



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

**1<sup>st</sup> Session**

**Day 61**

**20<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

**HANSARD**

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025**

Pages 2561 - 2604

**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, May 28, 2025****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer or Reflection**

---Prayer or reflection

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

Please be seated. Thank you, Jonas Lafferty for opening prayer and reflection. Ministers' statements. Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 138-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES' NEW APPROACH TO  
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about the Government of the Northwest Territories' new approach to addressing climate change. From community resilience to economic opportunities, the challenges posed by climate change are urgent, complex, and interconnected with many other aspects of life here in the Northwest Territories. That is why the GNWT is moving to a joint approach that brings together climate change and energy strategies, with the aim of taking more efficient, coherent, and impactful actions across government.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is a reality that is affecting NWT residents, ecosystems, and northern ways of life. The territory currently experiences climate change effects through thawing permafrost and shifting weather patterns that will likely change even more over the coming decades. Through an integrated approach to energy and climate change, we will develop a better coordinated response that tackles both present-day impacts and future risks in the North.

Climate change and energy security are connected in a way that cannot be separated. We need to ensure that as we transition to a cleaner, net zero future, we are also preparing communities and residents to withstand the impacts of climate change. The

interconnectedness of climate with energy, infrastructure, public health, environmental protection, and the economy requires that we align our efforts and resources.

Within this joint strategy, the Department of Environment and Climate Change's primary responsibility is to lead and work with other departments to build climate knowledge and implement climate change adaptation actions to enhance the territorial resilience against climate-related risk and disruption. The department is also exploring ways to reduce land-based greenhouse gas emissions. Important considerations for all GNWT climate change-related actions include:

- Maintaining affordability and security by addressing climate change-related supply chain disruptions, emergency management costs, and impacts on infrastructure and housing;
- Maintaining and growing our economy by supporting resource development that is consistent with our net zero commitment and advancing economic diversification opportunities like agriculture, tourism and the potential market for carbon offsets.
- Supporting safe, healthy, and resilient communities by addressing the impacts of a changing climate on public safety, culture, ecosystems, health, and traditional ways of life; and,
- Continuing to collaborate with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and community governments to coordinate adaptation actions.

The joint strategy will recognize that Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations are developing and executing their own adaptation solutions that reflect their specific priorities and provides ways for us to advocate for and efficiently use resources together. The strategy will acknowledge that federal investment will be key to implementing the many climate change related actions that are needed.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT's ongoing commitment to engage with Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations, and other stakeholders through the Council of Leaders, NWT Climate Change Council, NWT Climate Change Youth Council, and other forums will continue to guide our efforts to advance climate action in the North. We are committed to regularly updating the public on the process of this joint strategy and to working together with all partners to address the urgent need for climate adaptation. We anticipate the final integrated strategy will be released in spring 2026, along with a revised climate change action plan based on extensive engagement and feedback we have received from Northerners. The GNWT remains committed to preparing the Northwest Territories to face the challenges and opportunities from climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 139-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES' NEW APPROACH TO  
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about the Government of the Northwest Territories' new integrated approach to energy and climate change, and how the Department of Infrastructure's work on energy will help build a stronger, more affordable, and more resilient future for the territory.

Energy powers our communities, heats our homes, fuels our transportation, and propels businesses and the economy. But today, the Northwest Territories faces some of the highest energy costs in Canada, aging energy infrastructure, and increasing impacts from climate change. Our approach to energy must evolve.

Last fall, Mr. Speaker, our government committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This commitment is driving the development of a new integrated strategy for energy and climate change. As our teams complete this work over the coming months, there are three themes I want to introduce today. This strategy will be designed to improve energy affordability and security, ensure community safety and resilience, and unlock new economic opportunities through the clean energy transition. It will be people-centered and built around enabling conditions that allow communities, economies, and governments to thrive in the face of climate

change pressures. And, as a joint strategy, it will bring together expertise from across departments in a coordinated, whole-of-government approach.

First, strengthening our energy security by modernizing our energy infrastructure. Our power infrastructure is aging and increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Overhauling our power generation assets, upgrading our electricity grid, and continuing to invest in local clean energy solutions across the territory are key steps we are taking to ensure our energy system can serve Northerners for generations. This will include refurbishing of key hydro assets in the North Slave as well as the development of an approach to modernize our grid and support the integration of renewable energy in remote communities. Our goal is simple: Ensure all communities have reliable and secure energy for decades to come.

Second, supporting energy affordability. Mr. Speaker, Northerners currently pay the highest electricity rates in the country, between 25 to 34 cents per kilowatt hour after subsidies. In some remote communities, the unsubsidized cost is as high as 74 cents per kilowatt hour. This is two to three times the Canadian average of 12 cents.

We need to give residents in hydro-served communities more affordable, lower-emission options like switching to electric vehicles and, where power supply is available, electric heating. These shifts increase power sales, reduce emissions, and then ease pressure on electricity rates.

Programs and services supporting residents, communities, and businesses to reduce energy consumption and adopt clean energy technologies, such as the Arctic Energy Alliance and the greenhouse gas grant program, will continue to be key moving forward and soon we will be announcing the full availability of an electronic vehicle corridor from Yellowknife to the Alberta border. The government's recent set of directions to the public utilities board will help support all of these important changes.

Third, unlocking economic opportunities through the energy transition. Clean energy is about more than reducing emissions. It is also about building a stronger, more sustainable economy. This includes creating good jobs, supporting new industries, and long-term growth supported by renewable energy, which in turn will support critical minerals development.

The Taltson Hydro Expansion Project is a leading example of this approach. This is not just an energy project. It is a project of partnership. We are advancing Taltson together with Indigenous governments in the Taltson Watershed - the Northwest Territory Metis Nation, the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, and the Salt River First Nation. This project has the potential to connect 70 percent of our population to clean, renewable hydro power while connecting two major energy grids. It will reduce our reliance on diesel, and it will help support the development of critical minerals opportunities by providing clean energy at the front end of those supply chains.

By investing in transformative projects, we are not just reacting to change we are shaping it. We are unlocking new economic opportunities, strengthening sovereignty over our resources, and ensuring that Northerners benefit directly from the transition to a clean energy future.

The Departments of Infrastructure and Environment and Climate Change will continue to work together to develop this joint strategy with a final release planned for spring 2026. Together, we are building a net zero energy future that is affordable, reliable, and resilient and led by Northerners for Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 140-20(1):  
UNITED WAY ANNUAL WORKPLACE  
DONATION CAMPAIGN

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share that the Government of the Northwest Territories has launched this year's United Way Workplace Giving Campaign. This annual campaign gives GNWT employees a simple and meaningful way to support programs that make a real difference in communities across the territory. Through payroll deductions, employees can choose to direct donations to United Way NWT, helping fund local organizations that tackle poverty, support youth, and improve community health and well-being.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, Northerners have come together during some very difficult times, supporting one another through wildfires, floods, and other emergencies. GNWT employees played a big role in those efforts, and I want to thank everyone who stepped up.

This campaign is a chance to carry that same spirit forward by investing in long-term community support. United Way NWT works with organizations that know their communities best and are helping build a stronger, healthier North.

I also want to recognize the important role of the Union of Northern Workers, that the Union of Northern Workers continues to play in the success of this campaign. Their support and partnership reflect the shared values that guide our work as public servants.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all GNWT employees to consider signing up. Every contribution makes a difference, and together we can help ensure that support reaches the people and places that need it most. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 141-20(1):  
UPDATE ON 2025 MARINE  
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
OPERATIONS

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update on marine transportation service operation for the 2025 sailing season. Every spring, residents and businesses across the territory are eager to plan shipments for their essential goods and equipment by our barges along the Mackenzie River, Great Slave Lake, and all the communities in the Western Arctic.

As people are aware, in 2024 marine transportation services operations were affected by record low water levels. This created unnavigable conditions along the Mackenzie River and presented a challenge to the Canadian Coast Guard, who were unable to put buoys in the water. These buoys are key navigational aids. Not only was our sailing season disrupted but our marine operations for other commercial shipping companies were also cancelled. Thankfully, proactive contingency planning efforts made it possible for affected customers in the Beaufort Delta and Inuvialuit settlement region to make arrangements for their cargo to be redirected to our terminal in Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Speaker, our waterways represent an important piece of the North's supply chain puzzle. As the essential resupply option for many remote communities during the spring and summer months, marine transportation services' contribution toward the success of NWT's supply chain is undeniable. There is great work being done to contribute to this

service and it spans various departments, divisions, and sectors, both within and outside of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, to give you an update on the 2025 shipping season, the Canadian Coast Guard has not yet made final decisions on whether or not the buoys can be placed in the water and marine transportation services continues to monitor water levels along the Mackenzie River to assess options with resupply operations. Sailing plans are being developed based on cargo loads that marine transportation services is expected to receive if the river is navigable. We remain adaptable to the changing forecast this season and are continuing to work closely with the hydrology team at the Department of Environment and Climate Change to monitor water levels along the way.

In the event of last year's circumstances repeating themselves, marine transportation services has developed contingency plans that may give us the opportunity to ship from the south side of the N'Dulee ferry crossing, and staff are working closely with the Canadian Coast Guard to allow some buoys to be placed in key locations between the N'Dulee ferry crossing and Tulita. Should any route changes disrupt shipments, staff will be available to assist affected customers like we did last year. Our fuel services division is also involved should any logistic plans change, and our staff are prepared to work towards another busy winter resupply season to make up for any essential services that may be affected by low water levels.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear, regardless of water levels improvements to procedures and service delivery continue to be made by our hardworking staff. This work includes using vessels more efficiently and reducing downtime during the sailing season.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, the team is watching the water levels closely and planning for each scenario. We will continue to keep the public aware once the coast guard has received a decision and as we better understand the water levels along the Mackenzie River and any impacts to this year's shipping season. And I'll just add, hot off the press, the Canadian Coast Guard has gone out today to assess the water levels at the mouth of the Mackenzie River. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 672-20(1): CUTS TO EXTENDED HEALTHCARE BENEFITS INCOME THRESHOLDS

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, the last year hundreds of Northerners who rely on extended health benefits were suddenly confronted by new income thresholds driven by cuts which would determine who our health system would support with the costs of their medication and who were now on their own.

This so-called rationalization of a crucial health care benefit has caused serious anxiety and hardship. These income thresholds are unfair to my constituents struggling with a cost of living crisis alongside the fact that many are already paying out of pocket for other necessary health services like home care and accessibility supports.

When these changes were announced, I also received calls from many seniors who were concerned their benefits were at risk too. But I was able to reassure them that the Minister of Health and Social Services has made it clear to this House, and to Northerners, that seniors' benefits would not be touched. But, Mr. Speaker, lo and behold, several seniors in my Range Lake riding were recently charged for over-the-counter medications and initially I believed this had just been an honest mistake, but I was shocked to find out it was I who was mistaken because somewhere along the way that promise to not touch seniors' benefits wasn't as much as a guarantee as we were led to believe. But we were able to push back, and the Minister was able to assure us that these constituents would not have to pay a cent for their medication because that was the right thing to do.

Yet I am still deeply concerned that these changes were made and proposed in the first place, and they could even return, Mr. Speaker, as in an email I've received, the Minister's office has stated, quote, "a decision has been made not to proceed with changes to the coverage for over-the-counter products under extended health benefits program at this time." Let me be perfectly clear, when I say the time to charge seniors for their medication is never - not after further consultation, not after establishing a new income threshold, never. And if the Minister can see the wisdom in reversing cuts to seniors' benefits, it's time she opened her eyes to the strain it is causing on other Range Lakers and reinstate full extended health benefits to all Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.



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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 673-20(1):  
HOME INSURANCE PREMIUM INCREASES

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Home and fire insurability are major concerns in the NWT, and the cost of insurance premiums may continue to rise for homeowners. The level of risk determines the cost of insurance premiums. Canadian insurers can consider the likelihood of a customer or group of customers with a similar set of circumstances making a claim and how much those claims might cost. The price for premiums is based, in part, on an insurer's best estimate of the amount it will be required to pay out in claims in any given year.

The Office of the Superintendent of Insurance, or OSI, regulates the business of insurance in the NWT and enforces our Insurance Act and its regulations. The act and regulations cover licensing and regulation for insurance companies operating here.

It's difficult to establish how many homes are currently uninsured across the NWT and for what reasons they've been denied coverage. Reasons for denial may not be public or could be based on the insurer's proprietary risk assessment model. The OSI does not track this information, and it's difficult to connect the rising cost of premiums using this risk-based model to the consumer and community price indexes that are published by the NWT Bureau of Statistics.

While insurers themselves set the costs for their premiums and products, there are mitigation efforts that local governments could undertake to help reduce costs. For example, concerning commercial fire insurance, the presence of hydrants and a full-time fire department in a community could bring down costs. I'm not going to go down the municipal funding gap rabbit hole quite yet, though, Mr. Speaker.

Section 270 of the Insurance Act requires that the superintendent of insurance prepare annual reports for the Minister. Part of these reports track the increase in amounts of insurance premiums through the amount of gross receivable insurance premiums. For example, there was a 24 percent increase between 2019 and 2023; the last annual report being published on December 30th, 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions for the Minister of Finance today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 674-20(1):  
AFFORDABLE HOME INSURANCE  
THROUGH SASKATCHEWAN  
GOVERNMENT INSURANCE

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to build upon the statement made by my colleague just now. Mr. Speaker, home insurance is proving to be a growing barrier to homeownership in the Northwest Territories and a financial challenge for homeowners.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents have told me about their inability to obtain home insurance in some cases or costs of their insurance skyrocketing year over year. Some residents with insurance policies have had them cancelled because of wood pellet boilers being installed. As bad as it may be in Yellowknife, I can't imagine how difficult it must be for some homeowners in small communities to obtain insurance. Mr. Speaker, this issue is about accessibility and affordability of home and fire insurance in the NWT and has been raised in the House before. Residents have no recourse except to complain about unaffordable increases or their difficulty even getting a policy to the office of the superintendent of insurance and speaking to MLAs.

