-abuse)

This webpage identifies specific help resources, such as the Family Violence

Helpline, 811, or RCMP with phone numbers and/or links to websites such as the NWT Community Counselling Program.

Further, residents can also phone the NWT Seniors' Society Information Line for relevant information at 1-800-661-0878.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 562-  
20(1):  
INUVIK AIRPORT SECURITY SCREENING  
AREA

Further to the response provided to the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake on February 28, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

I committed to providing an update to the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake on whether security and screening capability was considered in the design of the Inuvik Airport Terminal Building project. I also committed to reviewing the project to ensure this feature was included in the design of the building.

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, or CATSA, a Crown corporation, is responsible for security screening of passengers and baggage at designated airports in Canada. The Government of the Northwest Territories GNWT is not aware of any plans by CATSA to expand service locations in the Northwest Territories at this time. Any decision to expand the service outside the current 89 locations would need to be negotiated between CATSA, the GNWT and the airline seeking to provide a new service.

It was important during the design phase of the Inuvik Airport Terminal Building project to allow for a flexible design to assist in facilitating any expansion to the facility. I can confirm that if CATSA were to offer security screening for passengers and baggage at this airport in the future, the current hold room at the terminal building would be converted to security screening and a new hold room would be built beside this space via a facility expansion.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 567-  
20(1):  
YELLOWKNIFE EMERGENCY SHELTER  
FOR HOMELESS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife North on February 28, 2025, regarding information about the available shelters in Yellowknife for those experiencing homelessness, I offer the following information:

I will table a document that provides a listing of emergency shelters in Yellowknife that offer

support and services to individuals experiencing temporary or chronic homelessness. This resource will also be shared with community partners, including Non-Government Organizations, or NGOs, local businesses, the City of Yellowknife, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs continues to collaborate with the business community, the City of Yellowknife, and NGOs through the Yellowknife Community Partnership Forum. At the Forum's meeting on May 6, members collectively identified several concrete actions, including the need to share information about shelter operations.

Since the closure of the On-the-Land Camp in January, Executive and Indigenous Affairs has been closely monitoring shelter utilization. Between January 17 and April 27, 2025, shelters reached full capacity on only seven nights. The average occupancy rate during that time was 87%. While this data suggests shelter space has generally been available, we recognize the need to enhance our data collection and analysis to better understand fluctuations in demand. This will help us plan more effectively, allocate resources wisely, and provide more targeted support to those in need.

Our Integrated Service Delivery team in Yellowknife has been working closely with emergency shelter providers to better understand the needs of shelter users. The team has also been engaging with individuals sleeping rough or in tents throughout the city. Contrary to common assumptions, many of these individuals are aware of available resources and have options for places to stay. Their reasons for choosing to sleep outside vary and may include personal relationships, safety concerns, sobriety requirements, shelter rules, and a desire for autonomy.

Executive and Indigenous Affairs continues to work with partners to address these barriers and remains committed to engaging with individuals to explore potential solutions.

I want to thank the Member for suggesting the development of this resource. I hope it proves to be informative and helpful.

#### FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 569- 20(1):

##### EXTENDED HEALTHCARE BENEFITS FOR SENIORS' PRESCRIPTION GLASSES

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife Centre on February 28, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

Under the Extended Health Benefits Policy, vision care benefits are available for eligible seniors, 60 years of age and older, in accordance with the terms and rates established in the NIHB Vision Care Fee Grid NWT (December 13, 2024):

Maximum eligible amount for standard coverage is up to \$300.00.

Maximum eligible amount for high index coverage is up to \$440.00.

There is some additional coverage for specialized needs that requires prior approval and is also outlined in the NIHB Vision Care Fee Grid NWT.

If the cost of the eyeglasses is greater than the maximum eligible amount, the client is reimbursed only to the maximum eligible amount.

Both in the application for EHB and the Alberta Blue Cross Claims form, it indicates that eligible EHB seniors must first use any other health-related insurance plan they have access to before making a claim under EHB. The EHB Seniors Benefit Application and the Alberta Blue Cross Health Services Claim set the criteria for EHB as the payer of last resort.

