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The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

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Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 30, 2025****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer or Reflection

---Prayer or reflection

SPEAKER (HON. SHANE THOMPSON):

Colleagues, I wish to draw your attention to the 1967 Centennial carry belt, or baby belt from What We Heard from Commissioner Kisoun today.

It was my pleasure to receive this historical piece of artwork back on behalf of the Legislative Assembly. This carry belt has a very rich history and holds a lot of meaning. Believed to be made in Aklavik for Canada's Centennial celebrations, it was displayed with the territorial mace. Commissioner Stuart Hodgson gave the belt to Tony Belcourt, at the time a young Metis leader who had publicly challenged the Commissioner's view on the role of Indigenous people leading the Northwest Territories.

A nationally-respected Metis leader and elder, Mr. Belcourt returned the belt to the Premier earlier this month in Ottawa. The Premier gave it to Commissioner Kisoun, and he entrusted it to the Legislative Assembly just moments ago. The belt and its story will be displayed at the Legislative Assembly.

The belt returns to the Assembly in a very different world from when it left. Indigenous people lead the territories and, more importantly, lead their own governments and nations. Receiving the carry belt today will serve as a reminder that we come from one land with many voices. We will proudly display this belt here at the Legislative Assembly to honour those voices from the past but to also honour those voices that will be our future. As well, we will continue the research to make sure we have more of the history, and we'll make sure it's displayed on the display as well as our future website. So thank you very much to everybody that was part of this celebration and thank you for bringing it back to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Before we go any further, I would like to recognize the former Premier, Mr. Stephen

Kakfwi, Member from 1987 to 2003. As well as Marc Whitford, president of North Slave Metis Alliance. Welcome to our Assembly.

Ministers' statements. Just wait, I want to make sure I get this title right. Minister responsible for Strategic Investment, Energy and Supply Chains.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 162-20(1):
ADVANCING NORTHERN CRITICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is at the heart of several transformative projects that are vital not only to our territory's future, but to Canada's strength, security, and prosperity.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' major infrastructure initiatives are nation-building in scale and critical to Canada's long-term presence and leadership in the Arctic. Together, they unlock access to critical minerals, deliver clean and reliable power, and create resilient north-south transportation links that strengthen sovereignty, emergency preparedness, and supply chains, while creating new opportunities for Northerners. Each project is being advanced in partnership with Indigenous governments, offering a model of collaborative northern development.

Mr. Speaker, in September, the Prime Minister announced the first round of projects of national interest and strategic areas of focus under Canada's new approach to advancing transformative infrastructure. The Prime Minister also established the major projects office and directed them to create business development teams to work with proponents to make these projects of national interest a success.

One of the named areas of strategic focus is the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor, a project described by the federal government as a "strategic lifeline" and "a backbone for both security and prosperity". This level of national attention and awareness on matching the progress of other circumpolar countries is long

overdue. Now that the opportunity has come, we must maximize this chance to truly make the dream of Canada as "the true North" a reality.

I am pleased to report that staff from strategic infrastructure, energy and supply chains have already met with the major projects office and my office has a meeting scheduled in early November. With strong and consistent engagement, we will be well positioned to take advantage of this federal initiative and advance key strategic projects for the Northwest Territories.

The Arctic Economic and Security Corridor is a nation-building initiative that will strengthen sovereignty, open access to critical minerals, and create an all-season, dual-use, port-to-port-to-port infrastructure corridor connecting the Northwest Territories to Nunavut's Arctic Coast via the planned Grays Bay road and port. In partnership with Indigenous governments, and specifically noted in the 6th Tlicho Assembly Priorities 2026-2030, this project represents an opportunity to deliver long-term economic value to the North, and to show how impactful a focus on Canada's Arctic can be in shaping Canada's prosperity.

Supporting and enabling the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor is the Taltson hydro expansion, a clean energy and transmission project that will deliver reliable renewable power to 11 communities, serving over 70 percent of the Northwest Territories' population.

Taltson will reduce reliance on imported diesel, advance Indigenous economic participation through equity and ownership opportunities, and provide the clean energy needed to power industry and future industrial development both south of Great Slave Lake and along the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor. Federal partnership will be essential to co-developing funding and financing model and to address legacy impacts from the original project through a reconciliation lens.

Rounding out Northwest Territories' strategic projects is the Mackenzie Valley Highway. This is an essential all-season route that will connect communities along the Northwest Territories' central region, strengthen Canadian sovereignty, and reduce supply chains vulnerabilities. This highway will enhance year-round access for communities, improve emergency response, and open new opportunities for northern businesses and mineral resource development across the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that just last week, the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation and the

GNWT announced a work plan that allows us to collaboratively explore potential corridor and routing options through Pehdzeh Ki First Nations traditional territory. The agreement establishes a clear framework for collaboration, outlines activities and milestones, and sets out how both parties will work together to ensure traditional knowledge, local input, and community priorities inform any future planning and decision-making.

Under the amended and restated memorandum of understanding for collaboration on the advancement of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated are also working together to move this nation-building infrastructure forward. Through quarterly meetings, the partners are actively advancing project planning, including completion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway business case, discussions on financing and federal engagement, and the strategic use of existing funding under the national trade corridors. This collaborative approach is laying the groundwork for unlocking economic potential, improving connectivity, and strengthening northern resilience.

Mr. Speaker, these projects represent a unified vision for the North. The onus to make them a reality cannot be on Northerners alone. Both Canada and the Northwest Territories must remain equal leaders in advancing this work to safeguard our nation's strategic interests in the North. This vision of connecting Canada's North will be built through collaboration, sustainability, and shared prosperity. This is the foundation for a stronger and more connected and more resilient Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy and Supply Chains. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 163-20(1):
MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENTS WITH
ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the recent finalization of master service agreements with Alberta Health Services. This is an important milestone. These agreements modernize our partnership, strengthening accountability for the essential supports and services delivered to Northwest Territories residents and funded by the GNWT.

For many years, the GNWT's collaboration with Alberta Health Services has been based on informal arrangements that evolve over time.

The new master service agreements formalize this relationship, help reduce legal risks, clarify funding responsibilities, and improve accountability for the services provided to the Northwest Territories residents. These agreements also document the complex ways we work together and help ensure that these important services remain stable and sustainable into the future.

These agreements are important milestones because they support our ability to deliver coordinated health care to residents. There are two agreements in place: One between the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and Alberta Health Services and another between Alberta Health Services and the Department of Health and Social Services.

Each agreement is structured as an umbrella agreement, with detailed service commitments and arrangements added as separate schedules. One example is the section focused on clinical ethicist support services. These services help patients, families, and health care providers navigate difficult decisions during complex care situations. This part of the agreement also supports staff development by offering targeted training to strengthen ethical decision-making across our health system.

Under the master services agreement held by the department, the first schedule formalizes the longstanding arrangement with Alberta Health Services for their administration of the NWT cancer registry. Alberta Health Services also acts on our behalf to report this data to the Canadian Cancer Registry and the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries. This agreement reduces the administrative burden on local staff, allowing them to focus more on delivering essential services to residents.

Mr. Speaker, with the master services agreements now finalized, including the first two schedules, work is underway with Alberta Health Services to complete additional schedules that reflect the services already being delivered through our existing partnerships. These additions will help to ensure that all aspects of our collaboration are clearly defined and supported within a formal structure.

Additional schedules are currently being developed to formalize existing partnerships and processes. These include the exchange of health records to support patient care, access to specialized physician services, and position and medication information services. The agreements will also help coordinate travel arrangements for Northwest Territories

residents who are referred to Alberta for medical care.

The agreements also provide a clear process for considering new partnerships. As new arrangements are developed, they will be documented and formalized under this modern framework.

Mr. Speaker, the finalization of these master service agreements is the result of extensive collaboration and dedicated work behind the scenes by staff across multiple departments and agencies. This includes contributions from the Department of Health and Social Services, all three health and social services authorities, the Department of Finance's procurement shared services division, and the Department of Justice. And I would like to sincerely thank all those involved for their commitment to advancing this important work. Their efforts have been instrumental in putting these agreements in place and laying the foundation for continued progress toward our goal of supporting healthy people and communities in the Northwest Territories. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 164-20(1):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the honourable Member for Thebacha will be absent from the House for a portion of today's proceedings to attend to a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 787-20(1):
REMEDIATION OF LAKES NEAR RAYROCK
MINE SITE

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, elders, residents of Behchoko, and even Tlicho workers, have raised concerns about the Rayrock mine site and how nearby lakes could affect people's health and safety. These lakes are not being cleaned up as part of the current remediation work.

Mr. Speaker, the lakes known locally as Alpha, Beta, and Gamma are all connected to the old uranium mining at Rayrock. They are not part of the remediation plan. Even though they are

very close to areas that are being treated, active clean-up taking place, sometimes less than 100 metres away.

The question that must be asked, Mr. Speaker, is this: What is the current state of contamination in these nearby lakes and why has that information not been made accessible to the people of Behchoko? The reports that do exist are highly technical and can only be interpreted by specialists.

Mr. Speaker, residents deserve clear and understandable information about what these results mean, what risks may exist, and why these nearby lakes were left out of the remediation plan. Mr. Speaker, if we want the Rayrock clean-up to truly protect people and the environment in the long term, we need a more open and complete approach that means clearly sharing test results, explaining what they mean in plain language, and ensuring that all impacted lakes are properly studied, including those not covered in the current clean-up plan. The safety of our land and water must never be left in question. Not negotiable.

I urge the government to work with the responsible authorities to share information with the community of Behchoko and make sure residents are kept informed and protected throughout the Rayrock clean-up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have question for the Minister of ECC.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Members' statements. Member from the Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 788-20(1):
DEVOLUTION AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over a decade ago, the NWT devolution agreement fundamentally transformed our territory's future. We gained province-like control over the public lands, our resources, our economic destiny. This was not merely an administrative transfer; it was a recognition that Northerners are best positioned to make decisions about the North. Legislation still remains with the Government of Canada.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I spoke of the declining resource sector, mineral industry departure. Mr. Speaker, with devolution came the authority to conditionally manage our own minerals, oil and gas development. We gained the power to collect royalties and keep up to 50 percent of resource revenues. We secured the right to make our own decisions on land use

permits, regulatory timelines. These are not symbolic powers, Mr. Speaker. They are tools of economic resilience. Yet tools are only as valuable as our willingness to use them.

As we face the imminent loss of Diavik royalty revenues in the coming months and navigate uncertainty federal political landscape, we must ask ourselves are we fully seizing the opportunities that territorial control provides? Are we exercising our hard-won independence with the urgency of our economic situation demands?

Mr. Speaker, evolution for devolution, economic resilience is not built through hesitation; it is built through decisive action by using our devolved authorities to streamline approvals, attract investment, and demonstrate to the world that the Northwest Territories is truly open for responsible development.