During the 19th Assembly, the honourable Member for Yellowknife South committed, as Minister of Finance, to instruct the Department of Finance to investigate Saskatchewan Government Insurance, a Crown corporation owned by the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we need to follow up on this now to see if SGI can provide us affordable insurance in the NWT.

Established in Saskatchewan in 1944, SGI now provides insurance in five Canadian provinces as SGI Canada, operating in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. It has operated in Manitoba since 1993 and Ontario from 2001 and Alberta since 2006 and in BC beginning in 2015. It offers home, farm, business, and even auto insurance. I believe it could operate here. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker. We need to get a handle on this growing insurance cost issue in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 675-20(1):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Low water solutions. Mr. Speaker, there is no better time than the present for us to work together

with the federal government to realize the dream that is fully completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway, or MVH. Mr. Speaker, becoming a reality, the MVH campaign plan will involve the federal engagements with our Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister, GNWT envoy to Ottawa, and Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated MOU arrangement. This next step is overwhelming and, more importantly, extremely encouraging.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the infancy of a new federal Liberal government. Throughout the federal election campaign, we heard that opening Canada, removing trade barriers, and supporting nation building initiatives are important priorities for the newly elected Prime Minister. These priorities were once again highlighted in King Charles' Speech from the Throne that took place in Ottawa, was very encouraging.

Mr. Speaker, the completion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway is a GDP contributor during and after construction. The Speech from the throne highlighted that the federal government will work closely with provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, to identify and catalyst projects of nation significance. The Mackenzie Valley Highway will serve as a catalyst to Canada from coast to coast to coast, deepen Canada's ties to the world.

Mr. Speaker, the original \$700 million application of 2015, we gained since then a 26 percent equity position. In MVH phase 1, significant work has been done such as the Canyon Creek all-season access road, the Prohibition Creek access road, community engagements, design, geotechnical studies as well. But much work remains, Mr. Speaker. Our partnership with the government needs the business case and environmental assessment completion which is drawing closer by the weeks. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 676-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER  
CORPORATION AND AFFORDABLE CLEAN  
ENERGY

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to discuss Northwest Territories Power Corporation, NTPC, and the Taltson Hydro Project which provides power to Enterprise and K'atlodeeche First Nation in my riding. NTPC's mandate includes investing in core assets, increasing the distribution customer base,

reducing emissions, and reducing fuel consumption.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to promote affordable clean energy across the territory. But I want to see more affordable power rates in my riding, especially in Fort Providence and Kakisa. According to the 2023-2024 annual report, NTPC incurred limited physical asset damage during the wildfire season, but fires and evacuations greatly affected the corporation's ability to complete land operational work and capital projects. Mr. Speaker, one of these projects was the overhaul of the Taltson hydro facility which was originally scheduled to be completed by November 2023 but was only opened on April 1st this year after repeated delays.

Mr. Speaker, estimates for overhaul costs are now over \$97 million. We know from the public accounts that in previous years, NTPC lapsed tens of millions of dollars in budget capital expenditures. Mr. Speaker, lapses and delays impact costs for residents, and they worsen greenhouse gas emissions because of increased reliance on diesel power generation. Project delays also mean fuel work opportunities for local residents.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know next steps for making clean energy accessible across the territory. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for NTPC at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 677-20(1):  
RECREATIONAL LEASES AND  
TRADITIONAL USE CABINS

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for many years, Indigenous governments have raised concerns over the GNWT's approach to traditional use cabins. They have made it clear that requiring recreational leases and charges fees for members' cabins does not align with their understanding of aboriginal rights. Mr. Speaker, I brought it up in this House before. I know my colleague, Minister Semmler, in 2023, brought it up as well.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, ECC held a two-day workshop in Yellowknife meant to advance the conversation around this topic. It is my understanding that progress was made and GNWT is now working to develop follow-up materials for Indigenous governments responding to the discussions and proposals made through that forum.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that GNWT has made several key commitments that are meant to respond directly to the concerns raised by the Indigenous governments:

1. They committed to developing a unique authorization and management approach for traditional use camps and cabins;
2. Agreeing to set the annual rent for this new authorization at zero cost or nominal value of \$1, eliminating this financial barrier to traditional land use; and,
3. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committing to working collaboratively with Indigenous governments to establish the terms and conditions for this new authorization so that it provides a level of flexibility and regional customization while still meeting the GNWT's basic interests in the management of public lands.

Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that these commitments demonstrate that our government does recognize the importance of traditional uses of the land by Indigenous people, that they represent a significant shift in our approach to land management, one that better respects the spirit and intent of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

While we work together with Indigenous governments on this longer-term solution, the government must also take immediate steps to address some present and ongoing concerns. Such, Mr. Speaker, is ensuring we continue the pause of collections program available to Indigenous people with recreational leases and ensuring we will not take collection action against them.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that, through the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat, the GNWT is advancing a potential amendment to the Northwest Territories lands regulation that will allow us to change a nominal fee for recreational leases held by the Indigenous cabin owners in the areas where their Indigenous government has an asserted or established right to harvest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 678-20(1):  
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SUPPORTS IN  
SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the territory needs transitional housing. Mr. Speaker, I have constituents who are homeless and in unstable situations. Mr. Speaker, we are in a crisis. Last year, one shelter director in Yellowknife estimated, quote, "if all shelters in town stopped taking in people or stopped taking people in when they reach capacity, there would be an extra 50 people living on the street." Mr. Speaker, I need to highlight this, that many of these people, quote, "many of these people" are our Indigenous brothers and sisters. They are someone's child, parent, or parents, grandparent, parents, siblings, aunts or uncles.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sensitive issue for many of our people who found themselves in tough situations. My heart goes out to them.

In April, media reports reported on Yellowknife, quote, "point in time count showing that 327 people were homeless in 2024, a 5 percent increase from 2021." Mr. Speaker, small communities face the same problem. Some single men will never get off the waiting list for housing. Some of them are saying we will never get a unit or a house in their lifetime. They will not see it. This is what they're saying. It's not my word; it's their word.

The federal and territorial governments signed an agreement in December 2024 committing \$1 million each over two years. Mr. Speaker, this money is intended to alleviate capacity challenges identified by local shelters operator while addressing encampments and helping find homes for people sleeping in tents. Their goal is to increase supportive housing options for people at risk, but \$2 million will not have a big enough impact. Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we must use these programs to help people struggling in small communities. In Tlicho region, the government's Northern Pathway to Housing program partnered with Behchoko Friendship Centre to provide transitional housing, but people need wraparound supports for health and addiction needs like the ones offered by the Housing First program and the new housing -- and the new facility. How can we extend wraparound support to our small communities. I will have questions for the Minister of housing at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 679-20(1):  
IMPACTS OF JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE  
FUNDING REDUCTION

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, we've all heard about the significant cuts coming to the Jordan's Principle program, a federal program that many schools depend on to support their students. For weeks now, schools across the North have watched as their application for Jordan's Principle funding for the fall have come back denied, leaving them with a massive funding shortfall. Let me give you a concrete example of how devastating these cuts are.

Last week, I learned that Lutselk'e Dene First Nations school is losing five full-time education assistants, all of whom were funded through the Jordan's Principle program. In Fort Resolution where the Metis students make up a large portion of the school population, new eligibility restriction means Deninu Kue School stands to lose a significant amount of federal funding. Meanwhile, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment currently funds just one student assistant in Lutselk'e and only for a few hours a week. This is a stark example of the chronic underfunding of Indigenous education in our territory despite the fact that education is also a sacred treaty right.

This longstanding neglect has already forced families to leave their traditional communities in search of better education opportunities and, now, even schools in Yellowknife are at risk. Together, the Catholic and public school boards in Yellowknife, they receive over \$50 million from Jordan's Principle funding each year, funding that is now in serious jeopardy.

When schools reopen this fall, a crisis of Indigenous education will begin, unless this Minister talks immediate action to restore the Jordan's Principle funding. So today I'm calling on the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to meet with school boards across the North this summer and to provide a clear and immediate commitment to restore at least some of this critical funding. If the Minister fails to take this opportunity, she risks becoming the first education Minister in the North leaving education in worse shape than she found it. And she also inherited this from the 19th Assembly so this is a very important to the Indigenous people in my riding. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister for ECE at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 680-20(1):  
ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNSHELTERED  
INDIVIDUALS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we see people on the street who are in a bad state, some of whom who are unhoused and some of whom prefer to live in encampments rather than in shelters, we tend to jump to different conclusions about what should be done. Some people believe they should be moved out of public spaces and ultimately that law enforcement officers should step in, and others see unhoused people as victims who simply require more supports and resources. Either way, we tend to focus on what should be done to these people or for these people. But what if we ask a different question? What can we ask from these people? What are everyone's responsibilities in this situation?

The government certainly has responsibilities to provide decent options for shelter. But we often overlook the fact that people who are unhoused, even when they have addictions, also need to be accountable, especially when they're threatening or harming others.

I think that asking for accountability is a basic sign of respect. It means recognizing someone as a self-determining human. The trouble is when it's GNWT staff who are tasked with enforcing accountability or consequences. Say someone who works for the government comes along and says, come on, you owe it to the GNWT to pay your rent on time or to stop damaging your housing unit or to stop disturbing your neighbours or stop bringing drug dealers around here. Well, people can rightfully say, I don't owe the GNWT anything. It's the government that set up residential schools and took our homes and land away in the past and got us into this mess in the first place. But what if a respected elder comes along and says okay, you owe it to your family, to your community, to keep your home safe, to keep your neighbourhood safe. What if an unhoused person has one of their peers or someone with lived experience come along and say hey, maybe you could settle down or stop yelling at people; you know better than this.

Our law enforcement system has a critical role, but it struggles to hold people accountable over the longer term. Putting minor offenders on a revolving door in and out of jail doesn't seem to help. That's where a move towards restorative justice approaches is so important. The community, as a whole, needs to hold an offender accountable. I'm hopeful that we can use these same kinds of restorative justice principles to address encampments in public spaces, public intoxication, and threatening behaviours. Mr. Speaker, can I ask for

unanimous consent just to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues. So I am hopeful we can use these kinds of restorative justice principles to address encampments, public intoxication, and threatening behaviours, by figuring out perhaps community-led and peer support teams who might be able to more meaningfully hold people accountable for their actions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 681-20(1):  
SENIOR ENVOY TO CANADA

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I talked about the envoy yesterday, and I wanted to continue where I left off.

Mr. Speaker, as a reminder, just to set the table as they say, Ontario's budget is \$232 billion. The GNWT hides in its shadow being 1 percent of that. But the Ottawa envoy is \$140,000 a year. Mr. Speaker, the Quebec budget annually is approximately \$166 billion. In round numbers, that's about 1.3 of our budget, in comparison to them, Mr. Speaker. So in other words, they pay their envoy \$140,000. How are we seeing in comparison, in any straight line, why is our envoy worth \$440,000, Mr. Speaker? Why is this envoy, this friend of the Premier's, worth two to three times as much as the Ontario or the Quebec envoy? I can't see the math, Mr. Speaker.

And by the way, for the record, I looked up the phrase envoy, and it could be used in many different ways. There's some interpretations that I want to say for the record. It can also be exchanged for the word ambassador. Mr. Speaker, this person is sent on a mission. Sounds like an envoy. And I thought, well, considering we're paying this person \$440,000 a year, you know, we better address him properly. So how do you address an envoy or an ambassador? You use the phrase Your Excellency.

Mr. Speaker, is there value for money? Mr. Speaker, I mean, I see it more likely us bringing back the unicorns from our imagination to life than seeing value for money here.

Are there other options? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I've called and spoken to two different political advocacy groups. They hire a team at a fraction of the price. Their monthly fee runs between \$2,000 and \$25,000 per month. It's all

about what you want, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, their range is based on a size of a team for your issues, your concerns. They'll focus, they'll sit in and negotiate and, of course, they'll fight for your issues. But what's interesting is they bring a plan, Mr. Speaker. They have a matrix of deliverables for your money, Mr. Speaker. You get to see where your money's going, Mr. Speaker. You ask, Mr. Speaker, what is this advocacy paying for? I know this \$440,000, something is lacking. What is -- there's a word here I'm lacking. Oh, it's called transparency, Mr. Speaker. There's no transparency. Mr. Speaker, monthly, this is 300 -- sorry, monthly this is \$37,000 for this ambassador. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member from Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 682-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TRACK AND  
FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP 2025

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, this week from June 4th to 6th, Hay River transforms from a quiet northern town to the Olympic Village of the Northwest Territories. Yes, it's that time again for the Annual NWT Track and Field Championships. If you're from Hay River, you know how significant this event is and how deeply the community is involved. It takes hundreds of volunteer hours and advanced dedication to put this together. The community's commitment will be ready to shine when over a thousand athletes show up to compete. If you're an athlete that's been involved for over 30 years, you likely have fond memories of this trip or this event.

I want to take the time to congratulate the track and field committee on organizing this year's event and thanks to your dedication, the field will once be filled again with young athletes from across the NWT. This commitment deserves the acknowledgement.

I'm also looking forward to being a part of this year's event. Now, I know what you're thinking. Wait, you're competing? And while I hate to disappoint in my bid for the NWT senior athlete of the year; no, it's not the 500-meter dash or the high jump. I'll be flipping burgers for everybody. So come on down to the world famous track burgers and enjoy the sights and sounds and the smells of one of the greatest north sporting events. Trust me, you don't want to miss these burgers or the action on the field.

And, finally, a huge thank you, Mr. Speaker, to all the volunteers and athletes and all the sponsors that make this event possible and unforgettable. To all the athletes, have fun,

travel safe, and look forward to seeing you all next week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Hay River South. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 683-20(1):  
YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIAN LAUREN  
TORDIFF

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I do every year after Youth Parliament, today I am bringing the words of the youth representative from Yellowknife South to this House, ensuring all Members and the public hear the fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and policy insights reflected in the voice of our youth. And so, Mr. Speaker, this year, Yellowknife South, who was represented by Lauren Tordiff, and these words are hers:

As young people, we inherit the challenges of today and the responsibility to create solutions for tomorrow. If we want to tackle issues like the high cost of living, we must ask ourselves a tough but necessary question, do our current systems still make sense given today's challenges?