In a situation where the eligible senior has coverage through another health benefit plan such as a private insurance plan, the senior must use the other health benefit plan first before making a claim for benefits under the Extended Health Benefit Policy. For example, if a senior has coverage from another plan for \$250 every two years, the senior will submit a claim for \$250 to their private plan and then submit a claim for \$50, or \$190 for high index coverage, to Alberta Blue Cross for the remainder of the full maximum eligible amount.

#### FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 571- 20(1): ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE PROGRAM FUNDING

Further to the response provided to the Member for Great Slave on March 3, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Minister committed to following up on the outcomes of an initiative supporting energy efficiency in Norman Wells, highlighting energy-saving measures implemented by Arctic Energy Alliance, or AEA, and sharing insights that could benefit other communities. The response below is provided to fulfill this commitment.

Beyond its core programs in 2024-25, AEA supported Norman Wells through initiatives such as the Winterization Walk-Throughs and the Firewood Access project.

The Winterization Walk-Throughs involved AEA staff visiting low-income households in Norman Wells and Yellowknife to assess homes for energy efficiency improvements and assist households with the installation of energy saving measures such as insulating window plastic and weatherstripping for doors.

The Firewood Access project delivered two iterations of a three-day course for participants in the Sahtu region, with certified chainsaw safety instructors providing training and certification in safe wood-harvesting techniques. The course also included a component on how to start a small local wood-harvesting business.

In recent years, AEA has partnered with Indigenous governments to deliver similar programs in two or three communities annually; these are intended to continue and improve in the future.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 575-  
20(1):  
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY CONDITIONS

Further to the response provided to the Member for Mackenzie Delta on March 3, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The previous Minister of Infrastructure committed to providing the Member for Mackenzie Delta information regarding signage placement near Rengleng River. I was named Minister of Infrastructure on March 31, 2025 and I am following up on the commitment made by my colleague.

The department has taken steps to address concerns regarding signage placement near Rengleng River to improve safety for all road users. While slow signs have always been in place on both sides of the river, additional 50 km/h maximum speed signs were installed on March 4, 2025. These new signs are positioned farther back to provide drivers, particularly trucks, with more advance warning to slow down before reaching the area.

Regarding inspections of the Dempster Highway, the Department continues to conduct daily highway inspections from the Yukon/NWT border to Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik during ice road season. These inspections are carried out by GNWT highway technicians and local contractors. Any significant changes in road conditions are communicated to the public through mass emails to local contractors and

updates on DriveNWT.ca. This platform is updated at least weekly under normal conditions. Significant changes in road conditions are reflected as needed, including hourly or daily updates as required.

The department acknowledges there have been vacancies in staffing, including a Highway Project Officer in Inuvik and a Highway Technician in Fort McPherson. While the Department continues to make progress in ensuring these positions are filled, during periods of staffing shortages, contractor assistance is utilized to ensure continued road inspections and updates.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 576-  
20(1):  
DELIVERY OF NEW HOUSING UNITS TO  
FORT RESOLUTION

Further to the response provided to the Member for Tu Nedhé-Wiilideh on Monday, March 03, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

Housing NWT's residential assets, larger than a duplex, are covered by the Government of the Northwest Territories Property Insurance Policy. While not insured, Housing NWT was able to accommodate the replacement of the public housing duplex that was lost due to the fire within its existing capital budget.

In addition to replacing this public housing duplex, Housing NWT has also delivered eight additional new public housing units for Fort Resolution as part of the 100 new public housing unit initiative committed to during the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

As for the market housing duplex lost in the fire, with no demonstrated need at the time from the market housing waitlist, this duplex was not replaced. In addition, Housing NWT is currently evaluating its approach to the provision of market housing, aiming to promote additional market housing investment by Indigenous Governments and the private sector.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 578-  
20(1):  
DRUG RELATED ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC  
HOUSING UNITS

With regards to illegal activities in your communities, it was a pleasure having an opportunity to meet with you on March 10, 2025, to discuss these matters in more detail.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 612-  
20(1):  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF LINE  
490 REPLACEMENT PROJECT IN NORMAN  
WELLS

Further to the response provided to the Member for the Sahtu on March 6, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

Officials from the Department of Environment and Climate Change met with the Executive Director of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, or Review Board, on April 18, 2025, regarding the scope of the Line 490 Replacement Project Environmental Assessment process versus the on-going Environmental Assessment for the Norman Wells Operations. I will table a Note to File regarding this meeting prepared by the Review Board which has been filed on the Review Board's public registry.