Mr. Speaker, within the agreement, we have partial control and now want total independence. Now we have the aggression to use both secure and economic future. Later I will have questions to the Premier. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 789-20(1):
ARCTIC SECURITY WORKING GROUP
MEETING IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw attention to the House of an event happening next week in Yellowknife, the Arctic security working group being held in Yellowknife at the Joint Task Force North on November 5th and 6th, Mr. Speaker. To build relationships, nurture partnerships, and identify opportunity the for collaboration is their aim, Mr. Speaker, to continue discussion around Operation NANOOK and continue information sharing between member stakeholders and the Arctic security working group.

The theme for the two days is shared infrastructure with DND, especially in the northern operational hub, such as Inuvik, Yellowknife, and Iqaluit. There are 226 people registered in person and virtually. And I understand, Mr. Speaker, that every federal department will have representatives participating in this event, and I encourage, Mr. Speaker, our government to ensure that we have the same level of participation. I note that Minister Wawzonek is on a panel with Mayor Peter Clarkson of Inuvik and Yellowknife Mayor Ben Hendrickson on doing a panel on

perspectives on dual use infrastructure. And I also note, Mr. Speaker, that the MOU I spoke of in a previous Member's statement between Yellowknife and Inuvik to share information has now officially been signed.

Mr. Speaker, Arctic security is a growing concern nationally, for the NWT, our communities like Inuvik, and that are designated as northern operation hubs. Identifying and building shared infrastructure that is beneficial for our communities and DND is critical to help address our infrastructure deficit. Arctic security is an opportunity for all levels of government in the Northwest Territories to work with DND and ensure the North and Arctic are fully involved and share in these benefits. As we continue to see less sea ice, Mr. Speaker, and more open water in the Canadian Arctic and specifically in the Northwest Passage, Arctic security is a growing concern.

The freightship that was grounded this summer in the central Arctic was successfully salvaged and refloated without serious environmental issues, but this further supports the need for better Arctic security and monitoring, Mr. Speaker. The eyes of Canada, North America, and indeed the world are upon us. We have to be ready to meet this moment, Mr. Speaker, as the true guardians of the Arctic. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 790-20(1):
MEASURES IN DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS
PLANS TO ADDRESS TRAUMA

MS. REID: Mr. Speaker, the annual business plans of the GNWT are presented to Members and, in recent years, to the public as demonstrating how government is implementing its mandate. The mandate is built by departments and Cabinet to implement the 20th Assembly's priorities. This is the Russian nesting doll of the hierarchical system of how the GNWT chooses to action priorities of this House.

One of our collective priorities is access to health care and addressing the effects of trauma. And, Mr. Speaker, two years in, I wonder how effectively we are addressing trauma. This is concerning for many reasons.

It gives me pause especially because all of our priorities intersect. We can't have a healthy economy without addressing trauma. We can't address trauma without meaningfully addressing suitability, accessibility, and

affordability of housing. We can't have safe residents and communities without addressing trauma and how it impacts public safety.

I spent part of my summer reviewing every business plan item related to addressing trauma. Many of these actions are things that the government was already doing prior to our election. Some of them are arguably under-resourced. Very few, if any of them, can be argued to have anything to do with addressing the root causes of trauma. I'd argue that only a few departments and agencies have meaningful actions in this regard, and I'd rather we target them more effectively, strategically, than trying to stretch a connection to trauma. For example, a committee meets a certain number of times a year as a target of our success.

Mr. Speaker, it's also notable that some departments have made very little progress so far under all priorities, not just the actions under trauma. This year's business plan update is going to be a crucial -- this coming year's business plan update, I should say, is going to be crucial for this House to dissect. I should ask all of us to consider, what is the point of a business plan if you're not effectively monitoring and evaluating your progress to know if your actions are meaningful or impactful?

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance oversees departmental business plan submissions. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Member statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 791-20(1):
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
TEACHERS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, the schools across the North could collectively face a \$60 million cut in Jordan's Principle funding for support staff. Programs and services come to an end. Yet, even when this funding, our schools have long struggled to provide quality education because their communities face severe shortage of affordable housing for teachers. Despite these challenges, schools in my communities continue to seek the best educators for our Indigenous children, teachers with skills and expertise to offer diverse classes and meet unique needs. They work hard to recruit top talent from colleges and universities across Canada when competition with the rest of the country is tough. Many of these teachers have mortgages to pay back home, and when they see rent here climbing well over \$2,000 a

month before even factoring in utilities and overall costs of living, they don't see the North as an option. Instead, they see the south to communities they provide teachers with free housing or, in cases of Nunavut communities, where staff housing is subsidized. Here in the Northwest Territories, meanwhile staff housing whittled away over time leaving the problem to DEAs which lack the necessary resources. All teachers can rely on now are market rentals which were never truly affordable and have become more expensive this year.

Our children have treaty rights to education. Yet students in my communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e cannot access the same quality of education as their peers here in Yellowknife. Their schools struggle to recruit teachers and when they do, many don't last for long. Just a few days ago, I was informed that one of my communities lost yet another teacher. Once again, a lack of housing was to blame.

Mr. Speaker, our government must stand up for our small communities and our treaty rights because leaving classrooms without teachers is unacceptable. Later today, I will be asking the Premier to listen to our voices and join us in creating a solution they deserve in collaboration and also to uphold the treaty rights to education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 792-20(1):
STRATEGIC PLANNING

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past few days in response to my statements, I've had a few Ministers respond that the last thing we need is to burn up staff's time creating more strategies and reports that don't take us anywhere. We need to focus on actions. Mr. Speaker, I agree with that sentiment. So I want to clarify what I've been getting at in my statements about strategy, analysis, and planning.

The difficulty we have in taking effective action is the GNWT is a large organization with diverse and sometimes competing mandates. If we don't focus our work, we end up going in far too many directions and the work isn't effective. That's why I keep coming back to analysis and strategy. We need to focus our work. We need to assess its effectiveness at addressing the problems we're facing and course correct when we're off track. Without effective strategy and planning, it's difficult to articulate what we are doing on any given front. It's even more difficult for staff to understand what's expected of them.

I think Cabinet does understand the need for focus and have demonstrated it in their own work. Very early on, the Premier identified he wanted to change how federal engagement was done. Rather than show up to Ottawa with a laundry list of ideas and asks, we are focusing on just a few things. Determining whether they are the right things is where analysis can be helpful.

The reason I've repeatedly referenced the Greenland Economic Council is that entity provides expert economic analysis as to whether the government's actions are targeted at the right things and whether they're being effective. That kind of advice can help us break out of entrenched perspectives and introduce ideas we haven't considered or show us where we aren't doing enough. For those reasons, I think this kind of analysis is essential to effective economic planning.

I have attached my suggestions about analysis and planning to the proposal to create an economic vision because that initiative was included in the business plans as part of mandate implementation. It has been further referenced by the government in response to calls in the environmental audit for more effective economic planning.

Mr. Speaker, I don't like ineffective strategies any more than our Ministers, and I don't like wasting time. That's why I called for measures to make the vision effective and get it done quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 793-20(1):
DELIVERY MODELS OF GOVERNMENT
SERVICES

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what should the government be doing about the economy? We sometimes hear that we should be running government like a business. If only we elected business people, then we'd get the territory booming in no time.

Historically, it has been easy to confuse business with government because of places like this that were founded as company towns. The gold mines built much of Yellowknife's early infrastructure. Imperial Oil built Norman Wells, you know, back in the good old days when we got things done. Now, the land corporations and dev corps connected to Indigenous governments are significantly expanding their business ventures and looking to take big stakes in mining and oil and gas. So

are government and industry basically the same or should they be?

I think it's safe to say that a pure free-market economy doesn't exist anywhere in the world but especially not in the NWT given the level of government intervention and the extent that government procurement affects prices and government salaries affect wage pressures in the private sector. So is the solution for the GNWT to lean in and operate like a proper business?

It's important to remember that a business succeeds by maximizing profits, by squeezing the most money out of its customers, and by avoiding paying for damages it causes. The business model that built Yellowknife violated treaty obligations and left the public on the hook for billions of dollars in cleanup costs with irreparable damage to the land and water. Plus, the mining business model is famously a high-risk gamble. Most ventures fail, fold up and leave, and even when they succeed the idea is to take everything as quickly as you can and then still leave. Governments cannot afford to fail or to lose everything on a bad bet. The whole population cannot just pick up and leave.

So no, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it will serve the public interest to operate health care as a for-profit industry or public housing as if it was a real estate business. We should, indeed, expect excellence from government, but government's mission is not to shake down residents for maximum profits. It's also not to make every single northern business a winner. Government's mission is to provide physical and social infrastructure, the foundation for all residents to have a chance to succeed with clear and fair rules. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues. So in conclusion, instead of spending our time and resources trying in futility to steer industry by the tail, let's focus on excelling at running government as government, not as a business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 794-20(1):
EXPANSION OF TRADES TRAINING
PROGRAMS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am going to talk about an opportunity that can support our workforce, diversify our economy, and just make sure life is just a little

bit more enjoyable. It all starts by working through the Apprenticeship, Trade, and Occupational Certification Act and that particular program, Mr. Speaker. I am going to highlight two issues in this area of opportunity, but I am going to probably drill down a little further on one.

The first one we've all probably heard of, it's called landscaping and horticulture. Did you know it's a red seal trade program? Across the country, you can get certification in that. You can get support through Alberta, BC, Ontario, and many other jurisdictions.

Now, I am going to test the Assembly today. Does anyone really flow what a lather and interior systems mechanic is? I hear silence, Mr. Speaker. You know why? Because no one knows what that is. It's drywall for goodness sakes. And they're everywhere. They're key to our economy. They're key to building. So like horticultures, they provide essential services. Like drywallers, drywallers fix buildings and help maintain and bring them to life, horticulturists are landscaping people who help bring our community to life through sustainability options, health and beauty, trees, plants. They do many things to aid in the biodiversity of our community, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, two opportunities, and there are many more, speaking of which that the NWT trades program could expand and ask itself how are we supporting these trades.

I had asked someone in the trade the other day often do you see drywallers apprentice. They said they don't; they all come up from down south. I said but they're everywhere, like mushrooms after a fire; they just bloom. But yet sure enough, no one is training them. There is no trades program for drywallers in the Northwest Territories. I got asked by someone in the landscaping and horticulture business why isn't the trades program facilitating their staff so they could take on this training. It helps their skills, it helps our neighbours, it helps our community, and it empowers the workers to earn more money and to provide expertise in areas that people don't necessarily get.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk back to the point of saying an opportunity to strengthen or workforce, diversify our economy, and see a real opportunity that has been sort of going by, let's pause for a moment and ask ourselves is there a way to start facilitating these opportunities. And I certainly say there is ways we can strengthen our community, empower workers, and do more for Northerners as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 795-20(1):
CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR BERTHA
RUBY NORWEGIAN

HON SHANE THOMPSON: Colleagues, I regret to inform you, with a heavy heart, that Bertha Ruby Norwegian passed away on September 22nd, 2025. The family held her Celebration of Life on October 15th at the Fort Simpson Rec. Centre. Unfortunately, we were in session that day, so I missed the celebration.

On July 5th, 1955, Berna and her twin sister Bertha came into this world. As Berna said they were always meant to be together. They both would go on their separate adventures but somehow, they ended up back together until Bertha passed away.