Take, for example, the cost of electricity in the Northwest Territories. Many residents struggle to afford power, yet we expect a Crown corporation to transition to greener technology while also keeping rates low. The current system forces the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, (NTPC), to pass the costs of infrastructure upgrades directly on to consumers. This makes it difficult for families and businesses to thrive. But what if we did things differently?

As the Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation, I feel the need to promote safety, affordability, and easier distribution among the smaller communities, but how can we regulate this while distribution remains a regulated private sector activity?

The government will take responsibility for producing power and lead the transition to renewable energy sources without forcing residents to bear the full financial burden. Meanwhile, private companies could compete to efficiently distribute electricity in our communities. This would not only help reduce costs but also ensure that cleaner energy becomes a reality in our communities. We might also create opportunities for residents to become micro generators of power, feeding back into the grid and increasing system resiliency and capacity.

A larger problem that affects many communities of the Northwest Territories is the imbalance of energy distribution. The solution I propose is a generating system that will be able to produce enough energy, not only for the communities that are present today, but for what will be there in the years to come. So what would this look like?

In collaboration with Indigenous governments, we will build a mass generator for each energy district that will provide reliable, affordable, and environmentally sustainable power to all Northwest Territories communities. As young leaders, we must be willing to challenge the status quo. We cannot solve today's problems without outdated solutions if we have the courage to ask whether our current structures make sense, we can build a stronger, more sustainable future for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Lauren for her strong representation of Yellowknife South. I have only one correction. It's not only young leaders who need to be willing to challenge the status quo. It's a challenge that all leaders need to accept. Thank you to Lauren and thank you for that inspiration, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. That's the second time I've got to hear it, so it was an amazing speech there, and it's another one today.

Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 684-20(1):  
COLIN MACPHERSON, NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES PARKS AND RECREATION  
ASSOCIATION LIFE MEMBER AWARD  
RECIPIENT

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, today, I would like to recognize an individual that received the Life Member Award (formerly called the Honorary Life Member) from the NWTRPA this past October. This award is not something given out annually but recognizes a member who has made an outstanding contribution to the recreation and parks field, who has significantly served the NWT Recreation and Parks, and is nearing or has reached the end of their career in the recreation and parks field. This past October, it was given to Colin MacPherson.

I have had the pleasure of working with him when he took the recreation coordinator position in Fort Liard. I can tell you he made a huge impact on the community and the youth. To this day, people in the community speak highly of him and the things he did for the community. One of the biggest highlights, besides the swimming pool, was the speed

skating program. He worked hard to get youth engaged and to try out for the Arctic Winter Games. After leaving Fort Liard, he moved to the Yukon, then to Inuvik, and then to Norman Wells where he became the regional recreation development officer for the Sahtu region. Years later, he moved to Fort Smith and then to Yellowknife, where he is the manager of community services for the sport and rec division.

During his time in Norman Wells and Fort Smith, I got to work with him on various projects such as northern youth aboard program, the youth ambassadors program which takes youth to the Canada Winter and Summer Games, Arctic Winter Games, Pan Am Games, and Winter Olympic Games and on the development of sport and recreation policies that we are still using today.

Colin was our guys when it came to aquatics, whether it was facility side or the staffing part of the program, he was the one you'd call. He could come into a community, hear the problem, and provide great advice on how to fix it or where to get the necessary part. He was an asset for the communities that he worked with daily and a strong component of the team we worked with. I have included his nomination form at the end of my statement and ask that it be deemed as read and printed in the Hansard.

Nomination for the Life Member Award – NWTRPA

Nominee Colin MacPherson

Location Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Career in Recreation Over 20 years with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

Nomination Summary

I am honored to nominate Colin MacPherson for the NWTRPA Life Member Award in recognition of his outstanding career in recreation, his strong mentorship, and his dedication to fostering community well-being across the Northwest Territories (NWT). Colin's work has been (sometimes) quietly help guide the recreation field in varied NWT regions for years.

Outstanding Contributions to Recreation

Mentorship

Colin's commitment to mentoring others is very well known. Over his lifetime in recreation, Colin MacPherson has guided many people into successful roles in the recreation field. There are a lot of recreation leaders across the North

who can attribute their knowledge and professional growth to Colin's mentorship. His willingness to share his expertise in community recreation has empowered people to excel and brought strength to the recreation sector across the NWT.

Leadership in Games and Events

Colin's leadership through volunteerism and participation in major games have left a lasting impact on athletes, youth ambassadors, and staff alike. From the Arctic Winter Games and the North American Indigenous Games to the Pan Am Games and even the Olympics, Colin has worn many hats: athlete, coach, mission staff, administrator, and always, Mentor. Each role he undertook with dedication, representing the NWT with pride and professionalism.

Promoting Healthy Living

Colin embodies and promotes a healthy, active lifestyle. Through his unwavering 100% effort, he inspires others to embrace challenges and prioritize active living. He has helped ensure communities across the NWT have the programs, facilities, and opportunities to stay active and healthy, helping make recreation accessible for children, youth, and adults and elders alike.

Advancing Youth Development

Colin played an important role in the development of the NWT Youth Ambassadors Program, helping establish its principles and criteria. This program has provided countless opportunities for youth to gain firsthand experience in recreation, leadership, and community service. The program's lasting impact is a testament to Colin's vision and commitment to empowering young people.

Workshops and Training

Colin has significantly contributed to the professional growth of recreation workers across the NWT. He has delivered workshops on all aspects of community recreation and safety training, ensuring individuals are well-prepared to serve their communities. His efforts have built capacity in most NWT communities.

Recreation Facilities and Programs

Colin has been a part of the development and operation of recreation facilities in various NWT communities, ensuring their long-term sustainability by training staff and fostering local ownership. His hands-on involvement extends to grassroots initiatives, like starting the speed skating club in Norman Wells, which continues to today.

### Commitment to Excellence

Colin MacPherson exemplifies the values of dedication, leadership, and community spirit that this award honors. His contributions to recreation in the NWT have been wide reaching, fostering growth, opportunity, and resilience across the North. As Colin approaches the finale of his career, this award would be a fitting tribute to his long-standing service and enduring impact.

In closing, there are many stories that I want to share with you but being reflective of the time, I would like to congratulate him on receiving this award.

Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, you just heard me give a statement about a friend of mine. He's up here in the -- sorry, I'm getting a little emotional here. I'd like to recognize Colin MacPherson as well as my friends and colleagues Damon Crosmann, Alicia Korol, Alison Brown, Conan Donahue, as well as the deputy minister Gary Brennan and, you know, my former MSA but he was also the executive director of the recreation and parks. Welcome to our Assembly.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River South.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel you stole my list. I want to echo the recognition of visitors in the gallery, same people there, but I would also like to add the YK city councillor Tom McLennan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a fellow photographer in the House, Vincent Ret. Wanted to say a big old hello to him. He's an incredibly talented northern artist, and it's always lovely to have people in the gallery, especially ones as talented as him. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Kam Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Yellowknife South.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have one of the younger residents of Yellowknife South in the House today, young

Finnigan Gosselin has been spending the day job shadowing with his mom. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Finnigan, thank you very much for keeping your mom working hard, so. We appreciate you being here. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] Masi, Mr. Speaker. Today we have -- we have Lucy Lafferty. She's a wife, and then she was a principal. She was also a director of education and also the -- and also she is the coordinator. She is very active for our language, Lucy -- Lucy Lafferty. The interpreter -- the interpreter here Jonas that isn't here, Jonas Lafferty, his wife is also here, as I'd like to say -- I would like to say thank you to Lucy Lafferty. And also the young people from Chief Jimmy Bruneau School here are also here, Shiloh Simpson and Nicoli Grosco, they are the page from the Chief Jimmy and Lucy Lafferty is from the community of Behchoko, the wife of Jonas Lafferty, interpreter.

[Translation Ends] Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also recognize Tom McLennan who is one of our city councillors at the city of Yellowknife. So thank you, Tom, for being here today.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives great pleasure to recognize, through you, to the House; I have several guests to acknowledge. First of all, I'd like to recognize Todd Cook. He happens to be the president and CEO of Northview Residential REIT. He's up there in the gallery. Sitting next to him is Linay Freda. I believe she is the vice-president of operations. And she's there as well. And next to her is a face many of us will know around this room, but certainly in the community, is Ms. Colleen Wellborn. She is the local, so the northern regional director here for Northview. And I want to give thanks quickly to Ms. Wellborn for her use and support of the community organization with Tony Foliot where they brought clothes from the South Slave to Yellowknife, and they've facilitated that and made sure that NGOs could benefit from that situation. Thank you, Northview REIT, and certainly Colleen.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that every time my good colleague on my side, the



Member for Range Lake, sounds like he knows what he's talking about well, there is the source of all the brilliancy in that relationship. Thank you very much.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'd like to recognize the source of my brilliance, as my colleague said, and my favorite constituent, my lovely wife Colleen Wellborn.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the Dene Zhatie translators here from the region. In the House are Sarah Gargan and Mary Jane Cazon and to thank them for their contribution to keep the language alive. Mahsi.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do want to address a small technicality on the recognition of visitors in the gallery today and congratulate councillor Tom McLennan on his purchase of a new home in the Frame Lake riding. Very excited to welcome him to Frame Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 733-20(1): TERRITORIAL LIQUOR STORE BIDDING PROCESS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I appreciate it very much. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of Finance regarding most recent bid on the liquor operations here in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, a local bidder had bid on this project, and they -- their scoring seems to be quite subjective. I wrote an email because of the significant urgency on this. By the time they closed this contract, we don't want it to turn into a legal problem.

Mr. Speaker, by way of example, under northern experience, they got 50 out of 50, Mr. Speaker. But under local BIP, they got 1.8 out of 50. And under NWT BIP, they got 5 out of 150, Mr. Speaker. There's some mysterious

concerns with these numbers, and I wish some urgency. Would the Minister pause this awarding of this particular contract to ensure these numbers are correct and all the numbers are correct? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did acknowledge the email that I got this morning from the Member and thank you for bringing this to my attention.

As with any other procurement matter, I'm not going to be putting these details on the floor of the House. I have already tasked the department to look into it and when we get a matter where there's some concerns around a procurement scoring, much like a human resource matter, there are avenues and channels by which we can have our staff review it, can have it go through a review. And certainly, until that's been done, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to be in a position to say one way or the other what may have happened or didn't happen or did happen, but I can say that we will review this urgently. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, although I would like to influence the outcome, that's not my question. My question is about pausing this to ensure there's a rigorous review before an awarding of a contract so there will be no necessity for legal action to work their way through this because, as I highlighted, the details are a little questionable. Would the Minister clarify for the House that she'll ensure the official awarding of the contract won't be done until there's a rigorous review of the numbers and their calculations? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the advocacy on behalf of constituents. I certainly want to ensure that our procurement review -- or procurement processes are accurate and fair. We are subject to procurement processes that maintain our obligations under trade, our obligations for open procurement, and, Mr. Speaker, I'm simply not in a position here today to say where we are at in this particular procurement process. I don't have it in front of me. As I said, this came in this morning. Happy to have it brought to my attention. It's not the first time I've had procurement brought to my attention. But it's -- so it's gone to the procurement shared services now and it really is not one that I want to be interfering with on the floor of the House. I recognize it's an important issue for many residents, and so I want to assure them again that we've sent it forward to procurement to make sure that it's done, and any award is done

fairly and that any review is done fairly. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, all the Minister would have to say is that she'll issue an email or instructions or whatever language she wants to use -- I don't care, it's fine, I'm fine with that -- that she'll issue some awareness that they need to ensure before they officially award the contract that these numbers are reviewed because it's taken four months, in January to now, for them to find out the details of why they weren't successful, would she be willing to issue that direction to ensure it's issued in the most fair and reasonable way? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the intention around fairness. Mr. Speaker, I -- again, without -- I don't have the details of the procurement here in front of me, as I normally wouldn't. That is a level of operations that Ministers would be inappropriate to get my hands involved in and certainly not here. So, again, I do appreciate the concern for fairness. I certainly can commit that I'll double down on saying to the department that we want to ensure that we are being fair and that we are maintaining and adhering to all of the procurement principles that we have. But beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not going to be, here on the floor of the House and without a fulsome awareness of the procurement details, issuing any directives to the department on this one. I will commit to the Member that we'll follow up as quickly as possible. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 734-20(1):  
DRINKING WATER LEAD CONTAMINATION  
AT RANGE LAKE NORTH SCHOOL

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the news broke of the potential contamination in the Range Lake North School, my constituents have reached out to me who are nearby in the neighbourhood very concerned about the quality of their own drinking water. Can the Minister of education just reassure my constituents that there's no risk to contamination in the wider Range Lake neighbourhood. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have received information that the city of Yellowknife does regular testing of their water, and there is no concern. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, constituents are also wondering why we haven't historically tested schools for safe drinking water. Can the Minister explain why this has been a pilot project and not just ongoing work for the department. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly as a parent share the concerns of many residents of the city of Yellowknife as well as the residents of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, it is worth me saying right now that I was notified of this project and the results on Monday evening. Immediately from there was able to ensure that that drinking water and cooking water was no longer able to be used been those schools that were advised were experiencing concerns. Mr. Speaker, I can also advise this House and the Member that given the extreme concern with this situation that I have provided direction to the GNWT, because it is multiple departments and through the Premier's office, to do a third party investigation so we can understand the details of how we got here and how we're going to ensure that we are moving forward in a fulsome way. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife -- or sorry -- Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Yellowknife Range Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that. I know the Minister is taking it seriously. I have no reason to doubt that. My intention is get the information out to my constituents. But if they do come back and find a problem with the school, who's going to pay for that? Will the Minister provide funds to replace whatever needs to be replaced to ensure there is safe, clean drinking water for the kids in my riding? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the schools in Yellowknife are interesting in that they are different from schools across the territory. So the schools in Yellowknife, for the most part, are owned by the education body themselves, but we have mechanisms to work together within the city of Yellowknife. First and foremost, we need to ensure that the water in our schools is safe and that kids in our schools are safe, and so as per usual, I will continue to work with our education bodies. I have a very close working

relationship with the chair, and we will continue to work forward on this. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 735-20(1):  
FEES FOR INDIGENOUS AND  
TRADITIONAL USE CABINS