As of May 7, 2025, the Line 490 environmental assessment has been adjourned, at the request of the developer, Imperial Oil. The GNWT will continue to participate actively in environmental assessment proceedings related to Imperial Oil's Norman Wells Operations.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 658-  
20(1):  
YELLOWKNIFE DRINKING WATER  
PIPELINE REPLACEMENT

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife Centre on March 13, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Minister committed to getting more information on correspondence between the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the City of Yellowknife regarding a new water pipeline.

To provide a bit of background, the project to replace the water line is funded through the Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, or DMAF, up to a maximum of \$25,862,218. The City was approved for this funding in 2020 based on cost estimates from 2017. Updated cost estimates are now significantly higher. Additionally, progress on the Giant Mine Remediation Project has made other options more viable. Due to these factors the City has completed a study to review four options to replace the water intake line. One option that the City is considering is switching to Yellowknife Bay as the primary water source which is more economically feasible than the original option. DMAF funding has been

extended for the project and will be utilized for whichever options the City selects.

MACA staff have regular discussions with City staff and have discussed Federal Funding programs that may be applicable; however, the City has not requested direct support regarding the waterline project. MACA continues to work with the City to support them in maximizing all funding sources for their capital infrastructure as per City priorities. MACA will continue to advocate with the federal government for additional funding to support development and replacement of critical municipal infrastructure.

FOLLOW-UP TO ORAL QUESTION 659-  
20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER  
CORPORATION DISTRIBUTION IN HAY  
RIVER

Further to the response provided to the Member for Yellowknife Centre on March 13, 2025, the following additional information is provided:

The Member inquired if there was specific debt issued or if cash reserves were used to acquire the Hay River franchise assets.

The Hay River Franchise purchase was included in Northwest Territories Power Corporation's, or NTPC's 2024-25 Capital Plan and included in the NT Hydro/NTPC 2024-25 Corporate Plan. NTPC finances all capital expenditures through a combination of debt and internally generated cash flow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

### Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-20(1):  
OPERATING ROOMS AT STANTON  
TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to written question asked by the Member for Range Lake on March 6th, 2025, regarding the productivity of operating rooms at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a document titled Operating Room Activities for Stanton Territorial Hospital.

The Member asked for the total number of scheduled surgeries and day procedures completed in 2024, broken down per month. There were a total of 2,053 surgeries completed at Stanton Territorial Hospital in 2024. The monthly breakdown of Operating Room activity

is presented in Table 1 of the tabled document, which is titled Scheduled Surgeries and Day Procedures Completed in 2024.

The Member asked for the total hours worked by all surgical teams for the year 2024. A full time Operating Room Registered Nurse will work 1,950 hours per year. Each service is provided with an allocation of Operating Room days per week. For example, the types of surgeries are scheduled as follows:

- Orthopedics surgeries are scheduled on Monday and Wednesday;
- General surgeries are scheduled on Monday and Wednesday;
- Gynecology surgeries are scheduled on Tuesday and Friday;
- Ophthalmology surgeries are scheduled on Thursday;
- Ears, Nose and Throat surgeries are scheduled on Wednesday and Friday; and
- Urology surgeries are scheduled once per month on Tuesday and Wednesdays.

The Member asked for the number of surgeries and day procedures cancelled over the same period. In 2024, there were a total of 561 surgery cancellations. There are a variety of reasons for these cancellations. 210 were patient generated cancellations, 85 were cancelled by the Surgeon, and there were 81 no shows. In the tabled document, a summary of these reasons is given as well as a break down by month, in Table 2 titled Summary of Rationale for Surgery Cancellations, for 2024.

The Member asked for a full cost accounting of all scheduled surgeries and day procedures completed in 2024. The 2024-25 fiscal year revised operating budget for the operating room is \$5,910,000. The 2024-25 revised operating budget for Day Procedures is \$3,014,000. Expenses for the year are not due to be finalized until the end of June 2025.