I had the pleasure of knowing Bertha and Berna for over ten years. If I wanted to hear a more informed perspective, all I had to do was go visit these two amazing ladies. The stories they would share with you was just like a movie. There was always a twist and turn that made you always wanting to come back for more.

During the flood, their home and personal properties were destroyed (over 90 percent) but as sad as it was, they never complained. It was always about how they would move forward. This was the time I got to know them better.

I can say that Grace and I would go visit and the last time we had the opportunity to visit Bertha was at the long-term care home about a week before her passing. She was still engaged and talkative as always.

Like most individuals, it is hard to share their life story. Here is a person that did things from washing dishes to training to be stunt double to rebuilding helicopters, a composer, special advisor to five premiers, and named one of the top 500 women in Canada, so I have attached Berna's eulogy that was read by Malo Antoine, which I will like deemed read and then printed in the Hansard.

Now, I would like to share a couple of stories. After finishing school, Bertha and Berna moved to Calgary to start working on their own. Even though they were no longer in school, they did not stop learning. They made sure each paycheque they would purchase books so they could continue to read and educate themselves. Berna recently told Grace and myself that they would take characters out of the book and live their lives according to these characters. All I can say is these characters must have been amazing.

Another story that jumps out to me was Bertha was always dressed for success. She always said you need to look the part if you want to get places in this world and, boy, did she get to those places. If you heard her story, you could not believe this Rabbitskin Dene was so accomplished. The funny thing was, Berna was the opposite of her sister, very laid back, but she was just as successful in her ways.

The family would like to thank the elders care staff, home care, Dr. Smylie, oncology staff, McKenna Funeral Home, Rowe's Construction, GP2U, Deh Cho Suites, and Trail Printing during their difficult time.

In closing, I would like to read a few words modified from a song (Spearmaidens) composed and written by Bertha and Berna:

You know our beliefs, you know it, our agonies. You know only you can lift our spirits high. Sister to my soul, takes us to the gathering, To the gathering of worshippers. For blessed are nights, we sing to him, and blessed are the nights, You'll sing with us and glory be the day, God smiled on you. Now go and be our light our dearest and most beloved Bertha.

Bertha will be sadly missed.

Berna Norwegian (written) and read by Malo Antoine.

Born in Fort Simpson, Bertha lived the early years of her life in Rabbitskin. Those years of her life she always remembered; her memories of Dad and Jane waiting for Hilda to be born were years of incredible beauty and contentment. She often spoke of those times as one of simplicity, comfort, songs and love.

She had a great love for the land and understood that everything we needed was provided by the land and animals. We were never hungry, cold, sick and always had a tent or cabin for shelter. She was a happy child.

Her constant wish was that our people would use the great spirit of the land and waters to solidify their hopes, their desire for quiet peace, and build up the dreams of the youth by preparing them for a life of work, good health, and receive rewards of joy in love and friendship. Bertha believed that in embracing the land; the land would become your teacher because a better life of pride and freedom will soar in your spirit.

Throughout her life, Bertha had two great loves: Our people and the land. To her final breath the future of our people was always on her mind.

When Bertha turned 5, the residential schools started, and she was trapped in that terrible story for 13 years. We all now know the legacy of and the impact it had on our beloved people and the great damage it did to many generations. To her last day she never forgave the church, government and perpetrators.

However, Bertha refused and never lived her life as a victim. She believed that we are all born with a part of God in us. She believed that if everyone just chose to trust that great inner presence in all of us, we would all live happier, healthier lives.

After she left the residential school system, Bertha travelled and lived a few weeks or months in several Canadian cities. We were living in Toronto and one morning I got up and she was frantically packing some bags. I asked her what she was doing. She said I's going to Hollywood, California. What the heck are you going to do there? As it turned out, she has seen an advertisement in the newspaper for training stunt doubles for actresses and actors. So, she moved to Hollywood and settled right into a room for rent and her neighbours were Robert Redford and Paul Newman. She did finish the training and decided it was too dangerous doing that kind of work. So, we need up back in good old Fort Simpson and I think we were 20. so again, one morning I got up and Bertha is running around packaging bags again. I asked her where she was going this time and she said Borden, Ontario. Borden? What are you going to do there? She said I am going to learn to be a fixed wing mechanic. So off she went.

After her course, she was hired by Trans Quebec Helicopters as an apprentice to work on their rotary winged aircrafts. Rebuilding crashed helicopters and maintaining others according to aviation protocols. She worked at the Lake La Grande Hydro Dam site for several years. From there she joined AeroArctic and maintained a helicopter in a geology camp 80 miles south of Cambridge Bay. Her last helicopter engineer stint was in Prince Rupert where she worked for Silver Grizzlies Helicopter. She really enjoyed as most of her work was on Sikorsky and Bell 206 Helicopters.

During these years, Bertha always carried a guitar. She attributes most of the early years of learning to play to Peter Hope and the many years played by ear as opposed to reading notes on a page. In around 1985, Bertha was discovered as a natural talent and a Master Guitarist, where Boswell took her under his wing, enrolling her into UBC, where she studied classical guitar for three years. When Bertha was about 10 years old, we saw a movie called the "Sound of Music." From that day on she

wished with all her heart to play a classical guitar for a princess in a castle. No audience. Just the princess and her. Well as it turned out, Bertha went to Austria for six weeks in 1986 and the village she was in, were amazed that there was a real Canadian Indian in town. Well, everyone had to meet her.

As it turned out, there was a Contessa, who lived in a castle in the area. The Contessa sent a private invitation to Bertha to come and play her guitar in the castle. The Contessa wasn't a princess, but it didn't matter She took this a helping her achieve her childhood dream. So, hang on to your dreams; you never know what will come your way in life.

In 1992, Bertha recorded a "CD" called Spearmaidens. It has been played in 136 countries.

Bertha did many other significant things in her life. Everything from washing dishes to rebuilding helicopter gave her a sense of pride and the experience of learning what is really means to have self-respect and tried every day to hand down that knowledge. You cannot respect others if you have no respect for yourself.

Part of Bertha's dream was also to be a MLA for the Nahendeh. She had so many ideas and hopes for all people in the riding. She was very disappointed when she didn't win, but something very good came out of her running for MLA. Nellie Cournoyea, who became the Premier hired Bertha to be a Special Advisor to her on Women's equality matters which ended up being involved in social and justice issues, housing, promoting the advancement of youth through job creation initiatives and many such goals. As it turned out, she became special advisor to five Premiers over a 16-year period. As Advisor, Bertha was heavily involved with the Federal / Provincial / Territorial Premiers and government representatives. As a result of her contributions and work, Bertha was named as one of the top 500 most influential people in Canada. She always laughed about it, saying she was number 500.

Her plan was always to retire at the age of 50 which is what she did. So, for about 12 years after retirement, she travelled much or Europe and Isreal. Her stories and experiences will live on in the hearts of the many people she befriended and loved so much.

Bertha was diagnosed with cancer in 2018. She fought a long hard battle with great dignity. Only once in December of 2019, did she cry because she was so tired of being sick.

In the those years, when still working for the helicopter companies and then the government

everyday she made it a point of buying a lunch for someone didn't matter who she did it because she cared. Bertha often would tell people that she loved them and the love she shared was unconditional. More than her own life, she loved the land and the people with every fiber of her being. Rest in Peace, Bertha. You have earned that heavenly reward.

Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 796-20(1):
EULOGY FOR LARRY GALT

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to pay my respects to Range Lake constituent Larry Galt.

Larry was born in Red Deer, Alberta, in 1952, and in the words of his son Isaiah, Larry was a real northern legend. A fisherman, a hunter, a mechanic, a master of duct tape and zip ties, a bush rat, a grandfather to a thousand kids and animals around the world, a friend, a sponsor, a mentor, a brother, an uncle, a son, and a father.

Larry came to Yellowknife in 1971 to work at Con Mine, and not long after he discovered life in the bush and all the exciting opportunities for adventure it offered. He took up firefighting and later spent months at a time prospecting where he found his calling in mining exploration, a career he happily pursued for over 30 years.

From his earliest memory, Larry knew the bush was where he belonged - fishing, hunting, trapping, and generally traipsing around. He loved the lifestyle of freedom but knew he also needed to focus on his friends, family, and most of all himself.

Larry joined Alcoholics Anonymous in 2002 and never strayed. In his words it was my time to quit. When it's your time, it's your time. Now I'm doing all these things I always talked about. You've just got to work at it and never give up.

At AA, Larry affected the lives of many, staying by their bedside, spending time, and listening as they moved on to their next journey.

In his final years, he traveled the country on his bike, visiting friends coast to coast, and in Australia and Central America, fishing wherever he could along the way. When he wasn't on the road, he was homesteading in a cabin along the Mackenzie Highway for many years.

Larry's real legacy is through remembering laughter and good times and through tears and sad times. His unwavering love for his friends was second only for the love of his two children,

Isaiah and Leah. He was a very proud father who enjoyed celebrating the company of his kids. He is missed by many, and our community is better for having had Larry Galt as part of it. Gone too soon. Rest in peace, Larry, our Bushman with a heart.

MR. SPEAKER: Our condolences go out to the families and friends of this amazing individual.

Member statements. Members' statements. Motions. Member from the Yellowknife Centre.

Motions

MOTION 64-20(1):
NAMING OF THE 50TH STREET
AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPLEX,
CARRIED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS Housing Northwest Territories is building a new 50-unit affordable housing complex on 50th Street in Yellowknife, located between the Gold Range Bistro and the Raven Pub;

AND WHEREAS it is hoped that occupancy can take place in late 2026 or early 2027 to help families with affordable housing;

AND WHEREAS the new affordable housing complex is being supported by a contribution of \$20.8 million through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rapid Housing Initiative in partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the land for this initiative was donated by the city of Yellowknife as their contribution of help meet the needs of affordable housing opportunities in the city;

AND WHEREAS Housing Northwest Territories will be the owner this building and, once completed, it is intended to also house the future office of the Yellowknife Housing Authority;

AND WHEREAS this 50-unit affordable housing complex will be one part of the mosaic of solutions helping those who are experiencing affordability, homelessness, and other housing challenges in the North;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories has guidelines for selecting names of Government of the Northwest Territories-owned office buildings;

AND WHEREAS the executive council of the Government of the Northwest Territories is well within its authority to waive their building

naming policy and directly name this new building;

AND WHEREAS the guidelines for selecting names of Government of the Northwest Territories-owned office buildings do not apply to Government of the Northwest Territories-owned buildings designed primarily to deliver programs and services to the public;

AND WHEREAS the late Anthony Wilfred James Whitford (Tony), originally from the town of Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, as a young Metis man started his journey with humble beginnings, with a lifelong history of public service, dedication and advocacy for Northerners;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Range Lake, that the executive council of the Government of the Northwest Territories name the new 50-unit affordable housing complex on 50th Street in Yellowknife the Anthony (Tony) W.J. Whitford Building;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to this motion in 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been thinking about this for a year and holy smokers, I felt like something really ran over me there when I was trying to read the motion in, and I guess it's a surge of emotion and respect for the Whitford family, Tony in particular, and of course people like his brother Marc who we have here in the gallery today. And I want to thank the Whitford family for allowing me to bring forward this initiative. I'd spoken to his three sons in different forms who I knew. I think I pressed the issue in particular to two of them out of the three, and everyone I spoke to in different ways all liked the idea of the initiative.