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my Member's statement today regarding the recent work done by the Department of ECC on the developing materials for the Indigenous governments around land leasing. My first question for the Minister of ECC is how would the department, I guess, define Indigenous traditional use cabins and who they are for? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I think that, you know, as we talk about traditional use cabins, traditional activities, traditional use of the land across the NWT, it's important first and foremost to identify that as the Minister and I stand here, it's not my place to identify how an Indigenous government or an Indigenous organization's defined what a traditional use cabin or what their traditions entail amongst the Indigenous governments and the Indigenous organizations. There are many differences in tradition in how they define lifestyle and what their -- how things were done by their ancestors. What I will commit to standing here is to work with all of those Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations to ensure as we move forward, the policies and the work that we do together formed by those traditions and that we respect those in the path that we take. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that's a good answer, Mr. Speaker. And I know that the Minister is well aware of what's happening here and what needs to be done and the length of time it's taken many years to get to where we are today. Following up on that, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that come out of the forum was the develop -- follow-up materials for Indigenous governments. Can the Minister speak to the timeline now as when we're going to follow up on that and, indeed, start this -- continue this consultation, gets that information out to Indigenous governments. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report that the work has started. It's well underway. As the Member indicated, there was a meeting on the 20th and 21st of May that was very well attended with some really good work done by all participants. There was also a follow-up meeting this morning, actually, between ECC and the technical working group to, again, advance this initiative, and ECC is working very close with the technical working group through the Intergovernmental Council on land and resource management and under the development protocol to amend the NWT act and regulations. So this work is very collaborative. You know, we're very committed to following a process that is really working together to ensure that all of our interests are represented at the end of the day and that they are truly informed by the traditional knowledge within the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister. I think we're starting to see a little light at the end of the tunnel here, and I know it's going to take a continued commitment from the Minister to keep pushing this issue forward and getting this work done. Follow-up question, Mr. Speaker, you mentioned the amendments to the Northwest Territories land regulations. Do we have a timeline for that? Has the department come up with a schedule and timeline to get these amendments done so we can move this forward? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member pointed out, we have committed to, you know, trying to reduce the rent to a nominal fee or a dollar in the short-term, as well as, you know, ensure that we're addressing this in the long-term. Right now, currently, the way the legislation is written, we can't technically charge rent less than \$150. So that's our -- really our short-term goal here is to address that. And as we work with our partners, giving a specific timeline to this process is difficult. There are many participants here. If I could, I'd be happy to do that tomorrow. But, you know, we have a process and a protocol that we follow to ensure that all the voices are heard. And I just wanted to reiterate my commitment to get this done as certainly, as quickly as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 736-20(1):  
JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE PROGRAM  
FUNDING REDUCTIONS

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I got my treaty book here. I highlighted areas in terms of education, and education is a treaty right. And so --

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, it's a prop. Okay, thank you. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of ECE is travelling to Ottawa next week to meet with her federal counterparts. Would she use this opportunity to advocate to restore these recent cuts to the Jordan's Principle program before they come into place with our new MP who is now the Minister of Crown and Indigenous Relations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I share the Member's concern, and the answer is yes.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If these cuts to Jordan's Principle go forward and it eliminates tens of millions of dollars from Indigenous students, will the Minister commit to working with the federal -- sorry, working with affected community school boards and First Nations to restore this critical funding over the summer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a close working relationship with our education bodies. I meet with them multiple times a year. I'm meeting with them again in June. This has been a conversation on our agenda all year. It is a huge concern for both education bodies and myself. Those conversations will continue. This conversation has also happened with the NWTTA.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that is -- needs to be very clear here is the GNWT cannot afford to take on the programs that the federal government introduces and does not continue. When this program was introduced, and over the last number of years, officials at the department of education have reiterated to officials within the federal government that we cannot afford to take on this program should they choose not to continue it. So that is why the Minister of Health and Social Services and I are teaming up together to deliver this message to Ottawa. That is why I have teamed up as well with education Ministers from the

Yukon and also from Nunavut because this has an impact on Indigenous people across this country and across all three territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, Jordan's Principle exists to close the gap in the standard of living between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. Every dollar provided to our schools is, in effect, an acknowledgement by the federal government that their needs have to be met by our own territorial government. What has the department of ECE allowed our schools to become so reliant on this federal government and what's their backup plan should they provide -- this program doesn't go ahead? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, within our school funding formula, we have accounted, within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, for different positions within schools. The federal government, with their program, accounted for putting other positions in schools that were different from the method of supporting schools that ECE had in place. So, for example, there was program support teachers that are funded through Education, Culture and Employment. Those program support teachers have funded through our inclusive schooling directive and already last year we have jump started the process of reviewing our inclusive schooling directive to make sure that we are doing this work properly and that work is already underway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 737-20(1):  
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SUPPORTS IN  
SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you. It's good to see my two pages in here, Nicoli and Shyloh.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister of housing explain what specific plans are in place to ensure transitional housing and wraparound supports like those offered in Yellowknife are extended to small communities across the NWT? Thank you.

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

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was waiting for you to -- that's okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question.

Transitional housing and wraparound supports, it's required all across the Northwest Territories. Looking at our waiting list, looking at Behchoko, we have over 130 families waiting for housing. In your Member's statement, you indicated some applicants may wait their entire lifetime for housing. So the work we do at housing, the money that this Legislative Assembly has approved over the next number of years, the federal engagement piece, the working with the Cabinet, the federal Cabinet, working with the new federal housing Ministers, these are the conversations we're going to have. This is a vision that we have. This is a priority of this Assembly. So continued good work and advocacy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the \$2 million federal territorial funding for transitional housing is limited, how does the Minister plan to prioritize or supplement this funding to meet the urgent need for temporary housing with wraparound support in regions like Tlicho?

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my most recent visit to Behchoko, and hopefully going into Whati over the summer, I see the need going into the communities, looking at what people need in communities to survive, and transitional housing is one of those pieces, including shelter space, including warming shelter space, including transitional housing, including THARP, including public housing, including market housing. So there's a huge need in the housing continuum across the North, and the Tlicho region is one of those regions and ridings that need housing. And, again, we have to look at this on a territorial basis.

We have 32 communities in the Northwest Territories that we provide public and social housing to, so these are the decisions we make and hopefully the plan over the next three years will encompass that decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister say how the department is working with other GNWT departments like Health and Social Services and with Indigenous government to

expand programs like Northern Pathways to Housing and ensure they include long-term social supports for residents with addictions? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this Cabinet, we are discussing housing all the time with the different departments, including justice and health and education, culture and employment and infrastructure, and then with finance and our Premier involved, constantly. Housing is a priority of this government. We work towards that. How do we move ahead, that's important. So we need to have plans in place, including transitional housing in all communities. But how do we get there? We need to get the funding and supports working alongside Indigenous governments who are receiving distinction-based funding through the federal-earned funding..

These are engagements that we have at Council of Leaders, engagements we have in bilateral discussions and face-to-face discussions and phone calls and conversations that we continue to press the need for housing in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 738-20(1):  
ANNUAL REPORTING UNDER THE  
INSURANCE ACT

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance knows that I love data. So can the Minister tell us when an annual report for 2024, which is required by the Insurance Act, will be made public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The insurance license year ends June 30th, so the June 30th, 2024, would be the end of that year. The annual report is then prepared thereafter. We could expect the 2024 Annual Report that gets prepared through the year will then be released in October, so the fall of this year. So roughly fall 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that. Can the Minister say whether the 2023 Annual Report, which is already out, takes increases resulting from claims made during the 2023 wildfires and evacuations into its calculations for gross

receivable insurance premiums? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct, it does. The insurance premium tax that gets paid to the GNWT does take into account any increases in total gross premiums for the calendar year. So the premium tax is three percent on general insurance, one percent on fire insurance, and that is, indeed, based on the previous calendar years' insurance premiums. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The superintendent reports on four previous years in each annual report. Can the Minister speak to what percentage increases to insurance premiums that the superintendent is tracking for 2024 or for even into 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the March 2023 -- or March 2025 year has not yet been completed, Mr. Speaker, but the 2024 amounts are still being finalized, and I can give you an estimate that we're sitting around \$6.9 million. That would be 3.6 percent decrease from the 2023 reported premium tax. As I'd said earlier, we are now tabulating 2024. 2025 will be reported in a year -- just over -- just under a year from now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 739-20(1):  
HOME INSURANCE PROVISION IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing on the insurance theme. Can the Minister tell us if the Office of the Superintendent of Insurance have received complaints from homeowners and/or businesses that they are essentially unable to access affordable insurance? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current superintendent of insurance has been in the role since December of 2022, and I am able to say that they have not -- they have informed me that they have not received any complaints from homeowners or businesses about being unable to access insurance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of me wonders if that's -- whether they are even aware of the office.

Mr. Speaker, since 2021, what specifically has the Department of Finance done to investigate having a Crown corporation like SGI Canada provide affordable home and fire insurance in the NWT, and how would this be regulated? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was a question that came up, I believe, in the last Assembly, if not earlier as well, and I can say that the Department of Finance was asked and did reach out to counterparts in Saskatchewan to better understand the SGI model, to learn whether or not it could be applicable here or brought about to the Northwest Territories. Obviously, as a fairly small jurisdiction, very small population and very small revenue base, creating a program of insurance would be next to impossible as it would not give a sufficient base of paying in in order to be able to pay out. And so in that sense, having our own Crown corporation is not financially feasible and that -- yeah, so as far as being regulated, I mean, certainly the insurance industry continues to be regulated here, Mr. Speaker. As far as the private market, certainly, again, the private market can choose whether or not to come into the jurisdiction, and that is not something that we can sort of force or require any particular private actor to come in or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the suggestion is not necessarily that we establish our own Crown corporation but could SGI be brought in, as they've done in other provinces, to provide insurance in the Northwest Territories and thereby give Northwest Territories access to a larger base, the way we do for some other things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, I mean, I wasn't personally privy to the conversations with SGI but did follow up to get some information as to what became of those conversations. It was a couple of years ago now. But I can say at the time that their indication is that they don't have any interest right now in coming into the Northwest Territories market, nor do any of their brokers have any interest at this point, from what they're informed of, to coming into the Northwest Territories market.

Mr. Speaker, although, you know, again, I -- I can't really speak for an entity from another jurisdiction, the scent of our -- from the Department of Finance is that, again, the population here is quite small so that makes the market very small. The -- there's going to be very little economies of scale, very little returns, very little incentive to bring this entity here. Moreover the payouts -- because we are often in isolated communities, payouts can often be a lot higher, and so all of which leads both SGI as the parent and as well as the broker, and perhaps also others, to not have any incentive to come into this market. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Deh Cho.

QUESTION 740-20(1):  
POWER FROM TALTSON HYDRO PROJECT  
FOR FORT PROVIDENCE AND KAKISA

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister for NTPC.

Can the Minister explain whether there's currently a plan in place to supply power to Fort Providence and Kakisa from the Taltson Hydro Project. Thank you?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Minister responsible for NTPC.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is actually a GNWT project, and so in that sense there is a plan. There certainly is a strong desire to see an opportunity to run a transmission line from just outside of Hay River through -- past Kakisa and up into Fort Providence that would -- that represents -- that extra bit would represent about 15 percent of our total emissions and obviously a significant reduction on reliance of diesel which is very volatile prices to the residents in those regions. So there is this plan in the way. It already has regulatory approval to get to constructions. We have an application in with the federal government for funding.

Mr. Speaker, one thing is we are still having some positive conversations with our friends at Naka Power. They are the distributing agent in Fort Providence and also in Kakisa, and so it's important that we discuss with them how we are going to find a way to put all this together knowing that we don't, as GNWT or NTPC, own all of that infrastructure. So that is a conversation we've had not too long ago, and I will be following up with them so we can move the project along. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think now you're saying you're the Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. So Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Will any of the work for projects in the region lead to the creation of new jobs within NTPC? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can say we're right now bringing what was sort of 60 percent design project up to a higher level of certainty and with that would come more of the analysis on whether or not there are any further opportunities. There is already, obviously, the distribution network within these communities which is, as I said, one that has rep -- that has Naka Power there, and I don't know whether they have any staff based in the communities or not, and I don't expect this would change that. When there are lines running, that certainly has the possibility that there may be some linesmen required to be available. Whether or not there would be a sufficient demand for these extra lines to create positions, again I can't say at this point. We would do that part of the analysis when the project comes forward with some finality.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that having more reliable, more sustainable, and hopefully more affordable energy, does benefit the community and can certainly, if that brings costs down, hopefully spur some business activity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. Final supplementary. Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. She probably answered a little bit of this, but I need it to be on the -- say it again. Can the Minister say whether this work is dependent on applications for federal funding or more part of our government's budget initiatives? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are waiting to hear back from the federal government. We do have an application in for the whole funding. The importance of having 100 percent public dollars on this is that it means that it doesn't go on the ratepayers. It doesn't add to people's costs of power which, of course, are as I said earlier today, the highest in Canada. So it's very important, as the Minister responsible, that we are not putting this on the backs of ratepayers. Even though we want to ensure they have sustainable and reliable energy, we don't want

people to be paying for costs they just can't -- they just can't be paying these extra costs, even in the face of needing the infrastructure. So it is very important that we get 100 percent dollars. And that application, as I said, is in.

The other issue, again, is that we find a path forward with our friends at Naka so that we are working together with them and ensuring a collaborative path forward for an asset, again, that is their distribution franchise but our transmission opportunity or our generation asset, and I'm confident we will find that path forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 741-20(1):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY UPDATE

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my statement, my questions is to the Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains.