The 2023-24 total expenditures for both Operating Room and Day Procedures was \$7,877,643.

The Member asked for the average completed surgeries and day procedures vs. cancelled surgeries and day procedures over a 5-year period.

The breakdown of completed surgeries at Stanton Territorial Hospital for the previous five years is as follows:

- 607 surgeries completed from January 1 to April 31, 2025;
- 2,053 surgeries completed in 2024;
- 1,589 surgeries completed in 2023;
- 1,447 surgeries completed in 2022;
- 852 surgeries completed between July 1 and December 31, 2021; and there is no data available from January 1 to June 30, 2021.

\*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic response and measures, there were fewer surgeries performed in 2021. There is no electronic data available prior to July 1, 2021.

Further, the total number of surgery cancellations at Stanton Territorial Hospital for the previous five years is as follows:

- 138 surgeries were cancelled from January 1 to April 31, 2025;
- 561 surgeries were cancelled in 2024;
- 507 surgeries were cancelled in 2023;
- 392 surgeries were cancelled in 2022; and
- 480 surgeries were cancelled in 2021; and there is no data available from January 1 to June 30, 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic response and measures, there were more surgery cancellations in 2021. There is no electronic data available prior to July 1, 2021.

As indicated in Table 2: Summary of Rationale for Surgery Cancellations, for 2024, of the tabled document, there are a variety of reasons for cancellations that are often beyond Stanton Territorial Hospital's control. Additionally, when cancellations occur, there is very little lost Operating Room time as same day surgical procedures are often scheduled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 15-20(1): TITLE TRANSFER ISSUES IN THE TLICHO REGION

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by the Member from Monfwi on March 3rd, 2025, regarding title transfer issues in the Tlicho region.

**The Member asked how many properties in the Northwest Territories are currently registered in the name of deceased individuals.**

Unfortunately, the Government of the Northwest Territories does not have the number of properties in the Northwest Territories whose registered owners are deceased individuals.

The land registry system used in the Northwest Territories and elsewhere in Canada is a Torrens system which registers interests and characteristics in land, and not who owns land. The Land Titles Office has no data on the named registered owners of land nor does the Land Titles Office enforce the use of legal names that appear on the records of Vital Statistics.

A separation between the NWT Vital Statistics Office under the Department of Health and Social Services, and Legal Registries under the Department of Justice prevents the Land Titles Office from accessing or cross-referencing information like death records that are not collected or intended for a particular purpose.

The Member also asked what specific legal steps are required to transfer ownership from a deceased titleholder to the rightful heirs under the current land title system.

The legal steps required to transfer ownership from a deceased titleholder to their rightful heirs in the Northwest Territories depend on several factors, including the type of interest in the land, how the ownership was structured, and the specifics of the deceased's estate. However, the two most common scenarios are transfer through estate administration, and transfer through survivorship.

Transfer through estate administration, for tenancy in common or sole ownership, begins with the administration of the deceased's estate; a personal representative, specifically an executor or administrator, is appointed by the court. The Court formally grants the personal representative the authority to manage the estate's assets, including real estate property. Once appointed, the personal representative is responsible for ensuring that all debts of the estate are paid prior to distribution of assets. This would include, among other things, taxes owing on the land, arrears in lease payments if applicable and any mortgages on the property, including amounts owed to Housing Northwest Territories. The debts need to be settled prior to the transfer of land. In some cases, land must be sold to pay off debts and if there are funds left, they can then be distributed. The personal representative must file a Transmission Application with the NWT Land Titles Office. The Application provides proof of the personal representative's authority. After the transmission is registered, the personal

representative must identify the rightful heirs and then transfer the land to them. This is formalized by filing a Transfer of Land with the Land Titles Office.

Transfer through survivorship occurs if the deceased held the property in joint tenancy with another person. The surviving joint tenant automatically inherits the deceased's share. The surviving joint tenant must file an Application of Surviving Joint Tenant with the Land Titles Office. The Application must be accompanied by proof of the deceased's death, such as a death certificate. Many applicants follow this process without legal assistance as it does not require administration of the estate. Upon successful application, the Land Titles Office will register the surviving joint tenant as the sole owner of the property. The sole owner is responsible for any outstanding mortgage and/or debts.