I am going to talk a little bit about Tony and why he represented the North so well. I mean, if I would like to begin, I'd like to call him one, not the only, in all fairness, but, you know, one of the North's favourite sons.

He was Captain NWT in my mind. He never missed an opportunity to talk about the North. He loved visiting Northerners. There wasn't a hand he couldn't find time to shake or pause to say hello to somebody. If he didn't know you, he made sure, you know, he stopped and said hi to you anyway, and he had a heart. He wore his heart on his sleeve.

I've known Tony, as I said previously when I talked about him, that I've known him basically my whole adult life. And I even knew him when I was a teenager, but I really got to know him as I got older. For some it's Tony; for some it's Anthony; some it's a bunch of other ways to describe him, but to me he was a legend and a myth.

There are many things I know about him personally, and I'd like to start with that before I talk about his credits to this institution.

In many ways, he was a mentor to me, and many. And I don't want to say only to me; I want to stress to so many. You know, when we would be auctioneering together, whether it's at the Rotary bike auction or helping the NWT Disabilities Council, I knew nobody put more energy into those causes than him. You know, he has a wonderful story about, you know, being a JP. Why? Because he wanted to be there to help people in the kindest of ways. You know, there's so many steps about how he has honoured people by just being there.

One of the favourite stories I often hear is when even former Member Sandy Lee talked about how exciting it was to work for him, being one of Tony's team and how he empowered the team to get things done and how he'd always make time for people; he cared.

Now from his election experience, or I should say his formal public service through the Assembly, he was elected in the 12th Assembly and eventually became the Minister of health, then on the Minister of social services, the Minister responsible for Science Institute of the NWT. Then he went on to public utilities board, transportation, public safety and services.

Mr. Speaker, they may be titles, but the important factor is Tony was such a guy that would spend the time getting to know the people, the staff, and the issues. And he would take files home and he'd take every issue personally, like deeply, in the sense of he wanted to get to know the files, wanted to get to know the people, wanted to get to know the problems. He wasn't just let's keep the paper moving guy; he was the guy wanting to know the story. It was more than just a signature on a piece of paper to him. It was about what did this mean to help Northerners. And I can tell you that personally. I may not have sat in his office in any one of those portfolios, and that would be the truth, but the truth is I know what he's like when he wanted to deal and learn about an issue and learn about people.

He went on and became Speaker in the 14th Assembly, and he even served as

Sergeant-at-Arms in this Assembly. Such big shoes to fill; I could only imagine.

When I was in my first term, the 15th Assembly, he was named deputy Commissioner and then eventually made it to Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, a role I couldn't imagine being filled in a more perfect way. I'm not suggesting any of our Commissioners had done a bad job; I'm just saying it was so perfectly tailored for Tony. He was the guy. He liked being at the crowd, saying hi to people. And you know what? I think he was a beacon of light for most of us.

Now his history in the territories, as I said he was born in Fort Smith. He got his bachelor's degree in social work later in life. And to me, that was a perfect fit for the guy who cared about everything and everyone. It was the perfect, perfect application for a guy to pursue because he genuinely did care, and it was a perfect fit. And of course he later married his wife Elaine and had his children, or I should say his studies came after he had the kids technically but that's here nor there.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, all I can tell you is that the Whitford family, you know, is a combined family. Yes, it may not just be Tony. I mean, it's Marc and the contributions of the other brothers as well. It's a significant family that has made such much a strong dedication. But Tony's highlights, I'll tell you make me proud as being his friend. And as I've said before, I was Tony's friend. I think he was friends with so many people, but he was also my friend in the sense as well, and it was very exciting.

Tony would tell me stories. I remember as we'd sit outside either having coffee at Tim Horton's or even talking here about his days working for Helen Nasogaluak, the former Commissioner, or even John Parker, our legendary Commissioner, about days that have changed that even helped move the Northwest Territories government to where it is today. You know, if you'd asked him about one role, what mattered more, I don't think he could pick it. You know, could you say was it best being Commissioner? He'd probably say well, some days. But then he'd regale a story about being a marriage commissioner or a justice of the peace, the way he had influenced and touched people's lives.

And I can certainly say I am one of the lives that he had touched and helped, I think, improve for the best. I mean, I'm so grateful for his time and his energy that he's dedicated to this House. He'd served many years in the best of ways, and I think his accomplishments by themselves I think we could spend hours talking about but,

more importantly, we're here to just run through the highlights that I'm trying to cover.

I know his parliamentary experience, he believed in this institution. When he was made Speaker, I mean I would often see how proud he was about the process, the dedication, the history, the respect for everything, and how important it was to him here.

He had a sense of humour and from time to time, he'd lay the law down, too, and he was very good at both. But he was very kind when people stepped the line when he was Speaker. And to me, that's the essence of what he was. Yes, here are the rules; I'll let you colour out of the lines a little bit, but you know what, the institution matters; do not offend the structure of the institution and he would pull you back in. I mean, I believe, if I remember correctly, he presided over the Mickey Mouse tie debates, the great thundering roll about what proper attire is in the Assembly. And he'd seen many stories that have changed, that turned legends of what we've seen into myths. But to me, he's one of the greatest legends of the Northwest Territories we've had. And sometimes it's the old, if we want to drill down too far, I think we missed the point. Really, the generosity of his time and his kindness is the greatest gift he's given us all and hence that's why I want this opportunity to say this motion is -- you know, I was honestly having trouble reading it. I didn't think it would impact me as much as it did, even just thinking about it. Getting it organized was no big deal. It was like oh, just type away, type away. But until the words were being uttered today, I mean, I just felt this weight that I haven't felt in a while. Because I think it not just matters to me; it matters to a lot of people.

And as I am going to finish and pause and welcome any thoughts from folks, my colleagues that is, I couldn't do this without the support of the Whitford family, both Linda and Marc; I've appreciated that. His sons, Blair, Ian, and Warren. And I would say that city council of Yellowknife, I've reached out to them and they're excited by potentially this opportunity to have a conversation about this initiative. And that's not to put pressure on people how to vote; I want people to vote from the heart -- no, I do, genuinely I do. But there are many people excited by this. I mean, the people of Rotary hearing that, you know, this initiative was being brought up. I mean, he had received the Paul Harris Award.

Now, most people may not know what that is but that's an exemplary award through Rotary about community service. I mean, even his personal motto is about service. And if there's a person that really did walk the talk, it was Tony.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am going to pause here for now. And I should say at this point I will ask for a recorded vote just in case I forget later. And I would thank my colleagues for their consideration of this. And I think in the end of the day, this would be honouring a great man who has meant so much to the institution of this Assembly, the institution of government, but most importantly the families and the people his kindness had touched throughout the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is an easy motion to support, and I expect it will be an easy motion to pass. But it is fitting that someone who left such an indelible mark on the history of the Northwest Territories receives a lot of debate in this House about what he did.

Tony Whitford was not someone I knew as well as perhaps members of his family. I was, of course, much younger than Tony but, you know, I almost -- it's weird not to see him sitting at the table of this Assembly when in the 18th Assembly it was -- you wouldn't have a sitting of this House without Tony coming in for one day, you know, so you quickly learned who Tony is and you quickly learned the many titles that he was associated -- that he had received for his exemplary service to the Northwest Territories. And, I mean, if anyone doubts the impact he has made on people's lives, I think it's pretty hard to make the Member for Yellowknife Centre to cry and that is something that just happens. But, you know, Tony gave so much to the community, and it seems fitting that we honour his memory and his legacy with the way this motion suggests -- or not suggests, calls for, the new housing complex. Housing is going to make such a difference in Northerners' lives. We've heard that loud and clear. It is one of the commitments of this Assembly, and it seems even more fitting that as we've made significant progress advocating for better housing conditions for Northerners that we remember Tony's tremendous legacy by creating the new homes that people are going to enjoy, that are going to be an anchor for their security and support for years to come, bear his name. So I think this is such a fitting tribute to a man who was a giant in the North, and I wholeheartedly endorse it. And I think also Tony would like nothing more for the number one word of the day in Hansard to be Tony. So I am going to say, Tony, Tony, Tony, Tony, Tony, and I hope others will support this as well. Thank you.

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

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I just want to say I have such great respect for the legacy of Tony Whitford. Before he passed away, he was a Yellowknife North constituent, and I had the great pleasure and honour of visiting him, meeting with him several times, and he certainly has made a lasting impact on me.

I also certainly wouldn't want this to become a debate about how great of a man Tony Whitford was. First of all, I think we would be here for days but, also, I don't think it's probably an appropriate debate for this House. And I also just want to recognize that I understand Cabinet does have a naming policy for its buildings, and I'm not actually aware whether they've been receiving other submissions to name this particular building, perhaps after another great northern figure, or whether they might be considering a name that has some particular significance to northern heritage or culture or geography. But I certainly -- from my point of view, Tony Whitford is more than a worthy candidate for someone to name this building after, and I am certainly happy to endorse this option but at the same time I recognize it's not my decision to make. And actually I'm glad it's not my decision to make because it must be a very difficult one, especially if there are a number of people or things that we want to honour their great legacies in the NWT. So I'll be supporting the motion but also recognize that this is a Cabinet decision, and it must be a difficult one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't have said it any better than the previous presenters to a honourable person.

I had the opportunity of meeting and talking and discussing issues there with Tony in the 18th Assembly, and Mr. Speaker, he would humorously say I was a Speaker, I was a Commissioner, I was the MLA, I was the Sergeant-at-Arms, I was the Minister, and I was also told they're not going to hire me anymore because I don't know how to stick to a job. So the conversations we had was very humorous, and I'll never forget that. So it gives me great pleasure to support this motion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. To the motion. Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of my colleagues and don't have a huge amount to add here, but I'll just share some of the words that I shared when I heard of Mr. Whitford's passing.

I first met Mr. Whitford when he was working as the Sergeant-at-Arms in the Assembly and I was a young cub scout working as a page. To the pages in the room, this was actually my first job too.