My first question there, Mr. Speaker, what work is the GNWT doing so that this project, or the Mackenzie Valley Highway, is ready to be one of the projects the federal government is describing as a nation building project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Sahtu. Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy, and Supply Chains. We got to come up with a shorter acronym. Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had to practice it several times, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. There's a lot of work that is happening. We are still, of course, actively involved with our MOU partners and, together with them, are reviewing an update to the business plan, to a final business plan, so we can have that ready to go with -- obviously the business plan is an advocacy document, but it also updates the final costing. We are working through the final remaining information requests that I believe at last count we were well over 400, and we are down to the last few. We are -- we did ask for a short extension on a few of them so that we could work with the community of Wrigley and the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation on some of the information they have provided. I had the opportunity to travel there just earlier this month and had very positive engagement with the

community to ensure that they are properly being reflected in the proposed project.

And with those two things in hand, Mr. Speaker, that will would allow -- or with the business case, and then with the project proceeding to through the board and through the board process, my understanding is that we are still on track for the work plan to have an EA done this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that information update. I can see our -- my constituents are getting very happy. I see the smiles.

My next question is will the GNWT work with the communities of the Sahtu so that they are ready for this project? Mahsi.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, and I will say one important thing that's come on this project is that very typically departments do community readiness working plans on large scale infrastructure projects and would typically do them a year or so out from construction.

Mr. Speaker, the communities in the Sahtu have been are very clear. They want that work starting now, and so I can say we have put an application in to the federal government to realign some of the ICIP money that is supporting the Mackenzie Valley Highway so that we can get the working groups for these readiness working groups up and running immediately and not wait until we're just at the construction stage. We want to get that work started now, and my hope is we'll hear back -- now that there's a government, my hope is we'll hear back and that we can get that work going so that the communities are ready well in advance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very glad for the continuous good news here. It's going to be an enjoyable weekend.

Will the Minister show Ottawa how critical this road is to connect the people of the Sahtu to the rest of Canada? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, yes. Mr. Speaker, I've already had at least some introductory calls with counterparts in Ottawa, and I can say -- I'm happy to say that I already raised the Mackenzie Valley Highway as being a nation building project, correcting a critical part of Canada that is right now unconnected from the rest of Canada, multiple



communities, an entire segment of this country has no connections on roads, and if we can't get barges in because of climate change, no connections really whatsoever other than by air, we can't have that. That's not the Canada of the future. It's not the building Canada that we are hearing the federal government talking about. So, yes, we will be in Ottawa, in fact, the Member might have a nice weekend. I'm flying this weekend, and I'm flying to Ottawa, and I will take this message with me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 742-20(1):  
SHELTER ENCAMPMENTS IN  
YELLOWKNIFE

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs.

So following challenges around the encampment last summer in the middle of the city of Yellowknife, I know that the GNWT has been working hard throughout the winter to establish better relationships with shelter providers to get to know members of the unhoused population and their specific needs and to get new transitional housing initiatives off the ground. However, it's unclear whether there was any specific planning around what to do about any future encampments, and now we have new encampments at locations popping up within the city of Yellowknife.

And so I understand that the average occupancy rate at Yellowknife shelters has been only 87 percent since last October, but was the GNWT operating on the assumption that given adequate shelter space, there would be no encampments to deal with in the city this summer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the Member's correct, we did take a number of steps to ensure there were enough shelter beds, and so that was funding NGOs to increase the number of shelter beds. We had the on the land transitional housing program running for a couple months in the winter. We hoped to already have a transitional housing setup for this summer but it's been delayed a little bit. So between the shelter space increase and the transitional housing increase, we were hoping to be able to address any shortfall that we have in spaces, beds. That being said,

people are going to do what they're going to do, and some people would rather stay in a tent and they are going to set up that tent and stay in there even if there are beds available. So I was never under the impression that we would have no encampments ever again in the territory even if we had all of the adequate space that we needed. So I would say the assumption was not that there would be no encampments. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thanks to the Minister for that answer. So now that we have better awareness that encampments are not necessarily related to a shortage of shelter space per se, but perhaps shortages in the broader housing continuum or people's preference for how they want to live, is the GNWT preparing to do some longer term planning around identifying some specific suitable space for an encampment in consultation with neighbours? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, as I mentioned yesterday, understanding that even with adequate space there will be encampments, we want to ensure that where those encampments might set up are places that are not disruptive to neighbourhoods, and so we are looking at different locations around the city trying to figure out where might be an appropriate location, then the plan is to try and work with those at the encampments and their legal representatives to try and relocate them to a more suitable location. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we have heard from the lawyer spokesperson for the encampment residents that they've been looking for advice or direction from the GNWT as to which lots or specific areas might be suitable. So has the GNWT already given such advice as to what specific areas might be off limits or what specific lots might be preferable to the current encampment residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions. I'm not -- I'd have to get back to the Member to find out if, you know, a specific address was provided. But those conversations have begun. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 743-20(1):  
SHELTER ENCAMPMENTS IN  
YELLOWKNIFE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a similar topic or same topic as the previous Speaker, I don't share her points of view very closely although I do share the humanity of the issue. I want to say that undoubtedly. Mr. Speaker, I feel that what's important to stress before I get to my question is I may be critical of this government but at times, defined as spicy, but I feel something's being missed in this articulation.

To imply that there isn't shelter options or shelter -- the shelters are full, there isn't to imply there's treatment or counselling supports aren't available, there's food available, for the record, there's beds available -- certainly, Mr. Speaker, and there's facilities.

Mr. Speaker, what is the major holdup of identifying spaces for these folks to move to so the residents are no longer in a situation that they feel unsafe? So what's the delay in identifying these safe spaces that these people can be parked into. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no delay. The work is happening right now. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, what is the plan to communicate this to Members and the public, and is there a way to get this sorted out before the weekend? Because we have them steeling fences now, and it's been reported to the RCMP. I have the file number. Mr. Speaker, is there a way to get this into action before the weekend before more destruction and safety become compromised? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not -- I haven't been a part of those conversations with the legal representatives. I haven't actually gone down to the encampment and spoken with the folks there. So I can't tell the Member or the House what their desire is to move at this point. Maybe they have no plans to move and even if we had a great spot for them, they wouldn't want to go. So I can't make any commitment about what a private citizen is going to do. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not really hearing the government wants to do anything other than wait. Are they going -- is the plan to wait and sit this out, or is the plan to actually engage and try to put better options on the table so businesses, the community, will feel safe again, Mr. Speaker,

and a responsible place for them to go could be quickly identified on NWT lands. Will the Minister -- or sorry, will the Premier step up, maybe even meet with these people, and to have this conversation? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I'll answer one of the questions in there. So what's happening now is that the different entities who are involved in this are meeting. The Government of the Northwest Territories, the city of Yellowknife, the RCMP, a number of different organizations are all meeting. Everyone is coordinating, putting their mind towards this issue. We are looking at more suitable locations and then working with the folks at the encampment and their legal representatives to try and relocate to those suitable locations. And we're identifying any other barriers that might exist, any other reasons why people might be setting up encampments and why they might not be moving those encampments. So all of that work is happening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 744-20(1):  
PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION COSTS FOR  
SENIORS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, I was contacted by two very distraught seniors who were charged full price for over-the-counter medicine that should have been covered by supplementary and extended health benefits. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services why this was the case. Thank you.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if there was charges to anyone who was on senior health benefits that was charged for over-the-counter drugs, I would suggest them reach out to my office or to their MLA because those charges shouldn't -- before -- I'll clarify, shouldn't have been charged under what was going to be proposed but after I took further -- looked at it further and began to kind of pull it apart a little bit, when I asked the questions as to why these changes in pharmaceuticals were being changed and why we were getting these e-mails from seniors because it was extended health benefits, we try to keep in line all of our benefits, and so there are some changes that ends up happening with NIHB and the pharmaceutical things change all the time. And

so I did stop it, and as the Member has said, that I would be looking into and not necessarily saying that it's going to affect seniors. What I'm saying is that we are looking at what change made that was actually going to implement, why it was going to impact seniors, and how are we doing this across the equitable lens of NIHB, Metis benefits, and our extended benefits, because my understanding is those are all supposed to be the same, except for with the hierarchy of the income testing on the extended health benefits. So if there are charges to seniors, please reach out because those shouldn't have been charged. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. And I want to recognize the Minister did stop it, and I thank her for that. But Mr. Speaker, why did these happen in the first place if they're only being looked at? Why was this implemented and then rolled back? Is this a case of a runaway department, or is the Minister making these decisions herself? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to say is the benefit -- pharmacy -- I don't know how to say it very easily without a lot of words in this time because our medical -- our extended health benefits is multiple programs together. So pharmacy goes through Alberta, and there is the changes that were made and they implement our senior benefits and our extended health benefits and our Metis benefits. But for each program, they're supposed to be simultaneously done. The one thing that we were looking at under Restoring Balance was how do we -- you know, if there's changes to over-the-counter drugs, if they're in other areas, then they should all fall in line. And then when that came back, there were some changes in some, then because of the way it goes through Alberta Blue Cross, you know, we -- it went across the board which it shouldn't have because things are -- they're all different within their system. So I needed to have more clarity of what went -- why that happened. We do not administer the Blue Cross. We give them the information, and they're supposed to do this so that's why I stopped it. It shouldn't have affected the senior benefits.

After further looking at it and having more conversations, it's -- like, one of the things that I did ask is why are we being charged so much when it looks like there's 63 percent of the fees of the over-the-counter charges are for pharmacy services. So on a \$3 prescription of something, we're being charged an extra \$15 for that. So how can we do it different so that we're -- these are over-the-counter drugs. How can we do it different that we're not having to pay that much costs.

And then so looking at the cost of it, I just said let's just stop it, we'll do more investigation as to what went wrong with the senior benefits and just ensuring that all of our other benefits are streamlined across so that way it's not affecting anybody inequitably. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health and Social Services give northern seniors her word that there will be no increases to seniors' benefits, no cuts to seniors' benefits, for as long as she is Minister?

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as long as I am the Minister, there will be no changes to the senior benefits as all of the benefits that are on the table -- like I said, even with the extended benefits, those changes, we're going to be doing the review so those discussions will happen later on this winter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### QUESTION 745-20(1): SUPPORT FOR SENIORS AGING IN PLACE

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seniors aging in place. Mr. Speaker, helping NWTers live independently at home for as long as possible is important. We know that. My neighbour in Behchoko lived at home to the wonderful age of 99 years old. We called her momma-cho. Housing NWT has a senior aging in place program with funding available for residents 60 and older to lower home energy costs or to do home repairs. So one of the questions, Mr. Speaker, one of the requirements for seniors aging in place funding is that the residents owns a home.

Can the Minister outline what specific policies are in place to lower home energy costs or to complete repairs for elders who are currently renting Housing NWT units or do not yet own a home? Thank you.

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

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. Housing NWT has various housing programs, housing assistance programs, to help those that need to upgrade their home, renovate their home, have their home become more energy efficient. There's different type of

programs like the senior aging in place. We have a mobility program. We have an emergency repair program. We have a number of different programs that are advertised throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister say how long elders are waiting for housing and is NWT Housing developing any rent-to-own program for elders? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a difficult question because the seniors are encompassed in the entire public housing program, so the local housing organizations manage our public housing program through the community housing services agreement so that encompass all communities and all population, all ages, including seniors, so that's very important to highlight.

And in terms of seniors aging in place, again, like transitional housing, the question she asked earlier, this is something that is needed throughout the Northwest Territories because seniors are looking for proper accommodations to age in place in their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. So what is the difference between seniors aging in place program and the seniors home repair programs and what are -- and are there any comparable programs for elders renting a unit, who are renting? Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the seniors home repair program and the senior aging in place program, these are complementary programs that Housing NWT offers throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 746-20(1):  
MANDATE IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier some questions related to mandate implementation. In particular, can the Premier provide me with an update on the mandate commitment to better streamline administrative processes, policies, and legislation across government to enhance the capacity of the public service to work better together. What actions to date have

been taken to implement this commitment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it might not sound like a big question, but that's a big question. We're talking about a culture change in had the government, really, and how we do business across government. But I'm happy to report that there are a number of initiatives underway. So I'll just start with something simple.

Sometimes streamlining just means defining roles so people actually know what their role is relative to other departments and enabling departments to work together with that understanding. And so one thing that we have started doing is creating project charters when there is an initiative that cuts across different departments. That way it brings departments together; they all know what they're doing, and no one's duplicating efforts, and everyone's in the know. So that's one thing that we are bringing in slowly, help acclimatize everyone to it.

We are developing new artificial intelligence guidelines because the future of, you know, administration is going to rely heavily on artificial intelligence and so that is going to assist employees with their work. So, you know, we're working with other governments, coordinating, looking at best practices and, really, all governments in Canada, they're at their -- this project is at its infancy everywhere and so we're really working on the same timelines as governments.