It is strongly recommended that individuals who may have an interest in a deceased person's estate to seek legal advice from a lawyer specializing in estate administration and real estate law in the Northwest Territories. They can provide guidance tailored to the specific circumstances of each case. The Land Titles Office can provide further information but is prohibited from giving legal advice to members of the public.

**The Member asked how the Department of Justice facilitates the identification of rightful heirs, and what actions must be taken to resolve any title issues including any specific declarations that must be made to the Land Titles Office.**

The Department of Justice's role in identifying rightful heirs is primarily through the Public Trustee's Office and is limited in scope. The public trustee generally accepts administration of estates only when the only beneficiaries are children, the beneficiary is a spouse and over the age of 65, the beneficiary is mentally incapable, or there are significant assets and no next of kin can be found. If the estate or individuals have assets or funds that exceed any prescribed amounts for the public trustee, these issues are considered private property matters. The determination of heirs, resolution of title disputes for most estates, and real estate transactions are also considered private legal issues. The Department of Justice is not implicated as it does not provide private legal services to members of the public.

Dealing with a deceased person's estate is a very common legal issue. It is strongly recommended that individuals plan how they wish their estate to be dealt with while still alive.

Estate administration can cause pain, costs, and other burdens being left for loved ones, which can be avoided or mitigated with good estate planning.

Individuals facing land title issues or the need to identify heirs should seek legal counsel. A lawyer specializing in estate administration and real estate law can conduct thorough investigations to identify heirs, navigate the legal process of transferring property ownership, represent individuals in court proceedings if necessary, and prepare and file the required legal documents including applications and declarations.

**Lastly, the Member asked about properties in the Tlicho Region that have not been surveyed or registered with the Land Titles Office. Specifically, they asked about what legal process exists for establishing ownership and what steps must a resident take to begin the land survey and title registration process under current Northwest Territories laws.**

- There are 1,411 parcels of land within the constituency of Monfwi. Of these 1,411 parcels:
- There are 17 parcels held in fee simple with the registered owner being the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (meaning the Government of Northwest Territories).
- There are 32 parcels held in fee simple with the registered owner being individuals.
- There are 877 parcels held in fee simple with the registered owner being Indigenous governments.
- 435 parcels have an active leasehold title associated with the fee simple interest.
- 485 parcels are untitled and would require a title to be raised by the proper authority.

Parcels can have different structures and overlapping title and may be included in more than one type. For an individual to acquire ownership of land that has not been previously surveyed or registered, this will typically start with a Crown Grant, notification, or a notice to issue title which is accompanied by a legal survey of the parcel of land. Within the Tlicho region, this process is likely conducted by the Tlicho Government under the Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement. The Tlicho Government may have

its own internal process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 16-20(1): ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITIES

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question number 16-20(1) asked by the Member for Frame Lake on March 13th, 2025, regarding environmental liabilities, inventory, and securities held by the Government of the Northwest Territories

The GNWT follows Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards issued by the Public Sector Accounting Standards Board. One of the standards issued covers how to account for contaminated sites.

On an annual basis, the GNWT's inventory of contaminated sites is updated each year in accordance with the accounting standards. The liability amount for the fiscal year end is determined based on that listing and cost estimate at March 31. The liability goes up when new sites are added or cost estimates increase, the liability goes down when sites are either removed from the list and/or sites are remediated.

The GNWT publishes through an online searchable database the contaminated sites as reported in the public accounts as at March 31 of each year end.

The public accounts publish the environmental liability information and the amounts at an aggregated level and does not disclose site specific amounts as this could interfere with future procurement processes to remediate these sites. Of the inventory of projects, historically some may have had leases, land use permits or water licenses. Of the list of contaminated sites at March 31, 2024, only one site had permits with a reclamation security required. The total security held for that site was \$2.9 million.

Later today I will table a supporting document with more details to supplement this response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. 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. Member from Frame Lake.

## Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

### BILL 17: MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

**MR. MORSE:** Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 17, Municipal and Community Affairs Statutes Amendment Act.