He was a reassuring and warm figure in a pretty intimidating setting, and I've thought fondly of him since. He certainly made immeasurable contributions to our community and territory, and he was a deeply loved and deeply respected figure. And so, you know, similar to the Member for Yellowknife North pointed out the naming policy that Cabinet holds, and I had a look through the policy. It does seem like this suggestion is in line with the policy, and so I'm happy to add my weight behind the suggestion that this be brought forward and, you know, I think Mr. Whitford's legacy is absolutely -- I'm at a bit of a loss for words here, but it's something I think we can all agree, you know, he left a big impact on this territory, and so I think naming a building after him does make a lot of sense. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to also give support to this motion. I have known Tony for a long time, being here in Yellowknife since probably around 1977. And I met Tony many times in all coffee shops I can think of and all the times we talked about the good times and we talked about the treaties and his growing up in Fort Smith, and it was really -- he was really an honourable man, and I have great respect for him. And when he passed, you know, we lost an icon of the North that I could think of who gave his life so that he could represent the people in the Northwest Territories. And he's done that. And I know the family very well, and Marc Whitford up there, he's a very good friend of mine too as well, and the family. So imagine getting together with Tony and George Tuccaro and guys like Marc Whitford in the coffee shop; you know, we have memorable times. So I just want to continue to support -- let my colleagues know that I do support this motion for an honourable man. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the motion. Member from Nunakput.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by expressing my deepest respect for the late Tony Whitford. Though I did not have the privilege to know Tony personally, Mr. Whitford personally, I recognize and admire his lifelong dedication to the people of the Northwest Territories. He served this territory as a social worker, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, as Speaker, as Commissioner, and a tireless community volunteer. Mr. Whitford was a true champion of people and community, and his legacy and contributions will continue to inspire us all.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of that legacy that I understand and appreciate the Members' intent in bringing this motion forward. At the same time, it is important that when we consider the naming of government-owned buildings, we do so in a way that is fair, consistent, and respectful of the process. Our government has established guidelines for naming Government of the Northwest Territories-owned office buildings which set out how these decisions are to be made.

Under these guidelines, Cabinet may approve a public engagement process to solicit potential names that reflect the historical, cultural, and geographic significance of the Northwest Territories. The guidelines also allow for buildings to be named in honour of a deceased person who has made significant contributions to public life and to the well-being of territorial residents. When the GNWT followed a similar process in naming what is now the Liwego'ati Building here in Yellowknife, we invited residents to share their ideas through a public engagement process. Nearly 200 suggestions were received and reviewed by the Northwest Territories Honours Advisory Council which made recommendations to Cabinet using the same criteria outlined in the policy. That process ensured that the decision reflected both by the values of the people and the procedures designed to protect fairness and transparency. These processes and procedures exist to ensure that every naming decision, no matter how meaningful or personal, is guided by fairness, respect, and due process.

Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT is committed to following that same approach. Work will begin very shortly to prepare for a public engagement process to help identify an appropriate name for the new 50th Street affordable housing complex. This process will ensure that residents across the territory have an opportunity to share their ideas and that the final decision reflects both the intent of this motion and principles of fairness and inclusivity to guide our work.

Mr. Speaker, as a typical practice, when a motion provides direction to government, Cabinet will be abstaining from the vote on this motion. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Before we call the vote, Member from Yellowknife Centre, do you wish to close debate?

MR. HAWKINS: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. And thank you for those who spoke. I just want to briefly say a couple small things; I won't take the full 20 minutes. I'll be surprised if I get even to five.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very personal motion for me. It's not about the success of the motion that I need. I don't need that win. But what I think is the territory needs this win. I think Tony's legacy needs this win more than me. And that's what I'm stressing. It's not about me; it's about the passion that every time I think about his shadow walking by, standing in it -- I mean, he was an incredible giant and meant so much to us. And I think about the people he got to know and help. I mean, there's no public organization that has gone without feeling the loss of his impact.

When Cabinet -- I heard that -- respectfully, I heard the housing Minister. I hear you. I hear you. But, and that's why the motion says you have every ability at Cabinet to waive these policies. And I'm serious when I say this. This is not meant to be funny or cheeky or in any way. But I remember the NWT opening up, what should we call the NWT? The most popular name was Bob. And I'm not trying to make a joke of it. It's just how many hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of names might we get in the context of here's a worthy one. And we have the ability as leaders to make these types of decisions. This is not the difference between deciding who gets health care dollars or who gets road money or who gets into housing. This is to honour the name of a building. Okay. So I'm not saying it doesn't have an impact. As a matter of fact, it'll have an impact, a reminder, a symbol in this community about the Whitford family contribution to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up by reminding people that, you know, if you are a tugboat or barge operator riding the Mackenzie River, you too could become the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Whether you're turning wrenches as a mechanic in Lutsel'e or Tsiigehtchic or Behchoko, maybe one day maybe one day you'll be a marriage commissioner and on to your way to be a

Commissioner. A social worker, a plant operator, a public servant, a marriage commissioner, a notary public, a justice of the peace, and you can end up becoming one of the icons of the Northwest Territories. What I'm saying here, Mr. Speaker, Tony was our diamond in the rough. He came from extraordinary, humble beginnings, and his passion drove him to the highest contribution of public service.

Mr. Speaker, when he was the honorary table officer in my last Assembly before I was on my sabbatical of course, he would come in and sit as the honorary table officer and send me notes and pictures -- respectfully, that is -- and it was funny sending them back. And I could see him smile there because he'd have to help with things and be involved in things. I mean, his contribution to this Assembly is so deep and to our government.

And, Mr. Speaker, he's not the only one who would call me The Hawk, but as I'm walking around and I hear him bellow it out, I'd get the chills down my spine about saying there's Tony, you know, and I hear other people -- I mean, I've been called a lot of things but, I mean -- I mean, respectfully, of course, but nobody said it like him. And to me, I'll miss that. And you know what? I mean, I miss his voice. I miss his presence. And I know everybody here does as well. And for that, I'm grateful for the time and even energy that we were able to put in this consideration. And I do hope Cabinet will deeply think about the opportunity here. We have former Commissioners with buildings named after them, and their legacy pales in comparison, in my humble opinion, to this man that we speak of today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. The Member from Yellowknife Centre has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

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

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay

River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Colleagues, all those in favour, nine. Zero opposed. Six abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River South.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Minister Lisa Naylor. She's the Minister of transportation and infrastructure for the province of Manitoba -- oh, just about said Alberta. And Ciara Shatturk, also from Manitoba. Thank you very visiting.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to once again make note on the record, in the gallery we have Mr. Marc Whitford who is president of the North Slave Metis. He's also a friend. And he was the -- or I guess technically the still much, much, much younger Whitford of the family. So good to see you. And Mr. Jeremy Bird who happens to be a constituent who lives down the street from me, who's trying not to get noticed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize President Marc Whitford of the North Slave Metis Alliance. He's been a great partner with the GNWT, and we are continuously strengthening our relationship, and I look forward to continuing that progress over the rest of this term. So welcome. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a resident of Yellowknife South, Mr. Marc Whitford who is president of the North Slave Metis Alliance. He and Linda I've known many for, many years. We're almost neighbours. Welcome one more time to the gallery.

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

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize the president of the North Slave Metis Alliance Marc Whitford. We have some friendly discussions. Thank you.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also too want to recognize Marc Whitford, president of the North Slave Metis Alliance. As well, everybody else in the audience that's here, thank you, and welcome. Mahsi.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It should come at no surprise that I too would like to recognize President Marc Whitford, a good friend and a great contributor to our territory with his leadership of the North Slave Metis Alliance. Thank you.

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

If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers. Again, I'd like to thank you very much for allowing the 19 of us to represent the people of the Northwest Territories for the humble period of four years. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to see people in the gallery as far away as from Manitoba. Welcome.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 888-20(1):
ARCTIC SECURITY WORKING GROUP

MR. RODGERS: Me first out of the gate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my Member's statement, my questions are for the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that we have departmental representation at the Arctic security working group that's happening on November 5th and 6th. Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The working group is something that happens every year. Each year it is co-hosted by one of the three territories. This year Yukon is co-hosting. But every year we have departmental representation at this working group. It's a director and manager level working group, and it will be the -- we will be registering our staff here I guess the coming days. So yes, we will have a number of staff on this working group, and we are active participants. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly happy to hear that given the importance of sovereignty and the conversations that are happening around our sovereignty, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Premier speak a little to our engagement strategy as it stands today, initiatives around our engagement strategy on sovereignty with the federal government and the Department of National Defence. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, fortunately, before there was a lot of this discussion about Arctic sovereignty or Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, we were already working to advance projects that will enhance Canada's sovereignty, things like the Mackenzie Valley Highway, things like the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor, and that work remains ongoing. As well, we have at the departmental level my deputy minister is in very regular contact with folks over at DND. As well, there is regular contact with Joint Task Force North. You know, personally, I've met with Minister McGuinty, the Minister of National Defence, and Minister Champagne, the Minister of Finance, and had discussions. The deputy Premier and Minister of Finance I would say has had even more of those discussions and has been working more closely with the federal Department of Finance to advance asks and provide information and insight into the territory to those departments to ensure that they're aware of how we can be partners in the Arctic sovereignty conversation. So big opportunities in this area and a lot of work going on to ensure that we take advantage of those opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you. I haven't moved. Music to my ears, Mr. Speaker. Infrastructure partnership, sovereignty. And, listen, I know that this Premier's keen to that. I know there's work being done. A lot of the information I get, Mr. Speaker, is from the mayors in my region,

mayors in other regions, and from the Indigenous leaders. I wonder can the Premier commit to providing some information to this House -- even a one-pager, Mr. Speaker, I'm not asking to write a full presentation -- around the work that's been going on and continues to go on around Arctic sovereignty, something that I can share with my constituents and with the leadership in my region, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, I would be happy to do that, and I know the Member didn't necessarily want a full presentation, but I'm also happy to offer a briefing to standing committee that he chairs on our efforts in this area as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 889-20(1):
TEACHER HOUSING SHORTAGE IN SMALL
COMMUNITIES

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we became MLAs, we took oath of office to uphold section 35 of the Canadian Constitution on treaty rights. So I'm bringing this issue up on education as a treaty right. My question would be to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I'm directing these questions to the Premier because addressing the teacher housing shortage requires a whole of government approach. Currently CPI funding provided by MACA cannot be used for staff housing. Would this be changed so that communities have more tools to secure housing for teachers in small communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So based on feedback from community governments, MACA is adjusting the community public infrastructure policy to better address staffing housing challenges, particularly those affecting recruitment. MACA policy restrictions on using the CPI funding for staff housing had been suspended, and communities that have submitted staff housing in their financial reports have not been denied. So that's a yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier work with ECE to ensure district education authorities have the funding they need to provide housing subsidies and other solutions to attract teachers and offer

them affordable and comfortable housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I am very familiar with this issue. I was the Minister of education for four years, and I heard about the issues around teachers' housing quite often. In fact, I put in the mandate letters for the Ministers of housing, finance, and ECE to work to ensure market housing is available for teachers in small communities where a lack of housing has been identified as a barrier to teacher retention. So this is not a new subject, but it is one that is -- it takes some effort to get at the heart of.