We're making amendments to the Public Service Act to update the legislation to reflect current practices and job evaluation hiring and labour relations. We are -- one of the things that I'm happy about is that we're reducing the number of strategies and frameworks that we have in the government. I was Minister of ECE for years before I realized that we even had some certain strategies. So clearly, those aren't working the way they need to, so by reducing those and streamlining things, we'll become more efficient. I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate that answer, and it sounds like the Premier had more to say so I would encourage perhaps a more fulsome response in writing.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like further an update on the mandate commitment to empower the public service by ensuring they are provided the flexibility to deliver programs and implement

policies in ways that best serve residents. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier describe what changes have been implemented in the public service to better empower staff? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so that question really gets to integrated service delivery. And so we are advancing integrated service delivery across the territory. We're starting small. Once again. We don't want to try and do this all at once. We want to learn lessons on how we can better work together and better empower employees to make decisions that are in the best interests of residents and aren't administratively burdensome. So we're establishing regional locations in five communities to explore how to reduce the regulatory and policy burden on both the public service and the residents. We're also embarking on an NGO support program which will empower the public service by identifying internal barriers and streamlining supports to allow residents to focus on healing and making productive choices. So by working with NGOs, we actually become more flexible. There's more ability to do different things compared to us doing it alone as government. So maybe I'll leave it there for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see the clock ticking.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Frame Lake. Final supplementary. Please be succinct with your question.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I think of empowering staff, I think about reducing hierarchy and actually empowering staff to make decisions to implement programs. Can the Speaker talk about how they're reducing hierarchy in the public service. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. I would assume that's going to the Premier, not the Speaker. So Mr. Premier.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So some of these sort of cut across different departments. Maybe the Minister of Finance might be more appropriate to answer that. So what I'll do is I'll let -- I'll tell the Member I'll have to get back to him on that one. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 747-20(1):  
9-1-1 SERVICE DISRUPTION UPDATE

**MS. REID:** Just under the wire, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much. Mr. Speaker, as folks might be aware, last night 9-1-1 services were impacted, and the government put out a press release saying if you're unable to reach your

local health clinic or hospital by phone, go in person for any urgent need. Mr. Speaker, that's pretty impossible if you're unable to move, if you're on your own, when every second counts. I have a constituent who works in medical dispatch and wrote me with his alarming concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what redundancy plans the Minister of MACA is working on so that future service outages don't result in unsafe situations for residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would assume that the point they were trying to get across is that if you were looking for help, you could go anywhere that provides the help, like the emergency department, RCMP detachment, or the fire service in your communities to get the help that you need. You know, when the NorthwesTel takes out these lines for their modernization of equipment, it's kind of out of our hands so, you know, they're -- what could be put in place, something we could look into but at the present time, when they take out these services, it knocks down all of our communication. So that's part of the problem. So at this time, we could take -- you know, take that back and see if there's an option of providing some kind of service in these times where the NorthwesTel does do maintenance on their systems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister then make some plans to have his department investigate what other jurisdictions do to maintain this critical service even during a telecommunications outage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in the day, pre-cell phones and phones and everything else, we used smoke signals. No, we would have to go back, honestly, and look and find out from the other agencies, like in Alberta, what they do and how they layer their systems in order to have backups in their systems. So I'll ask the department to see what other jurisdictional scans we can do to see how we can backup our systems when our main telecommunications system is out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister is trying to make some

levity, but it is a serious situation. So will the Minister commit to work with the Minister of Finance to address this telecoms gap. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to working with anybody to try to solve this problem. When, like I said, it's Northwestel is the one that does the network system, they're the ones that control the telecommunications in the Northwest Territories. Again, we'll look at options, we'll -- I'll ask the department to do a jurisdictional scan to see what they do for backup systems in other parts of the country. But, again, we can work with other departments in order to find out what a solution might be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Colleagues, our time is up for oral questions.

Colleagues, recognizing the time, we will have a brief break to give the interpreters an opportunity. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Written questions. 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 Range Lake.

### Reports of Standing and Special Committees

#### COMMITTEE REPORT 24-20(1): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S 2024 AUDIT OF THE STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL RENEWAL PROJECT

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Public Accounts is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2024 Audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal

Project and commends it to the House.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, Stanton Territorial Hospital in Yellowknife is the NWT's largest healthcare facility and serves residents across the territory and Nunavut's Kitikmeot region. The original 1988 hospital was replaced on the same site in 2019. The former facility, later named the Liwegoati Building in October 2023, was designated for future leasing.

On March 11, 2020, Members of the Legislative Assembly requested a performance audit to be conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, which used a public-private partnership (P3) model.

The OAG audited the Government of the Northwest Territories' Departments of Finance, Infrastructure, Health and Social Services and the NWT Health and Social Services Authority to assess whether they fulfilled their responsibilities in the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project (aka "the Stanton Project") and delivered value for money. The audit reviewed project planning, design, construction, selected non-medical operations of the new hospital, and planning and leasing of the legacy facility through document analysis, public records, and stakeholder interviews.

The OAG found that the project's original plan - to renovate and expand the existing hospital - shifted to a full rebuild under a P3 model. However, this major change in scope was not accompanied by a reassessment to confirm whether the P3 still offered greater value than the original request for proposal.

Additionally, the OAG found that a 30-year lease agreement for the legacy hospital, initially intended for third-party use, resulted in the government subleasing the building back for its own purposes without required approvals. This made the government a rent-paying tenant in a facility it owns and exposed it to risks that it had intended to transfer.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts has conducted an extensive review of the OAG's report and many of the confidential documents that informed it. Based on this review, Committee concludes that the Stanton Project was mismanaged throughout its lifecycle. From the initial scope change to the final leasing arrangements, the project suffered from weak oversight, inadequate due diligence, and a failure to reassess key financial decisions in light of major changes to the project scope. The result was a significant cost overrun, with costs rising from an estimated \$750 million to \$1.21 billion — a \$462 million (62 percent) increase over the originally projected costs reported in 2015 when the project was still under development. This leads committee to conclude that the P3 structure ultimately delivered poor value for money. Taxpayers are now committed to paying rent on a building the government already owns while assuming long-term risks that were originally intended to be transferred to the private sector. These outcomes reflect systemic failures in planning, procurement, and accountability.

Committee found no evidence that any analysis had ever been done by the GNWT to assess the merits of the option to use the legacy hospital building for its own purposes. This is concerning to committee given that the GNWT was aware that there were known space issues for the delivery of healthcare services prior to the establishment of the lease arrangements. Because the analysis was not done, Committee cannot verify that the GNWT achieved value for money in their decision-making. Moreover, because the evidentiary record for conflict-of-interest declarations is also incomplete,

Committee can neither verify nor disprove that there were real or perceived conflicts of interest throughout the lifespan of the project.

While the GNWT has agreed with most of the OAG's recommendations, Committee notes that a number of the responses back to the audit report lack substance. In several places, the GNWT states that it is already aligned with the OAG's recommendations and "no further work is required." Committee disagrees. Given the lack of transparency and failure to demonstrate value for money, Committee maintains that the GNWT must do significantly more to show how it will meet the recommendations — including clearly outlining what will change going forward to prevent similar failures and restore the public's confidence in the process.

Finally, the OAG recommended that the Department of Finance publicly report comprehensive and timely cost information for the Stanton Project as a P3. The reporting should include long-term leasing costs for the legacy hospital building and updates for significant cost changes to enhance transparency in public fund use. The Department of Finance disagreed, stating that legacy hospital leasing costs are part of a separate project and not applicable to P3 reporting requirements. The department committed to maintaining its current reporting practices through capital estimates and the public accounts.

Committee finds this position problematic, as it undermines the spirit of the OAG's recommendation and raises concerns about the adequacy of current reporting practices. The refusal to provide full and integrated cost disclosures limits transparency and diminishes the public's ability to assess value for money. Committee emphasizes that meaningful accountability requires a lot more comprehensive and open approach to financial reporting on public infrastructure projects.

In light of committee's review of the OAG's report, committee consequently makes nine recommendations:

**Recommendation 1** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provides a detailed and updated response to each agreed-upon recommendation, clearly outlining specific actions taken, timelines for full implementation, and measurable progress to date.

Committee expects this response to demonstrate how future decisions will differ to ensure improved transparency, oversight, and value for money.

**Recommendation 2** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement and publicly disclose robust measures to ensure strict compliance with cost-control and conflict of interest policies in the development and execution of large capital projects. Furthermore, the Government should clearly demonstrate — through transparent reporting, regular audits, and measurable outcomes — how these measures will prevent a recurrence of the mismanagement and ethical concerns seen in the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project.

**Recommendation 3** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a detailed update on how each component of the OAG's recommendation has been implemented in practice. This should include specific actions taken, timelines, and clear explanations of how future procurement processes will differ to ensure strong oversight, conflict-of-interest management, and public confidence.

**Recommendation 4** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide clear, demonstrable evidence of how procurement processes have been improved and how lessons from the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project have been applied to improve future procurement processes. This should include documented examples of how bidder communications are now consistently recorded, how equal access to information is ensured, and what mechanisms are in place to monitor compliance and enforce accountability across departments.

**Recommendation 5** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a threshold as defined by cost,

complexity, or risk, and appoint an internal auditor under the Comptroller General, or other qualified expert, to oversee and scrutinize a project that exceeds these thresholds.

**Recommendation 6** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories adopt the most comprehensive and transparent approach possible for reporting public-private partnerships in the capital estimates and public accounts as part of the forthcoming updates to public sector accounting standards and financial reporting requirements. Committee further recommends that the GNWT provide a public update outlining the new reporting approach for P3s and clearly demonstrate how it will meet enhanced standards for transparency, accountability, and fiscal clarity prior to the release of the 2024-25 Public Accounts.

**Recommendation 7** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories either classify Stanton Legacy Project as a P3, which was originally procured as a P3 project, or establish in the financial statement discussion and analysis in the public accounts the point in time when this ceased to be the case.

**Recommendation 8** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly release sufficient financial and contractual information to substantiate claims that the lease of the legacy hospital building represents value for money, including the basis for the reported 30 percent discount relative to market rates.

**Recommendation 9** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that the remainder of Committee Report 24-20(1), Standing Committee on Public Accounts' Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2024 Audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

## Introduction

The Auditor General of Canada (AG) is also the Auditor for the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), as set out in the federal Northwest Territories Act. The AG is a statutory Officer of the Legislative Assembly. This means their responsibilities are set out in legislation. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) operates independently from the GNWT. The OAG conducts an annual performance audit of one of the government's departments, boards or agencies. A performance audit looks at how well a department has met its own policies and legislation while delivering a particular program or service. These audits are paid for by the federal government, and the subject of the audit is chosen by the OAG. This ensures the OAG's independence. It is the role of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Committee) to review, examine and provide follow-up reporting on the OAG performance audits of territorial entities and programs. When Committee reviews a compliance audit report, it holds a public hearing with representatives of the OAG, who explain their audit findings. Representatives of the audited department(s) also attend and explain their response to the audit. Committee's primary focus is on how the department responded to the audit findings and how it intends to address problems identified in the audit report. The Speaker tabled the Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly – Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project on October 29, 2024. <sup>1</sup> Ultimately, the OAG confirmed that the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project ("the Stanton Project") is the most expensive capital project in the history of the Northwest Territories (NWT). The overall project costs estimated by the GNWT were expected to be \$750 million. However, the findings of the OAG indicate that the total project costs are actually in the range of \$1.21 billion over the next thirty years—a \$462 million (62%) increase from the originally expected costs reported in 2015 when the project was under development. Committee completed an extensive review of the OAG's report, including a public briefing on January 15, 2025. This is Committee's report on that review with recommendations for the GNWT.

## Acknowledgements

Committee wishes to thank Auditor General Karen Hogan, Deputy Auditor General Andrew Hayes, Principal Jo Ann Schwartz, and Audit Director Sean MacLennan, from the OAG.

Committee also thanks Deputy Minister of Finance Bill MacKay, former Deputy Minister of



Infrastructure Steve Loutitt, and Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services Perry Heath from the GNWT for their appearance before Committee.

### **Background**

Stanton Territorial Hospital, located in Yellowknife, is the largest healthcare facility in the NWT, serving residents across the territory and the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut. Originally opened in 1988, a new hospital replaced the original on the same site and began operations in 2019. The former facility, referred to as the legacy hospital during renovations for future leasing, was renamed the Liwegoati Building in October 2023, following the audit period.

On March 11, 2020, Members of the Legislative Assembly requested a performance audit be conducted by the OAG on the Stanton Project, which used a public-private partnership (P3) model.

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. When P3s are done well, the government transfers some of the risk to the private partner such as cost overruns and delays. In exchange, the government can use the P3 as a long-term form of financing and benefit from the expertise offered by the private partner.

### **About The Study**

On October 29, 2024, the OAG tabled the 2024 Audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project in the Legislative Assembly. Following this, Committee members met with representatives from the OAG on several occasions to seek clarification on the contents of the report and the OAG's analysis. Between October 29, 2024, and the May 2025 Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, Committee undertook an extensive review of the audit's findings. As part of this review, Committee requested and examined documentation from the departments and the health authority that were also reviewed by the OAG, including confidential correspondence, information regarding all involved parties, and lease agreements for both hospital facilities.

In addition, Committee held a public briefing with the GNWT and the OAG on January 15, 2025. The GNWT was represented by the Deputy Minister of Finance, the then-Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services

(HSS). The OAG was represented by the Deputy Auditor General and the Audit Principal.

Committee acknowledges that, due to the confidential nature of the materials reviewed, specific details about their contents cannot be disclosed. Nonetheless, Committee's methodology for this review was designed to rigorously analyze the chronology of events, decisions and decision-making processes, and the structure and evolution of the agreements in question. This analysis was undertaken to critically assess the AG's conclusion that the government failed to achieve value for money, in contrast to the government's assertion that it did.

The Auditor General's 2024 Audit of The Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project

### **About the Audit**

The objective of the OAG's audit was to assess whether the Departments of Finance, Infrastructure, and HSS, along with the NWT Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), fulfilled their responsibilities for the Stanton Project and whether the project delivered value for money for the government and residents of the NWT.

The audit focused on:

- The new hospital building: planning, design, construction, and select non-medical operations; and
- The legacy hospital building: planning and the leasing arrangement.

The audit reviewed departmental documents, public records, and included interviews with officials and external stakeholders. It did not assess the work of other GNWT organizations, Indigenous governments, or third parties, nor did it evaluate building safety or compliance with building codes.

The audit excluded clinical operations but assessed oversight of construction, non-clinical services, maintenance, and redevelopment of the legacy building. Consideration was also given to equity, diversity, inclusion, and alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Audit Key Findings**

The OAG's findings and conclusions included:

#### **Costs**

The 2014 Request for Proposals (RFP) required the existing legacy hospital building be used. Contracts were awarded to Boreal Health Partnership (Boreal), but for a significantly

different project scope than what was analyzed in the 2013 business case.

Boreal proposed to build a new hospital and operate and maintain it for 30 years. Boreal also committed to an alternative use for the legacy hospital building, where it would carry out initial renovations to remove and manage hazardous materials. Once this work was complete, the intention was that the third-party developer Ventura Stanton Inc. (Ventura), would carry out additional renovations and manage the leasing of the legacy hospital building and assume almost all capital and operating costs and risks for the building on behalf of the departments and the authority for 30 years.

The OAG found no evidence that Boreal's proposal received further analysis by the GNWT to determine whether the new project scope still offered better value for money as a P3.