Bill 17 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on February 10th, 2025 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. The standing committee completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs on April 22nd, 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 17, Municipal and Community Affairs Statutes Amendment Act is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### BILL 18: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PARTNERSHIP AND BUSINESS NAMES ACT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Partnership and Business Names Act.

Bill 18 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on February 10th, 2025 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. The standing committee completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister of Justice on April 22nd, 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Partnership and Business Names Act, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Member from Range Lake.

## Reports of Standing and Special Committees

### COMMITTEE REPORT 22-20(1): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2023- 2024 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Public Accounts and commends it to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, from January to April 2025, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (committee) publicly reviewed the 2023-2024 Public Accounts. The public accounts are financial statements that show the financial results of the Government of the Northwest Territories for a fiscal year. The fiscal year of the GNWT is April 1st of one year to March 31st of the next calendar year.

Committee recognizes that new public accounting standards will be implemented on April 1st, 2026, affecting the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Committee has therefore not recommended changes to the GNWT accounting practices at this time as committee appreciates that the adoption of the new standards will be comprehensive and take time to implement which will impact some government reporting entities or GRE.

Committee wants to acknowledge the efforts made by staff in the Office of the Comptroller General and the Office of the Auditor General in preparing the 2023-2024 Public Accounts. This report notes new recommendations that committee believes have merit and deserve consideration from the government.

The public accounts are financial statements that show the financial results of the GNWT for a given year. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts was appointed by Order of the Legislative Assembly in February 2024 to review and provide follow-up reporting on the public accounts. These reviews assess the credibility of the government's financial position and provide accountability for the government's financial results. Committee examines whether public money was spent prudently and as the Legislative Assembly originally intended.

The 2023-2024 Public Accounts were released by the Minister of Finance in November 2024 and tabled in the Legislative Assembly in February 2025. These are the second set of public accounts that committee has reviewed during the 20th Assembly. On January 28, 2025, committee held a public meeting for its review of the public accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, which included staff from the GNWT's Office of the Comptroller General (OCG) and the Auditor General and Financial Audit Team from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG).

Following its January hearing, committee invited staff from the Department of



Environment and Climate Change (ECC), the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), and the OCG to a public meeting held on April 3rd, 2025, to answer further questions about environmental liabilities and local capacity. This April meeting helped committee finalize its review of the 2023-2024 Public Accounts. Committee has identified recommendations in these key areas as well as with respect to the transparency of heritage Fund and public-private-partnerships, or P3 reporting.

Committee appreciates the collaboration of the Auditor General and OAG, representatives from GNWT departments who attended public meetings and responded to committee requests for information, and particularly the Comptroller General for helping to ensure a timely and comprehensive review of the public accounts from January to April 2025.

## **BACKGROUND**

The public accounts are required to be prepared annually by the government in accordance with the Northwest Territories Act and regulations of the Financial Administration Act and regulations. Section 35 of the FAA specifies that the public accounts must be prepared by the Comptroller General and approved by the Minister of Finance. The FAA requires the public accounts to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly then refers the public accounts to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to review and report back in accordance with the Northwest Territories Act.

The financial statements are audited by the OAG each year. The Auditor General gives an audit opinion on whether the public accounts are in accordance with the PSA standards and relevant Acts.

The Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis, or (FSDA), included with the Consolidated Financial Statements (discussed below) is a standard reporting practice that includes a summary of the results from the fiscal year. These notes are not audited but are reviewed by the OAG. The financial health of the government is measured by three indicators: sustainability, flexibility, and vulnerability. The FSDA also provides (i) an overview of the territorial debt and the NWT economy in comparison to other provinces and territories, (ii) financial trends, and (iii) reporting on the GNWT's fiscal responsibility policy.

The public accounts currently have four sections:

## **Section I. Consolidated Financial Statements and Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis**

The Consolidated Financial Statements must include all government-controlled organizations (all GNWT departments, revolving funds, public agencies, and other entities that make up the Government Reporting Entity, or GRE. The result is an overview of all financial activities under the control of the government. These statements show (i) the cost of providing programs and services, (ii) cost of financing debt, (iii) annual surplus or deficit, (iv) consolidated budget, (v) revenues received in the year, and (vi) assets and liabilities of the government

## **Section II. Non-Consolidated Financial Statements**

The Non-Consolidated Financial Statements only include information relating to GNWT departments. These statements relate to the information that has been approved by the Legislative Assembly in the main estimates process. Section II gives detailed supplemental schedules that provide additional information when assessing the activities of the GNWT department over the fiscal year.