Work that's been done to date includes putting together a list of all of the market housing available in had communities, supplying those to DEC's as well as Indigenous governments, so that they are aware of what is available. Of course, the GNWT isn't really in the business of providing housing to employees anymore outside of the market housing that is available for anyone to rent, and that's in part because there's so many teachers, right, there's so many nurses, there are such great needs that if we -- we can't meet all of those needs, and so there are economic opportunities for development corps or Indigenous governments to create housing in communities where there's a shortage every year of housing. And so we haven't gone into the business of building housing for teachers at this point, but work is going on to that end. For example, like I said, putting together that list of available housing units and the departments of ECE and housing have been having discussions on potential solutions moving forward. So it's not a cheap fix for this issue, but work is going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier provide my communities with a timeline for when Housing NWT will begin investing in staff housing for teachers in small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Probably a better conversation to have directly with the Minister of housing, but I know that there's about, I think, 900 individuals and families on waiting lists for housing across the territory. And so housing is really focusing on addressing those issues, working on ensuring that houses that need to be replaced that are past the end of their useful life are replaced, and so that's where a lot of the focus is right now. Nonetheless, this is still a live issue, and

we'll continue to make progress where we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 890-20(1):
DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLANS AND
EVALUATION

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain the process for assessing whether or not a departmental business plan action is effectively addressing a priority of this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the point of having the business plans is exactly to provide a venue and a vehicle for doing this exact work, providing us a four-year timeline so that this House can actually and effectively look at whether or not the department is achieving the business plan as set out, whether or not they should be questioned during the course of main estimates, whether or not the funding that's being proposed in main estimates aligns to what they're seeing in the business plans. The Department of Finance does set out a template. We do have expectations of what goes in that template, and that includes if there are annual evidence-based progress, performance measures, so on. So, you know, again, I'm not going to stand here, Mr. Speaker, and go into great detail, but that is really what the foundational purpose of those business plans is, and they're meant to be a vehicle and a tool for being held to account in this House. Thank you.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me how many of the core departments, agencies, health authorities, and educational councils have monitoring and evaluation staff to effectively select priorities that align with the GNWT mandate and priorities of this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an area, Mr. Speaker, where it's, I think, good to acknowledge that only a few short years ago we had very few evaluative staff in the service of the public service, and we certainly have increased our roster over the last few years and increased the focus through initiatives such as government

renewal which really does expect all departments to participate in monitoring and evaluation. So, at present, Mr. Speaker, we have seven different departments and agencies who have their own embedded staff, but in the absence of that, Mr. Speaker, we do work with the policy staff. We, being the Department of Finance, do work with policy staff with individual departments and further are looking to find ways to continue to broaden and strengthen the training so that folks can undertake this work, whether as a specialized entity or within their own roles as policy staff. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre -- or Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We look so much alike.

Mr. Speaker, many of the actions that are purported to address trauma are about staff training. Some have targets about the number of times a committee meets. Can the Minister provide rationale about how these sorts of actions directly impact the root causes of trauma? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to start by saying that the number of times a committee meets doesn't address the root causes of trauma, and that's certainly to say right now -- I'll certainly be more than happy to go back to the department and through the business planning, overseeing that we do make sure that our commitments are more clear than simply the number of times a committee meets.

With respect to training, though, Mr. Speaker, the frontline public service staff -- well, all public service staff, those writing policies, those interacting with individuals, those who are trying to direct the work of their departments, having them being able to provide a truly trauma-informed lens on the work that they do is fundamental. And so to that effect, Mr. Speaker, I would defend the efforts of trying to make sure that every single member of the public service understands the root causes of trauma, their interactions with people who may have experienced trauma, and their role, indeed, in preventing trauma and healing trauma. So, you know, happy to talk further to the Member about some of the elements that I acknowledge might not be getting to that, but certainly with respect to trauma, I do hope that our public service continues to take it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 891-20(1):
SUPPORTING TRADES AND
APPRENTICESHIPS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I talked about some challenges and certainly some opportunities we could all do to help with the trades and development of workers here in the Northwest Territories, including our economy. Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what can she do to help with the Department of ECE, and in also further partnership with the Aurora College, to help recognize further trades, in particular, as I noted landscaping and horticulture, as well as the lather and interior mechanics systems, also known as drywall. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of ECE.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we currently follow the national, what's called the NOT Code, so the trades that are identified under national standards, and so that's the system that we adhere to to make sure that we're being consistent with the whole country. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those two trades I had highlighted are red seal. Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister what actions or initiatives could she take to help initiate the conversation to allow some type of access opportunity to this accreditation. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the clarification from the Member. And so what we'd be looking for there is really demand. So there's a number of different trades that are available across the country, a number of different trades programming that is available to students in the Northwest Territories, and if we had the demand from students and from people wanting to seek that kind of particular -- oh my goodness, I've lost the word that I'm looking for, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. Certification. Thank you. If we had the demand for it, then we would be able to pursue that through Aurora College. But really it is student-initiated demand to make sure that we're filling classrooms as best we can. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate what the Minister's response was in the last one. So I mean, I can't specifically criticize demand or opportunity, but that said, she can

also facilitate through the process. And the simple example I'd say is that when an electrician goes for their second year and it's not available at a Aurora College, they can then be referred to down south and it's a bit of a process. In other words, if it doesn't fit we can find a way. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister find a way to help access other programs as noted are available in Ontario, Alberta, BC, etc.? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So the Member is absolutely right. When programs are not offered here, then often our students will go down to Alberta, for example at NAIT. So quite often, we end up with students who are doing their first and second year here in the Northwest Territories, and then their third and fourth year are being facilitated at other institutions. Predominantly, they end up going down to Alberta. I will also say the chair and board of governors of Aurora College is looking at other ways of increasing their trades offerings and making sure that they're increasing access to students across the Northwest Territories, and I really look forward to seeing the evolution of those programs as they come. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 892-20(1):
2025 REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY -
HOUSING IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the auditor general's recently released housing in the Northwest Territories report, there's some shocking findings, actually. And I think it deserves it's, what the press are calling it, scathing, which is unfortunately all too often what we hear about auditor general reports in the Northwest Territories. So as these findings were very similar from reports of 2008 and 2012, how is the Minister going to do something different? Because both times, housing has responded to these reports, they have failed to make progress. Thank you.

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

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for the question. I believe that housing has a lot of work to do. And I've mentioned this during the press conference and several interviews with media over the last couple of days. In terms of what

are we going to do better is we need to do a lot of more -- we need to do more follow-up. We need to do more quarterly reporting. We need to keep those decision-makers that are making decisions accountable for reporting and to getting things done, completed, especially around when we look at houses across the North, the unit condition rating is quite shocking that in some reports, we have up to 90 percent for unit condition ratings. But when you go into the home, it's not a 90 percent unit condition rating. So we need to look at how we're doing things and how we can do things better. One thing that I do note moving forward is I've asked the president that we provide quarterly reporting from the LHOs to the districts to headquarters to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past, saying on outset we're going to fix these problems has always been the case. So follow through does remain important. But we have contributed significant financial resources for new buildings of homes in this Assembly. We're supposed to be on track for 211 new homes. So what confidence can the Minister give the House that that money is actually going to complete these projects and get those homes on the ground? Because this audit leaves a doubt in my mind. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm confident with the team at Housing NWT, with the team we have at headquarters, and having these internal discussions over the last couple of days, we have to drive this. And we know that with this Legislative Assembly that housing is the number one priority. And I have made my expectations very clear to staff that we need to drive this and get this done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister saying it's a call to action and she's going to address this. Those are the right words to say; we need more than that. Will the Minister put the results of this audit and addressing the results with an action plan, will she tie those to performance pay, to promotions, to some sort of internal metric at Housing NWT that will have real consequences for staff if they're unable to address the concerns of these audits, which I'll remind you, go back now to 2008. Thank you.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, I have stressed the urgency to staff, to headquarters and district

staff, that this is something that needs to be addressed. It's been 13 years since the last OEG audit, and it hasn't improved. The Member is correct; it hasn't improved. It's probably gotten a lot worse. But in terms of performance pay and performance reviews, these are internal discussions, and these are human resource issues, so I'm not prepared to discuss them on the floor of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from the Sahtu.

QUESTION 893-20(1):
DEVOLUTION INITIATIVES

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my statement on devolution, my questions are to the Premier today. Starting with the first one, can the Premier explain, since our 20th Assembly began is there any discussions or progress that have been made on transferring total devolution, control of devolution between this government and the federal government? Thank you.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And of course, we signed the devolution agreement, you know, it's a little over 10 years ago now, and we do a lot of work related to that agreement. Of course, all of the land and resources legislation that we advance is under that agreement and it's done in partnership with the other signatories to devolution. And so any discussion about devolution necessarily includes those Indigenous governments who have signed on. So we continue to work through that process. We continue to work with our partners. We're working closely with Canada, the Yukon government, and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on implementing the legislation for the Turiq Offshore Accord. So a lot of work is going on with devolution, and I'll be meeting -- me and some of my Cabinet colleagues, We'll be meeting with the Intergovernmental Council in the coming weeks to discuss future steps of devolution. Thank you.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier answered my next question, and that was discussions underway with the Council of Leaders to support total control transfer of devolution. So I see that there's discussion going on, so I am going to waive that question and move on to the next one.

Can the Premier explain on the expectations that we can expect from the plans, if there's any in place for further talks for the remaining term of this Assembly with the federal government? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the devolution agreement, it commits the parties to further negotiations. And so one of those -- I didn't fully answer the Member's second question. I don't think I wanted to leave a little bit because I figured he would ask that. And so one of the commitments is to review the McKenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, which really guides our regulatory system in here. And so we are having discussions with the Intergovernmental Council. Those discussions are beginning on what that future might look like. That is really one of the key pieces that still needs to be devolved to the territory. I would love to see it devolved to the territory, so we didn't have to rely on the federal government to make changes, to provide direction, and things like that. It's still the major outstanding piece. That being said, we are one party to the devolution agreement, and I'm not going to speak on behalf of the Indigenous governments. Some may support devolution of that piece of legislation, and others may not. So we really do have to work through the Intergovernmental Council to try and make this happen.

In the remainder of this Assembly, we're looking forward to continuing with the land and resource legislation and passing that, introducing implementing legislation for the Turiq Offshore Accord, and to advance discussions with Canada related to the devolution of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. And I'll wrap it up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Premier for that update here. I'm glad to see that, to some degree, Mr. Speaker, we have the progress of the current system where the IGs and this government are sharing royalties. They're upgrading legislation with their MRA. My question is, has there been a five-year review as identified in the agreement done to date? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That'll be the discussions we're having at the next Intergovernmental Council meeting, and I'm happy to update the Members after those discussions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I lost my notes. I'll have to go again.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 894-20(1):
FUNDING FOR THERAPEUTIC
SPECIALISTS IN SCHOOLS

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask questions of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

So far too many students are entering in NWT schools with challenges preventing them from learning basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills. We heard from an education authority that one Yellowknife elementary school is dealing with 67 students who have arrived at school not even able to speak. So given the necessity of therapeutic support workers in schools such as speech-language pathologists, does the \$14 million that the GNWT has set aside this year to fill gaps left by the changes to Jordan's Principle funding, can schools use some of that \$14 million for therapeutic specialists, or is it exclusively for educational assistants? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the support assistant initiative funding is strictly to be used for classroom assistants, also known as education assistants or support assistants for classrooms. Thank you.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So that is discouraging to hear. Can the Minister clarify, if there are individual children requiring these supports, can individuals still apply for Jordan's Principle funding to fund, say, speech-language pathology services, or is that no longer available to any NWT students? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, even with the support initiative funding, we're still asking all education bodies to still put in their applications to Jordan's Principle and Inuit Child First Initiative. So even with those applications and that funding arrangement that we do have and have applied funding for, there still is a responsibility to make sure that we're still submitting applications to the federal

government, and the same encouragement would apply for the question of the Member in regards specifically to funding for the speech-language pathologist.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment continues to support education bodies with support letters for that work as well and for those applications. Thank you.