#### Conflicts of Interest

Information related to conflict-of-interest declarations and conversations with bidders was missing from the departments and the authority's procurement records. The OAG estimates half of all conflict-of-interest declarations were not completed, and the forms the OAG received were completed six months after the RFP process had started.

The OAG found that the Department of Infrastructure failed to issue the forms in a timely manner. When conflicts were declared, there was also no evidence that these were investigated, and that potential risks and unfair advantages were mitigated. Further, the third-party developer, Ventura, was not named on in conflict-of-interest forms.

It was and is the Department of Infrastructure's policy to maintain procurement records until the contract is completed or terminated, but this guidance was not followed for the Stanton Project.

#### Sublease of the Legacy Hospital Building

The GNWT leased the legacy hospital building in 2016 to Ventura following their 2015 P3 agreement with Boreal. In 2017, the GNWT became a tenant in its own building and the departments and NTHSSA took back most costs and risks in the 2016 leasing arrangement.

The OAG determined that the Department of Infrastructure's analysis did not include an option where the government itself retained the legacy hospital building and used the entire space, which it owned, to accommodate its own services.

As early as 2014, the Department of HSS had identified that there would be need for additional space. This should have factored into the GNWT's decision to enter into the 2016 lease agreement with Ventura. The department is paying Ventura:

- base rent
- additional rent for operating and maintenance costs
- other fees.

The OAG estimates that the 2017 sub-lease for the building over 30 years will incur an increased cost of \$78.6 million. The content and terms of the leases themselves remain confidential and, as such, there are limits to what can be publicly disclosed.

The OAG ultimately found that the departments and the authority received key approvals for the project expenditures as required, except for the approval to sublease back the legacy hospital building signed in October 2017. This finding is important because the sublease committed the GNWT to significant spending over the 30-year term of the leasing arrangement.

#### Legacy Building Lease: Redevelopment Risks

The OAG determined that by 2021, the Departments of HSS and Infrastructure had decided they would carry out most of the renovations for health services in the legacy hospital building themselves.

This decision was inconsistent with the original intention to transfer the capital risks and costs associated with redeveloping the legacy hospital building to a third-party developer to benefit from private-sector expertise.

Transferring the redevelopment risks and costs was a key component for the initial decision to use a P3 model.

#### Project Monitoring

The OAG found that all departments and the authority effectively monitored the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project at various stages of delivery.

#### Few Local Benefits

The Department of Infrastructure could not provide the OAG with evidence that it had verified that the over-\$71 million it reported as going to registered local and northern businesses was accurate, even though this is the amount the Government reported in 2019.

The commitments made to benefit local and northern residents and businesses in the

contract were limited to the construction of the new hospital and the removal and management of hazardous materials from the legacy hospital building. There were no commitments or requirements, including reporting requirements, related to the operation of the new hospital.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

The OAG found that from a project management standpoint, roles and responsibilities for the Stanton Project were poorly defined and there were inconsistencies with guidance documents.

The GNWT established oversight teams and committees with membership that included senior management from the departments of Finance, Infrastructure, HSS, and the NTHSSA. This included 2 deputy minister committees. However, the OAG found that roles and responsibilities for the teams and committees were poorly defined, and it was unclear whether the membership and responsibilities of the deputy minister committees were consistent with the P3 policy requirement.

#### Overall Project Costs

The project's overall costs were much higher than reported. As of late 2015, the total value of the contract with Boreal was publicly reported as about \$750 million. However, additional costs for services valued at \$50 million were never reported and the leading arrangements for the legacy building were not made public.

The OAG estimates that the actual and projected costs for the project were about \$1.21 billion, which is 62 percent (\$462 million) higher than the \$750-million agreement value reported by the Department of Finance in October 2015.

There were various reasons for cost increases:

- The Department of Finance did not include annual property taxes for the new hospital when planning for the project. These taxes with inflation will cost at least \$151.6 million over the 30-year term of the project.
- Operating costs for select non-medical services in the new hospital are projected to increase by at least \$173 million over the 30-year term of the project. These increases were based on a cost-benchmarking exercise that was built into the project agreement.

The first benchmarking process, completed in December 2021, led to some services increasing in cost by 55 percent to 128 percent compared with the initial service costs included in the 2015 project agreement.

- The OAG found that these cost increases were due in part to the departments and the authority underestimating the service needs before the P3 contracts were signed and external factors, such as inflation. These services will be subject to another cost-benchmarking exercise in 2027.

#### Audit Recommendations

The OAG Report made eight recommendations, to which the GNWT has responded. The GNWT has agreed with the first seven recommendations. The seven agreed-to OAG recommendations along with the GNWT's responses are as follows:

**OAG Recommendation 1** For future P3s, the departments of Finance and Infrastructure, and government entities involved in these projects such as the Department of Health and Social Services and the NT Health and Social Services Authority should

assess and document innovations and project scope changes included in bidder proposals to determine whether they constitute a significant change that could impact the expected value for money.

update value-for-money assessments with the most up-to-date information available from bidders before finalizing contracts to confirm that value for money is still expected to be achieved.

**The Department of Finance's Response Agreed**

For future P3 projects, the Department of Finance will assess, document and update value for money assessments for added innovations, creativity and project scope changes by following the current P3 Management Framework. However, it is worth noting that the value for money calculation under the P3 Management Framework is a tool to determine if a project should be constructed/procured under a P3 model. The value for money calculation is not a tool or factor to determine if the GNWT should develop an asset under more traditional construction/procurement models.

The GNWT's P3 Management Framework and procurement processes allow for project

feasibility to be re-evaluated for bidder innovations and project scope changes.

OAG Recommendation 2 For future procurement processes, the departments of Finance and Infrastructure, with support from other government entities involved in these projects, such as the Department of Health and Social Services and the NT Health and Social Services Authority, should ensure that the conflict-of-interest declaration process

is completed by necessary individuals in a timely manner

assesses disclosed relationships in a timely manner to determine whether a real or perceived conflict of interest is present and whether mitigation measures are required retains the results of the process in the procurement file.

GNWT Response Agreed.

The Departments of Finance and Infrastructure continue to improve its procurement processes since the procurement of the Stanton Renewal Territorial Hospital, and current practice aligns with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada's recommendation.

The Departments understand how using the same templates as used for the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) in general would be beneficial. On future P3 projects, standard procurement templates and forms used by Procurement Shared Services (PSS) will be utilized and/or modified for the project to include the unique requirements for a P3 project. The current templates include the requirement for members of an evaluation committee to declare any conflicts of interest.

To provide additional oversight in this area, P3 projects have a requirement for an independent Fairness Auditor to oversee P3 procurement process to ensure it is fair. This was done for the Stanton Renewal Territorial Hospital project, and the Department is in agreement with the Fairness Advisor's final report which raised no concerns with the procurement process related to this project.

While the GNWT agrees with this recommendation, the GNWT believes it has already implemented this requirement. No further work on this recommendation is required.

OAG Recommendation 3 For future procurement processes, the departments of Finance, Infrastructure, and Health and Social Services, and the NT Health and Social Services Authority should document interactions with bidders and ensure they are

provided with equal access to consistent information.

GNWT and the authority's response Agreed.

The GNWT believes its current procurement practices are aligned with this recommendation and no further work is required. It is not uncommon once a large project like the Stanton Territorial Renewal Hospital is completed to incorporate lessons learned into procurement guidelines, procedures and templates. The Department of Finance established a Procurement Procedures Committee a number of years ago to continually improve on government procurement procedures.

To this specific recommendation, Section 2.6.5, the Procurement Guidelines outlines that one Contact Person, through Procurement Shared Services (PSS), as the sole contact between bidders and the government and stipulates that "all contact with proponents should be formal, documented, and handled by the PSS Contract Administrators."

Additionally, the Department's Procurement Guidelines address communication and documentation of Pre-Tender/Proposal Meetings in Section 2.3.5.

The GNWT has had these specific guidelines in place for a number of years (prior to the start of this audit), which are considered best practice.

OAG Recommendation 4 For future P3s, the departments of Finance and Infrastructure and government entities involved in these projects, such as the Department of Health and Social Services and the NT Health and Social Services Authority, should

update value-for-money analyses as arrangements change, to determine whether the arrangement maximizes public benefits

for facility replacements, evaluate whether repurposing the existing capital assets to deliver other services provides value for money.

The Department of Finance's response Agreed.

For future P3 projects, the Department of Finance will update value for money analyses as arrangements change, including whether future repurposing of existing capital assets provide value for residents.

OAG Recommendation 5 The departments of Finance, Infrastructure, and Health and Social Services, and the NT Health and Social Services Authority should support the principles and intent of the Business Incentive Policy in future procurement processes by

verifying that reported amounts spent to meet commitments to benefit registered local and Northwest Territories businesses are accurate tracking, monitoring, and reporting on adherence to requirements in contracts and agreements in order to take corrective actions when commitments are not met strengthening performance measurement for local and Northwest Territories content in future projects.

The Department of Finance's Response Agreed.

Departments involved in project delivery should support the Department of Industry and Tourism's Business Incentive Policy (BIP) whenever it is applicable. These efforts will be supported by the following:

The Department of Finance will continue to rely on the BIP registry and the statutory declarations from contractors to verify amounts spent to meet commitments to benefit the use of local and NWT businesses.

The Department of Finance has introduced tracking of BIP content (labour, services, goods, and subcontractors) through the GNWT's financial system (SAM). Formally tracking BIP data in SAM will improve monitoring and assessment of BIP compliance in construction contracts valued \$250,000 and over where BIP applies.

The Department of Finance is strengthening performance measurement for local and NWT content through the new Vendor Performance Management System (New Vendor Performance Management policy to hold vendors accountable, GNWT).

OAG Recommendation 6 The departments of Finance and Infrastructure should work together to review, update, and monitor compliance with the guidance and policies related to project management, including public-private partnerships, to ensure consistency and that accountability is clear for all entities to support successful outcomes.

GNWT response Agreed.

The Department of Finance will review, and if required, update the public-private partnership (P3) Management Framework, in consultation with impacted Departments, to ensure that the governance and accountability for P3 Projects are clear for all entities involved.

Additionally, the Department of Infrastructure will review, and if required, update the Project Management Manual to ensure the governance and accountability for large capital projects are clear for all entities involved.

OAG Recommendation 7 The Department of Finance, supported by the departments of Infrastructure and Health and Social Services, and by the NT Health and Social Services Authority, should develop full cost estimates for projects that include all capital, lifecycle, operating (including property taxes), maintenance, and other associated project costs to make sure project estimates are comprehensive and reasonable.

GNWT response Agreed.

Since the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, the Department of Finance has adjusted its budgeting process for departments and entities to include costs for review and approval by the Legislative Assembly (such as life cycles costs and ongoing operations and maintenance costs) that may be realized as part of new capital assets coming into service.

Recommendation 1 The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a detailed and updated response to each agreed-upon recommendation, clearly outlining specific actions taken, timelines for full implementation, and measurable progress to date. Committee expects this response to demonstrate how future decisions will differ to ensure improved transparency, oversight, and value for money.

Despite the existence of established processes, policies, and guidance for managing large capital projects—particularly those aimed at controlling costs and preventing conflicts of interest—the OAG found substantial evidence that these were not consistently followed during the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project.

This finding raises concerns for Committee and prompts the question of what measures can be implemented to ensure these policies are properly followed in future projects. Therefore, Committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 2 The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement and publicly disclose robust measures to ensure strict compliance with cost-control and conflict of interest policies in the development and execution of large capital projects. Furthermore, the Government should clearly demonstrate—through transparent reporting, regular audits, and measurable outcomes—how these measures will prevent a recurrence of the mismanagement and ethical concerns seen in the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project.

The OAG's Recommendation 2 (or paragraph 27 in the OAG report) outlines three key improvements to the conflict-of-interest declaration process used in procurement processes. While the Departments of Finance and Infrastructure, with support from the Department of HSS and the NTHSSA, have indicated that current practices align with this recommendation, Committee finds this response insufficient. Committee is concerned that the lack of detail and the assertion that "no further work is required" fails to demonstrate a meaningful commitment to improved transparency and accountability.

Moreover, because the evidentiary record for conflict-of-interest declarations is incomplete, Committee can neither verify nor disprove that there were real or perceived conflicts of interest during procurement and throughout the lifespan of the Stanton Project.

Committee emphasizes that alignment in principle is not enough—concrete evidence of change is essential. Therefore, Committee recommends:

**Recommendation 3** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a detailed update on how each component of the OAG's recommendation has been implemented in practice. This should include specific actions taken, timelines, and clear explanations of how future procurement processes will differ to ensure stronger oversight, conflict-of-interest management, and public confidence.

Similarly, the GNWT's response to the OAG's Recommendation 3 (or paragraph 28 in the OAG report) states that its current procurement practices are already aligned with the OAG's recommendation and that "no further work is required." Committee remains concerned by the lack of specific evidence showing how lessons from the Stanton Project have been incorporated into actual practice. Simply citing existing guidelines—particularly those in place prior to the audit—does not demonstrate that the systemic issues identified have been addressed or that procurement processes have meaningfully changed.

Committee recommends that the GNWT go beyond affirming alignment and provide concrete examples of how procurement practices have been strengthened recently, and also as a direct result of this project. This should include documentation of how interactions with bidders are now more consistently recorded and managed, and how these improvements will be monitored and enforced to ensure

equitable, transparent procurement in future capital projects.

**Recommendation 4** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide clear, demonstrable evidence of how procurement processes have been improved and how lessons from the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project have been applied to improve future procurement processes. This should include documented examples of how bidder communications are now consistently recorded, how equal access to information is ensured, and what mechanisms are in place to monitor compliance and enforce accountability across departments.

With respect to OAG Recommendation 6 (or paragraph 48 in the OAG report), the GNWT notes that the Department of Finance has introduced tracking of Business Incentive Policy (BIP) content (labour, services, goods, and subcontractors) through the GNWT's financial system. Formally tracking BIP data in SAM will improve monitoring and assessment of BIP compliance in construction contracts valued \$250,000 and over where BIP applies.