## **Section III and IV. Boards and Other Consolidated Entities**

Sections III and IV include information for all education bodies, health boards, public agencies, and other related entities which are considered part of the GRE. Audited financial statements of each entity are to be completed within 90 days of the entities' year end.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Environmental Liability Reporting**

During both the January and April public meetings, committee asked many questions about Environmental Liabilities and liabilities for sewage lagoons and solid waste sites. Committee sought further information about how the GNWT determined, reviewed, updated, and prioritized the list of environmentally contaminated sites — which stood at 231 at the end of fiscal year 2024. These questions and the rate at which sites are remediated inform the relationship between the Actuals reported in the public accounts and the appropriations in the main estimates and Supplementary Estimates, given that the Department of Finance allocates \$2 million each year to remediation efforts. Committee has requested a table from the Department of ECC listing the specific information that is known about individual sites, whether they have already been remediated or approved for

remediation and appropriated. Committee also discussed whether it would be beneficial to include more information about Environmental Liabilities in the public accounts as appropriations and actuals frequently differ. The following recommendation aligns with committee's view that the public accounts can be a helpful tool for MLAs when they are reviewing the main estimates.

**Recommendation 1** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts therefore recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories Office of the Comptroller General add information in the public accounts indicating how long an environmental liability has been on the books with a corresponding summary of the known information about sites in the Notes and Discussion section.

### Improving Local Capacity

In the 2023-2024 Public Accounts, committee noted that MACA lapsed 26.2 percent of its budget, or \$101.1 million during the last fiscal year. Committee learned that these lapses are largely related to carry-overs from the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, other projects that were delayed due to the 2023 wildfires and evacuations, in addition to general issues with staffing and local capacity across communities. As MACA lapsed a similar portion of its budget in the 2022-23 fiscal year, committee wanted to follow up with departmental officials about the causes behind large budget lapses in consecutive years. Committee agrees with the Department that local capacity should be improved, projects that have allocated funding should begin, and lapses should decrease over time.

**Recommendation 2** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts therefore recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a work plan to improve staff retention within the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to help the flow through of funding, which will be reflected by an overall decrease in Departmental lapses recorded in the public accounts.

### Heritage Fund and P3 Reporting

Legislation requires the GNWT to publish the public accounts within nine months, which the GNWT met this year by publishing in November 2024. According to section 35.1 of the Financial Administration Act, the requirement to report in the public accounts does not apply to the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund (the Fund). However, the board established by the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Act (the Act), under section 5.1 (1) and (2) is still required to table an annual report on the Fund

in the Legislative Assembly no less than 150 days after the end of the fiscal year. The Act requires statutory review every ten years, which the Standing Committee on Government Operations will complete for the 2026 fiscal year.

The Department of Finance publishes the annual financial statements of the Fund as part of the public accounts (Section III) each year. Committee has asked whether the inclusion of financial statements for the Fund in Section III meets the requirements of section 5.1(2) of the Act concerning the production and tabling in the Assembly of annual reports on the Fund, particularly with respect to the question of whether they meet the requirements of "annual report" as defined in the GNWT's Planning and Accountability framework.

Annual reports generally include analysis of both financial and non-financial activities conducted throughout the year. Committee acknowledges that reporting on the Fund is timely; however, transparency and accountability could be improved. Specifically, the inclusion of more detailed information—particularly management discussion and analysis would provide the public with a clearer overview of the Fund's operations over the past year and how this performance may shape future decisions.

**Recommendation 3** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts therefore recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Board, and the Office of the Comptroller General enhance the transparency and accountability of the reporting on The Northwest Territories Heritage Fund in the public accounts by including more information about the Fund's activities, investments, management discussion, analysis, as well as overview of operations from the previous fiscal year.