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

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So given that any applications that are still being made usually require substantiation for each child and often letters of support or assessments by a specialist, is the department able to assist either education bodies or individual families with even just getting those assessments done or getting access to the therapeutic specialist, just to be able to make those applications in the first place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the support of a healthcare worker on those assessments is a change that was proposed by the federal government. We continue to go about doing our applications with education bodies in the same way and making sure that at the Department of Education, Culture and Employment that we're providing the support letters that our education bodies need to be able to facilitate that application process. So that support that we've always provided is still maintained and still provided. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 895-20(1):
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
ANALYSIS

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and apologies for earlier.

Mr. Speaker, in June 2024, I spoke to and tabled the Greenland Economic Council report as an example of how economic analysis could be incorporated into strategy. Has the department considered how it could better incorporate such analysis into our new upcoming investment strategy? The question is for the Minister of ECE. Thank you.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had a great conversation earlier this week, the Member and I, on how we incorporate some of that data. So we do incorporate data into the work that we do. We incorporate it into strategies like our film strategy, our fish strategy, into our art strategies. So that's work that we continue to do in all of our planning, in all of our programs that we do at the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, and work that we will continue to do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm more than happy to continue having conversations about how we can incorporate more of this work, more of this data, into work done by not just industry, tourism and investment, but also the government as a whole. I'm very happy to continue working with other Ministers on that as well, with the Member. Thank you.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's point yesterday that we don't want to waste time strategizing and focus on doing. So how does she suggest we communicate our economic plans effectively and ensure they are effective at addressing our challenges? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while I said to the Member that we don't want to do strategies left, right and center, and make new door props for departments to use, that we want to make sure that we're using our public servants effectively and efficiently, we still do have programs, and we still do have metrics in our programs. So continuing to use our data that we do have is incredibly important.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also say that it's really important that we are very clear in our communication that we have accessible messaging as a government in all of our economic initiatives that we're doing and that our outcomes are things that matter to the people that we all individually and collectively serve.

I would say that some of this is very clear under the direction of the Premier with our federal engagement approach that we have adopted this term, and we've been very effective at communicating how life is different in the territory with the federal government, and those are some of the approaches that we will continue to employ as a team. Thank you.

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

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I do note that in the Budget Dialogues document, again it came up that a cohesive economic vision is something that we're missing in the NWT, and so stakeholders were saying we need to establish something. So I do encourage us to put that vision forward.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister feel that this kind of high-level economic analysis and planning belong just in plans created by ITI, or should we be taking a wider approach perhaps attaching this kind of analysis and planning to the government mandate or having finance report on it alongside our economic review? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, government-wide, we have adopted a macroeconomic policy that we use in all the work that we do, not only across government but also in the Financial Management Board. That said, Mr. Speaker, we also do have -- you want me to keep going? Okay.

Mr. Speaker, we also do have our budget address, which our Minister of Finance delivers every year, that also includes an economic outlook, and I would be more than happy to work with the Member to make sure that we're capturing some of this and some of the other reporting mechanisms that the Member is pointing to, and working in conjunction with my colleague, the Minister of Finance, to make sure that we have robust reporting that we're doing every year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. Sorry for my distraction. Colleagues, I'm just going to stop the clock for a sec and going to recognition of visitors in the gallery, and I am going to turn to the Member from Hay River South.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for allowing me to do this. I want to acknowledge two visitors in the gallery - Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors for the Government of Alberta, Minister Devin Dreeshan. And also with him is some staff there, Jerry Bileka. Hopefully I got that right; sorry about that. And welcome to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to our Assembly, and we don't usually do that. Usually I do it, but I think it's more appropriate that the Minister does it.

Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

QUESTION 896-20(1):
DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS PLANS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a couple more questions for the Minister of Finance. Sometimes reviewing business plans feels like we're squishing round pegs into square holes; the actions don't quite fit our priorities. Why do business plans have existing government actions that have tenuous connections to our priorities of this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose that may be a matter of interpretation in the sense that departments certainly are very well aware of the priorities of this Assembly. It is incumbent on, obviously, Ministers as being politically accountable, deputy ministers as being operationally accountable to deliver on the priorities. So to the extent that the business plans do not align with the priorities, that really should come forward.

Every main estimates, that's why we put them with the main estimates. It gives a good opportunity for Members here in this House to critique the main estimates, critique the business plans alongside them. Both here and also in the committee process that we have.

So Mr. Speaker, if there's specific examples that we want to raise, again, happy to deal with it. I'm sure colleagues will do it on their behalf because we do want the business plan process to be effective. Anecdotally, we've heard that putting them together, the business plans and mains have been better. Doing a four-year business plan has been better. It is easier to understand and more clear direction. So happy to continue that process improvement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Members from the Yellowknife Centre.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate --

MR. SPEAKER: -- Let's try this again. Great Slave, thank you.

MS. REID: I just assume you mean me, Mr. Speaker. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's answer, and I do have more questions on this topic.

Previously, she spoke to the template and expectations of how to assess an action and how it effectively addresses a priority of this House, but we didn't talk about what is that benchmark of acceptance to include an action. There seems to be a disconnect between the operational and political, and we hear that every day in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Finance does oversee the process, and there certainly are occasions where there'll be discussion back and forth, particularly at an operational level, to ensure that the quality of everything that's being brought forward meets the standards that we were expecting them to meet, that when it comes to the financial management board, the financial management board becomes satisfied as information that we require. And also, Mr. Speaker, the financial management board has the benefit of an entity known as the management board secretariat.

These are analysts that work specifically for the financial management board to help provide analysis of business plans, and frankly, it's an opportunity to point out if a submission or business plan does not meet that standard. And that can then influence the decisions of the financial management board. So those are processes that are baked in, and we utilize them.

Again, I think this is a valuable opportunity. It's not always well known to the public what we do. I'm happy to keep finding a way to make it better, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister ever contemplated making the business plan even tighter to our political priorities such that it's not just a massive list of everything the government is doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have had concerns raised at times, certainly in this government, where we had a very narrow set of four priorities. It was raised at some departments or at least divisions since the work that they did every day that they believed was for residents was not going to be reflected in business plans because it didn't necessarily, at least on first blush, reflect overtly or directly the priorities. So, again, I appreciate it. I think there's probably some back and forth to be had.

Too much information is of no benefit to the public to understand or to Members to act on, so I am certainly happy to look again at what we

can do before we come back here. Our business planning process is underway, and we want it to be effective for the House and effective for the public. I will certainly look back again and see if we can meet that standard. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 897-20(1):
TRADES TRAINING AND
APPRENTICESHIPS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to follow up a little further on the trades matter in a little bit of a different direction, but the same sort of overall concept about making sure we have a good operating program.

There used to be called, and I think it still exists in some form or another, it was called the Territorial Trades Advisory Council, and it may have changed its form, but some of the members in the past who were on it resigned because they felt they were no longer being used. Is it defunct, or has it evolved into something else, including a different type of purpose? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's called the Apprenticeship Trade and Occupational Certification Advisory Board, so ATOC Board, and they are still very much in play. Their current board all has current membership, and I actually rely on them quite a bit and source them for their expert opinions. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not necessarily for my next question, but I kind of anticipated that was the only thing I could find that related to it.

Mr. Speaker, my next question is about in not that long ago, some members who were on the old trades advisory council, which is basically the same thing just rebranded, were sent to Fort Smith to do what's called marking desks, and that's when you send tradespeople to ensure that the teaching and practices have met a standard but yet they're not involved anymore, and I'm returning to the trades marking desks.

Mr. Speaker, is there any reason tradespeople aren't brought in for this overall final project marking desk anymore to ensure they're trained to a good standard? Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would need to go follow up with the board of governors of Aurora College and their trades program specifically. I can tell you that their trades instructors are all people generally who have worked in the field, who have a tremendous amount of experience, and the apprentices then also go and work directly with employers across this territory as well. Given that it's a small territory, I would assume if there is something up that we would definitely hear about it, and I can say that I certainly like to keep my lines of communication open with our employers and businesses across this territory, and so far none of them have been shy to give me a call.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and linking to my second question, I'll just say it's about the standards. Mr. Speaker, how do we know that the standards are being taught equivalent to what's being offered in other jurisdictions, whether they go down to NAIT or SAIT, etc.? I've been told that students aren't receiving equivalencies. Now, that said, I'm asking the Minister, how do we guarantee that they're receiving the same standard of trades education here in the Northwest Territories or as to other locations? And I can name them, but we don't have the time. Thank you.

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our programs are accredited, so they go through a process of accreditation before they can be offered, before they can be deemed programs that people turn around and then can use in life. We want to make sure that we are being safe, that we have appropriate training for people across the territory, and make sure that we're offering a program that is competitive with the south. If the Member has a specific concern about a specific program, I'm more than happy to follow up on that with him, with the college, and make sure that I can provide him with the detailed information of that, so that I can put any of those myths aside and calm them, because I definitely want people to feel that, at the end of the day, they have access to quality programs here in the territory. Both Aurora College and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment work hard on the programs that they offer, and I can say also that the post-secondary division at education, culture and employment has been working hard to increase the offerings, accredited offerings, in this territory over the last year. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 898-20(1):
REGULATION OF ONLINE SPORTS
BETTING IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you're aware, as are everyone in Canada right now, but the Blue Jays are doing quite well in the World Series. And when all eyes are looking at sports, they are seeing one thing in between the innings, advertisements for sports betting.

And currently in the Northwest Territories -- well, hold on. Currently in the Northwest Territories, we have a gray market situation. There are a lot of sports betting and there are no regulations for online gaming. We brought this up on the floor of the House before.

Without that, there's no consumer protection, there's no addiction programming that can be available to it. So when will the Minister take action on the gray market and regulate online gaming? And that's the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member bringing this up. So we've gone through a few things here with this. We've done a little bit of research on how this works with the iGaming stuff for sports betting and all the other stuff that goes on online. The department has spoken to a few other agencies who deal with this. So there is a little bit of work being done in the background and hopefully we can have something for the Member here, you know, within the next few months. There is a goal to move this forward and hopefully encompass some of this online gambling that's happening in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake has brought up the loss of funding to Arctic Winter Games. This is a real hit to our kids, to sport. How much longer are we going to lose money as a territory due to revenue leakage by not regulating iGaming in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the Member can understand that this is a very sensitive issue. We have to

work through a little bit of a process here on how this is dealt with and how we control it. You know, there is issues with shortfalls in our lottery funding. That's related to numerous things. As I think most communities can appreciate, there's a lot of issues that have happened with gambling over the past few years, including impacts to our local bingos. So There's lots of changes around on what people are doing with their extracurricular money. But going forward, just so the Member is aware, there is work being done in the background and we'd like to get this moving as quickly as we can to try to get some of that money back into the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to point out that as long as it's unregulated, we cannot prevent harm. So if we want to do harm reduction for addictions related to gambling, we need to regulate this market. Will the Minister agree to meet with the responsible gaming council to learn more about how his department can do this? Thank you.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we're willing to meet with anybody in regards to this topic. There's a lot of agencies out there that deal with this. I don't think there's one particular group, but more than interested in working with anybody to try to move this forward. And like I said, this isn't just something, you know, that's not being done. There's a lot of work in the background being done and we'd like to hopefully have something here in the next little while. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 899-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CANCER
STATISTICS

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my original question was for the Minister of ECC, but I do have a question for Minister of Health and Social Services.