Committee agrees that enhanced scrutiny and tracking for projects that meet a certain threshold for cost, complexity and/or risk is important. Moreover, to meet the spirit and intent of the OAG's recommendation, Committee would further recommend:

**Recommendation 5** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a threshold as defined by cost, complexity, or risk, and appoint an internal auditor under the Comptroller General or other qualified expert to oversee and scrutinize a project that exceeds these thresholds.

**Office of the Auditor General Recommendation on Reporting the Legacy Hospital Building Leasing Costs as a P3 Project**

The GNWT has disagreed with the OAG's assessment that the GNWT and NTHSSA should include the legacy hospital building leasing agreement as part of the P3.

**OAG Recommendation 8** The Department of Finance, supported by the departments of Infrastructure and Health and Social Services, and by the NT Health and Social Services Authority, should publicly report detailed and complete project costs for the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project that supplement the reporting in the Public Accounts of the GNWT.

This reporting should include costs related to the legacy hospital building leasing arrangement over the 30-year term of the project providing updates to total project costs when there are significant changes during the term of the project, such as for increased property taxes and operating expenses.

This information should be reported in a timely manner to support transparency in the use of public funds.

GNWT response Disagree.

The Department of Finance considers the leasing costs related to the legacy hospital building over the 30-year term of the project to be separate from the P3 Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project as these were two distinct projects. Additionally, the legacy project does not qualify to be reported as a P3.

The department will maintain its current practice when reporting for the Renewal project like any other capital project in the capital estimates (where applicable in the future) and in the public accounts.

Committee is disappointed that the GNWT is unwilling to revise its stance on publicly reporting detailed and complete project costs for the Stanton Project in its entirety, in the interest of increasing transparency on the use of public funds.

Although the GNWT has chosen not to adopt paragraph 63 of the OAG's recommendation and will not report the Stanton Legacy project as part of the original P3—or as a standalone P3—the project originated within the framework of the initial P3 agreement for the Stanton Territorial Hospital. At that time, the private partner assumed responsibilities including financing, operations, and maintenance under a long-term contract. The GNWT has since stated that the risks transferred to the private partner were ultimately not significant, which informed its decision to reassume those responsibilities.

However, as the OAG report has emphasized, projects that emerge from or are closely tied to P3 arrangements should be subject to enhanced transparency. Given the Stanton Legacy project's origins and its implications for public accountability, Committee maintains that increased reporting is necessary to ensure the public understands the nature of the project, the rationale for the shift in responsibilities, and why the GNWT determined it no longer met the criteria for a P3.

Ironically, the most effective way to ensure this level of transparency would be to report the

Stanton Legacy project as a P3—reflecting both its origins and its intended structure.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

Consequently, Committee makes the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 6** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories adopt the most comprehensive and transparent approach possible for reporting Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) in the capital estimates and public accounts as part of the forthcoming updates to public sector accounting standards and financial reporting requirements. Committee further recommends that the GNWT provide a public update outlining the new reporting approach for P3s and clearly demonstrate how it will meet enhanced standards for transparency, accountability, and fiscal clarity prior to the release of the 2024-25 Public Accounts.

**Recommendation 7** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories either classify Stanton Legacy Project as a P3, which was originally procured as a P3 project, or establish in the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis in the Public Accounts the point in time when this ceased to be the case.

Committee believes strongly in these recommendations and has also included Recommendation 6 as a recommendation in its Report on the Review of the 2023-24 Public Accounts.

#### Value For Money

In Committee's public briefing on January 15, 2025, the Assistant Deputy Minister of HSS was quoted by CBC News as saying it was an easy decision to lease the legacy hospital building and that this decision provided “value for money, in terms of building new spaces at pennies on the dollar.” CBC News further reported that the Deputy Minister of Finance noted that, while the commercial relationship must be kept confidential, “the lease was secured at 30 per cent less than market rates.”

In light of the OAG's finding that actual and projected costs for the project are approximately \$1.21 billion—62% (\$462 million) higher than the \$750-million agreement value reported by the Department of Finance—it is recommended that the GNWT publicly disclose the financial rationale and key contractual terms underlying the decision to lease the legacy hospital building.

While GNWT officials have asserted that the lease offers “value for money” and was secured at “30 per cent less than market rates,” these claims have not been supported by publicly available evidence. To maintain public trust and ensure accountability in the management of major infrastructure investments, it is critical that the basis for these statements be clearly substantiated through transparent disclosure, consistent with principles of responsible fiscal governance. Assertions of cost-effectiveness must be supported by transparent disclosure, particularly in the context of a project now projected to exceed initial estimates by \$462 million.

As the AG has emphasized, and Committee would reiterate, residents of the NWT have a right to full transparency regarding the total public cost of both the new and legacy hospital buildings. Clear disclosure is necessary to ensure accountability for how taxpayer dollars are being spent.

Moreover, Committee found no evidence that any analysis had ever been done by the GNWT to assess the merits of the option to use the legacy hospital building for its own purposes. This is concerning to Committee, given that the GNWT was aware that there were known space issues for the delivery of healthcare services prior to the establishment of the lease arrangements. Because the analysis is incomplete, neither Committee nor the GNWT can verify that the GNWT achieved value for money in their decision making. Consequently, Committee recommends:

**Recommendation 8** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly release sufficient financial and contractual information to substantiate claims that the lease of the legacy hospital building represents value for money, including the basis for the reported 30% discount relative to market rates.

#### Conclusion

This concludes the Standing Committee on Public Accounts' Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2024 Audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project.

Committee looks forward to the Government's response detailing how they will implement these recommendations.

**Recommendation 9** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Committee Report 24-20(1), Standing Committee on Public Accounts' Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 2024 Audit of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Renewal Project, be received and adopted by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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 from Range Lake. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carried. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 350-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO MOTION 47-  
20(1): STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR  
HUMANITARIAN REASONS FOR NORMAN  
WELLS



**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Motion 47-20(1), State of Emergency for Humanitarian Reasons for Norman Wells. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

TABLED DOCUMENT 351-20(1):  
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ACT ANNUAL  
REPORT 2024-2025

TABLED DOCUMENT 352-20(1):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 27:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PROTECTION  
AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 353-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
27: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PROTECTION  
AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE ACT

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents: Environmental Rights Act Annual Report 2024-2025; Plain Language Summary for Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Protection Against Family Violence Act; and, Statement of Consistency for Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Protection Against Family Violence Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 354-20(1):  
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING  
\$250,000 (APRIL 1, 2024 TO MARCH 31,  
2025)

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 (April 1st, 2024 to March 31st, 2025). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 355-20(1):  
BACKGROUNDER DOCUMENT FOR FIRST  
RESPONDERS WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Backgrounder Document for the First Responders Workers'

Compensation Amendment Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Motions

MOTION 57-20(1):  
SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION OF  
THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER ON  
COSTS IN THE COMPLAINT AGAINST THE  
MEMBER FOR TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH,  
CARRIED

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, I move that

WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly, in Motion 41-20(1), accepted the conclusion of the Integrity Commissioner that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh violated the Members' Code of Conduct, reprimanded the Member, and ordered the Member to pay a \$2,500 fine;

AND WHEREAS on April 24, 2025, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly received from the Integrity Commissioner a Supplemental Report about costs relating to the complaint by Jennifer Patterson that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh breached the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Members' Code of Conduct;

AND WHEREAS on May 21, 2025, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly tabled the Supplemental Report from the Integrity Commissioner identified as Tabled Document 330-20(1);

AND WHEREAS the Integrity Commissioner has recommended that the Legislative Assembly partially reimburse Ms. Patterson for the legal costs she incurred related to the making and investigation of her complaint that the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh breached the Members' Code of Conduct;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly must accept or reject the Integrity Commissioner's recommendation within 15 sitting days of the Report being tabled in the Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the supplemental recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner in Tabled Document 330-20(1) be accepted and that the Legislative Assembly partially reimburse Ms. Patterson for the legal costs she incurred.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

### First Reading of Bills

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present to the House Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, No. 2, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 28 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Member from Range Lake.

BILL 29:  
FIRST RESPONDERS WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT,  
DEEMED READ

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present Bill 29, First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 29 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 30:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND  
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION) NO. 1,  
2025-2026,  
DEEMED READ

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 30, Supplementary Appropriations Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization) No.

1, 2025-2026, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 30 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 27:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PROTECTION  
AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE ACT,  
CARRIED

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Yellowknife South, that Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Protection Against Family Violence Act, be read for the second time.

Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Protection Against Family Violence Act, amends the act to improve access to emergency protection orders and to address physical and online harassment. This bill widens the definition of family members who may apply for protection under the act, adds stalking to the list of actions that constitute family violence, and will establish a new civil recourse related to stalking for victims of family violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 27 has been read a second time and is referred to the standing committee of the Assembly for further considerations.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 30:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND  
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION) NO. 1,  
2025-2026,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 30, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization) No. 1, 2025-2026, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures and borrowing authorization for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 30 has been read a second time.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I am calling the committee to order. I will now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 340-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you, committee. We will now continue with Tabled Document 340-20(1). Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the chamber?

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, please, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left, Bill MacKay as the deputy minister of finance. And on my right, Mandi Bolstad is the deputy secretary to the financial management board.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, we will continue with the Industry,

Tourism and Investment. Total department, not previously authorized, \$3,868,000. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions -- oh sorry. Sorry, what was your question? Okay, thank you. Authorized \$3,868,000. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3,868,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you, committee. We will now consider the Department of Infrastructure on page 15.

Assets management, not previously authorized, \$26,180,000. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$26,180,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$12 million. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, energy and strategic initiatives, not previously authorized, \$12 million. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Programs and services, not previously authorized, \$4,813,000. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$4,813,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department, not previously authorized, \$42,993,000. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$42,993,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Justice on page 17. Corrections, not previously authorized, \$752,000. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, corrections, not previously authorized, \$752,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Court services, not previously authorized, \$3,477,000. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So listed under here is an amount that's not an offset by a lapsed amount, and it's not -- doesn't appear to be offset by revenues from the Government of Canada. So there's an extra \$2.3 million for funding for planning and design activities related to the Yellowknife Courthouse Infrastructure Project. Can the Minister explain what that's about and why that was not foreseen earlier in our main budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister for the question.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is an amount that is in response to concerns that have been raised by the judiciary. Now, I will answer maybe the last question before the first, which is whether or not it was foreseen. Mr. Chair, obviously -- I shouldn't say obviously, but judiciary has raised concerns about the state of the building and whether or not it was adequate and fit to purpose over the course of some time, and there have been over the course of time different efforts to try to alleviate those concerns.

What has been raised and what is proposed to be done on this present occasion, there's a number of specific risk areas, namely, the spacing and whether or not it provides a sufficient space to, for example, accommodate juries and have a separated space from the common areas when there is a jury that is

hearing a jury trial and particularly if they're being -- when they're entering into deliberations. Similarly, a lack of any specialized court space or a lack of any Indigenous appropriate space for efforts being made by the judiciary to better accommodate the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Security concerns, Mr. Chair, and this is in response more recently to the nature and type of criminal matters that are being heard more frequently and whether or not there needs to be an amendment to, for instance, the entryways, in particular, screening, and that is something that is -- we're hoping to be able to address now with this funding.

And last but not least, Mr. Chair, simply the co-location of judicial branch of government with really any other party and particularly those who might be appearing in front of the court, namely, the Department of Justice.

So with that, Mr. Chair, that does require a bit of work and planning, and we are looking at moving the Department of Justice out of what is now the fourth floor of the building that is co-located with the courts, and this is in part meant to start to immediately deal with some of the security issues but then also to line up to dealing with whether -- where and how to move legal division out and to be able to create a space that is more appropriate for the court usage exclusively. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to confirm that this is the very beginning stage of this project? Like, the -- these concerns obviously they've just arisen sometime since we passed our last capital budget and now this project is to begin; can the Minister just clarify? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so I can say over time that there's been, as I said, different questions and initiatives but there has been a more recent outreach from the judiciary, and it was in response to that efforts were made to see what immediate steps could be taken. Again, to build an entirely new facility, which is something that's been asked, is well over the \$200 million mark, and so there was an effort made here to say -- to try to respond, as I said, to recent outreach from the judiciary. This amount gets moving in terms of some immediate changes to the entryway which would help control entry and access to the court, the courtrooms and to

the courthouse section, as well as for planning of a renovation to particularly deal with the separation of the spaces and the enhancements to the jury room. That project is expected to take a few years. This is really, as the Member said, step one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? Okay, thank you. Continuing on.

Seeing no further questions, Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$3,477,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Total department, not previously authorized, \$4,229,000. Are there any questions? Thank you. Seeing none, thank you.

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026. Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$4,229,000. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, there is a schedule on page 18 that details the impact of capital estimates. This schedule is not a voteable item and is included as information only. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, we will continue on as this is not a voteable item.

Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 340-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026; does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 78-20(1):  
CONCURRENCE MOTION – Tabled  
DOCUMENT 340-20(1): SUPPLEMENTARY  
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2025-2026,  
CARRIED

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that consideration of Tabled Document 340-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 340-20(1) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Tabled Document 340-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 1, 2025-2026, will be reported as ready for consideration in a formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to your witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the chamber. Thank you.

I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Report of Committee of the Whole. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 340-20(1) and would like to report progress with one motion carried, that consideration of Tabled Document 340-20(1) is

concluded in the House, concurred, and those estimates as amended and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Can I have a seconder? Member from the Deh Cho. All those in favour? To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Can't vote all the time there, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Only can vote once. Motion carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 30:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND  
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION) NO. 1,  
2025-2026,  
CARRIED

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Kam Lake, that Bill 30, Supplementary Appropriations Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization) No. 1, 2025-2026, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The Minister has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

### RECORDED VOTE

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Harjot Sidhu):** The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for the Deh Cho. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha.

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining, please stand. All those in favour, 13. Opposed, 3. Zero abstentions. Motion has carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Harjot Sidhu):** Orders of the day for Thursday, May 29th, 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 Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, No. 2

- 
- Bill 29, First Responders Workers' Compensation Amendment Act
  - 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 29th, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