During the 19th Assembly, the Standing Committee on Government Operations recommended that the GNWT "Classify the Stanton Legacy Project as a public-private partnership (P3)" in its Report on the Review of the 2018-19 and 2019-20 public accounts, which committee reiterated in its Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 public accounts. The GNWT maintains that the government is unable to accept this recommendation as the Department of Finance has determined the most appropriate accounting treatment based on the Public Service Accounting Standards.

A P3 is a collaborative arrangement between a government and a private-sector partner to deliver public infrastructure or services. In a P3, the private partner typically takes on significant

responsibilities — such as designing, building, financing, operating, or maintaining a facility— over a long-term contract. While the GNWT will not report the Stanton Legacy project as a P3, committee feels that there should still be increased transparency so that the public has a sense of what happened and why the government re-assumed responsibility for risks associated with the Stanton Legacy Project which was originally intended to be offset through a P3 arrangement.

**Recommendation 4** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts therefore recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories either classify Stanton Legacy Project as a public-private partnership (P3), which was originally procured as a P3 project, or establish in the FSDA the point in time when this ceased to be the case.

## CONCLUSION

This concludes the Standing Committee on Public Accounts' Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Public Accounts. Committee looks forward to the government's response on how they will implement these recommendations.

## Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nunakput, that Committee Report 22-20(1), Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Public Accounts, be received and adopted by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nunakput, that pursuant to Rule 9.4(5)(a), the

Government of the Northwest Territories table a comprehensive response to this report, including all recommendations, within 120 days or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Range Lake. The motion is in order. To the question.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

## Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 324-20(1):  
NOTE TO FILE MACKENZIE VALLEY  
REVIEW BOARD MEETING WITH  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES STAFF

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document: Note to File Mackenzie Valley Review Board Meeting with Government of the Northwest Territories Staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Tabling of documents. Mr. Premier.

TABLED DOCUMENT 325-20(1):  
YELLOWKNIFE SHELTER INFORMATION

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Yellowknife Shelter Information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 326-20(1):  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR WRITTEN  
QUESTION 16-20(1): ENVIRONMENTAL  
LIABILITIES

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Additional Information for Written Question 16-20(1): Environmental Liabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 327-20(1):  
THE STRUCTURED DECISION-MAKING  
SYSTEM FOR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY  
AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

TABLED DOCUMENT 328-20(1):  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR RETURN  
TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-20(1):  
OPERATING ROOM ACTIVITIES FOR  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: The Structured Decision-Making System for Child Protection Policy and Procedures Manual, and Additional Information for Return to Written Question 14-20(1): Operating Room Activities for Stanton Territorial Hospital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 329-20(1):  
PROPOSAL FOR A PRIVATE MEMBER'S  
BILL: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC  
SERVICE ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 330-20(1):  
COLLEGE AND ASSOCIATION OF NURSES  
– NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND  
NUNAVUT: NURSING COLLECTIVE  
AGREEMENT & ASSOCIATION FUNCTION  
SURVEY

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following documents: First, a Proposal for a Private Member's Bill: An Act to Amend the Public Service Act. And secondly, the Nursing Collective Agreement and Association Function Survey done by the College and Association of Nurses for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 331-20(1):  
SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INTEGRITY  
COMMISSIONER ABOUT COSTS RELATING  
TO THE COMPLAINT BY JENNIFER  
PATTERSON THAT MR. RICHARD  
EDJERICON, MEMBER OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR TU NEDHÉ-  
WIILIDEH, BREACHED THE CODE OF  
CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY

TABLED DOCUMENT 332-20(1):  
LIST OF DECEASED NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES WORLD WAR II VETERANS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, pursuant to section 102(9) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table Supplemental Report of the Northwest Territories Integrity Commissioner about Costs Relating to the Complaint by Jennifer Patterson that Mr. Richard Edjericon, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Breached the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Member's Code of Conduct.

I wish to table the List of Deceased Northwest Territories World War II Veterans.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member from Frame Lake. No, okay. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Yellowknife North.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 26:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE  
ACT

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, May 23rd, 2025, I will present Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Reports of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills.

Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, May 22nd, 2025, at 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 Motions
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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

This House stands adjourned until Thursday,  
May 22nd, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