My question is the department published the NWT Health Status Chartbook in 2023 that provides cancer rates in the NWT. Can the Minister tell me if the department has statistics on cancer rates specifically in Tlicho region, for Tlicho region? Thank you.

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

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that level of detail, I'd have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Health Status Chartbook, the latest statistics related to cancer are from 2020. Does the department have updated statistics that can be shared? Thank you.

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, that level of detail, I would have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 900-20(1):
ASPEN APARTMENTS PROJECT UPDATE

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been a while since I asked the Minister for Housing NWT a question about the Aspen Project in my riding.

I'm curious how that's going along, and if we're on schedule to open in December. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Aspen Apartments has been one of the projects of the 20th Assembly. I am pleased to note that we look at completion of mid-November for tenants to move in early December. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, just for my recollection, tenants will be public housing clients from other buildings, is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yellowknife Housing Authority will be allocated the Aspen Apartments to manage, and what we're hoping to do is we will move tenants into the building from other landlords, and also other tenants within the housing authority that need to be reallocated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that. Is there a priority

process for who gets to live in these newly renovated units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife Housing Authority does have a tenant allocation process, and they'll review the tenant list. But looking at the list itself, we do have 36 units within Aspen Apartments. 30 of them are one-bedroom and then 6 of them are two-bedrooms, so we just have to be careful in terms of the allocation because many of them are one-bedroom units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Oral questions. Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 901-20(1):
YELLOWKNIFE AIRPORT AUTHORITY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Specifically, it's about the Yellowknife airport authority. Can the Minister give an update as to where that is in the current planning for implementation? Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Sorry, I may need him to clarify the question as he asked where the airport authority is at.

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Yellowknife Centre, I am going to allow you to clarify your question, please.

MR. HAWKINS: Excellent, Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Minister was listening very carefully. I was asking about where is the Yellowknife airport authority. It's a process that oversees the airport. If the Minister needs further detail, I'm pleased to help explain further.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If he's speaking about the capital plan for the airport, there's currently work underway with engagement with the public on planning for developments around the airport. However, there's other engagements that are involved in the planning, so there's DND obviously, but also public engagement that's happening right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for years there's been an intention to put a governance council called an airport authority over the Yellowknife airport zone, which includes the capital pieces he's mentioning. That said, I'm wondering where it is

in the process because it seems to be in the dark, and it hasn't emerged for years. Thank you.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that, I'll have to reach out to the department and get him the information that he's requiring because I'm not aware of where that's at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 902-20(1):
HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY BREACH

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of my constituents came to my office the other day and was complaining about a letter she received, a notification of a privacy breach related to her audiology appointments at the health centre -- I'm sorry, at the NTHSSA. This breach occurred in September 2024, was caught in October 2024, but my constituent was only notified in June of this year.

Can the Minister explain why it took so long for the authority to notify her that her personal information had been breached? Thank you.

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

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of what the timelines are when those are reported and what the process is. However, I can follow up with NTHSSA to find out what their process is and why, if there are delays, or how long it takes to notify a resident. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would think that that information would be readily available to the Minister, but the notice was indicated as medium risk. It was names, purchase numbers, insurance coverage detail, product types, service provider.

I tried to reassure my constituent that that was relatively low risk, but can the Minister provide some clarity that a medium risk is not something that will compromise this individual's health care insurance? Thank you.

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that type of information, I would have to go back to the department and get an answer from them or from the NTHSSA, and once I have that I can give that back to the Member. Thank you.

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 commit to reviewing the notification process for data breaches and ensure that if it is a year out that she revises those timelines so patients who do have their information breached receive notification in a timely fashion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON LESA SEMMLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 903-20(1):
ORIENTATION AND TRAINING FOR
LOCUMS

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also had a constituent reach out to me recently about locums and medical travel. Specifically, there seems to be some confusion with locums still about what is a service that can be appropriately redirected to medical travel. Is that issue being cleared up by NTHSSA, or is that something that the public administrator is looking at? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON LESA SEMMLER: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the question is. The locum travel and medical travel, I?

MR. SPEAKER: Member to clarify your question. You're still on number one.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's like baseball.

Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to be quick so what I will try and illustrate for the Minister is locums sometimes direct their patients to medical travel for concerns that that patient might have for specialist services. Then the patient finds out, oh wait, that is not actually a service that is available through medical travel and they get very confused, and it seems to be happening somewhat regularly over the last few years with locums. Is there a process that the Minister is aware of to clarify policies for locums such that they are not booking medical travel unnecessarily? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when our physicians are onboarded, they are provided with some orientation. I'm not sure the extent of that orientation. However, we do have a lot of

locums that come in. The process through a physician, and that is the problem I think that they're relating to, is not everything is an insured service. So if it's not an insured service, then it's not covered by our health care and therefore if there are certain things that a locum may say that -- a patient may come in and ask for them, I can't speak to what these things are unless I have details. So what I would say is if the Member wanted to provide me some examples that I could bring back to the NTHSSA, I could have NTHSSA do some kind of information sheet that kind of guides locums with the referral process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that. I can speak broadly to my constituent's issue, which is that of dermatology. I've personally experienced this with a locum putting me through this process and reversing this process as well, and it was around allergy testing, so those are two examples I can think of.

Mr. Speaker, it's just -- I really want to impress upon the Minister that if we are to rely on locums that there is a procedure or policy that they are very aware of, such that medical travel is not something that a constituent or a patient has to deal with that entire process, which is also complicated, and then be told they're not going. So can I get at least a commitment from the Minister to look at some of that policy piece or standard operating procedure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for identifying two of those.

However, I guess based on the circumstances and where you're living, those may be considered something that would be considered under medical travel. However, if there are specialists coming to, say if it's for Yellowknife, they may be traveling in at a certain time and therefore they would be put onto a waitlist for that. I can't speak to what if, so I guess if there are certain specific instances, I would recommend that the Member bring those forward through my office.

But in the meantime I know that we are working within medical travel because of having so many locums and casual nurses in our health centres that actually do the referrals, we are looking at putting in more positions to be able to be case managers so that way -- once it gets to the case manager, then the case manager will know the process and therefore can speak to the locums to have those conversations. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 904-20(1):
MASTER SERVICE AGREEMENTS WITH
ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICE

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are also for the health Minister. I just wanted to ask some questions about her statement earlier today. She mentioned that additional schedules are currently being developed to formalize existing partnerships and processes with the Alberta government. Can the Minister elaborate on this? Is this going to help with interoperability between our system and theirs? Many of my constituents have raised concerns with having to translate reports between governments and the difficulties that they have with getting records for Alberta written in the NWT and vice versa. So Can the Minister help us understand how this will improve that problem?

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

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what it will help is there will be a better sharing of information, more of a streamlined sharing of information, is my understanding through this. However, the interoperability is not going to be fixed through this master service agreement.

The interoperability is our system. It's our actual computer technology that is outdated and can't do anything more, can't connect into anything. So it's the replacement of that system is where we'll be able to.

But there is work for us to be able to work with Alberta to see what options they have that if we are having blood work in Alberta that we can log into their system somehow. But then that too is a cross-jurisdictional issue where we've got a whole bunch of people in the background trying to figure that out legally and technology wise. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course the natural follow-up is if replacement of our system to improve interoperability is what needs to be done, can the Minister give us an update on work towards that? Is there a budget ask coming? Are they working to address that issue? Thank you;

HON LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can give you the short version, is that -- and I am going to use the example. This is the conversation that I've had, is that Alberta,

it took them 10 years to figure out the system that they needed and then to start to implement it. Where we are right now is we know what we need to have in our system that's going to appease what we need as a territory. However it is a small territory with a lot of different components that need to feed into one and so this is the problem that we're having right now is we're trying to build that connection with Alberta, and I have the Office of the Chief Information Officer working along with the Department of Health and Social Services, with legal, with all of these pieces, trying to figure out the easiest path forward for us to get what we need within the least amount of time and not such a huge massive cost. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MORSE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker given how complex that task is I am going to give the Minister a lot of leeway here. Does she think she can commit to having that interoperability problem solved within the term of this Assembly?

HON LESA SEMMLER: Optimistically I can say I hope so. We're trying. We've got all -- I mean, the Minister of Finance and I have said go figure this out fast. So we're hoping that we can figure this out fast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Colleagues, our time is up for oral questions. And seeing that we've actually gone over 22 minutes, we need to give the translators a good, long break so we will have a break for at least 15 minutes. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you for the brief break. 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. Tabling of documents. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Infrastructure.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 420-20(1):
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SPORT AND
RECREATION FUND ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025

TABLED DOCUMENT 421-20(1):
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 33,
TECHNICAL SAFETY STATUTES
AMENDMENT ACT

TABLED DOCUMENT 422-20(1):
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL
33, TECHNICAL SAFETY STATUTES
AMENDMENT ACT

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Physical Activity Sport and Recreation Fund Annual Report 2024-2025; Plain Language Summary for Bill 33: Technical Safety Statutes Amendment Act; and, Statement of Consistency for Bill 33: Technical Safety Statutes Amendment Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Infrastructure. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 423-20(1):
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS OVER
\$250,000 (APRIL 1 TO JUNE 30, 2025)

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Inter-Activity Transfers Over \$250,000 (April 1st to June 30th, 2025). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 424-20(1):
NWT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025

TABLED DOCUMENT 425-20(1):
2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT -
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

TABLED DOCUMENT 426-20(1):
TLICHO COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL
REPORT 2024-25

TABLED DOCUMENT 427-20(1):
HAY RIVER HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025

TABLED DOCUMENT 428-20(1):
2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT - DIRECTOR
OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following five documents: NWT Department of Health and Social Services Annual Report 2024-2025; 2024-2025 Annual Report Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority; Tlicho Community Services Agency HSS Annual Report 2024-25; Hay River Health and Social Services Authority Annual Report 2024-2025; and, 2024-2025 Annual Report - Director of Child and Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 429-20(1):
OPERATING PLANS FOR NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES EDUCATION BODIES FOR
THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR ENDING
JUNE 30, 2026, VOLUMES 1 AND 2

HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Operating Plans for Northwest Territories Education Bodies for the 2025-2026 School Year Ending June 30th, 2026, Volumes 1 and 2. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 430-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CORONER
SERVICE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2024 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item number 9 on the orders of the day, written questions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Member from Yellowknife Centre is seeking unanimous consent to go to number 9. We have one nay.

Notices of motion. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 34:
TRESPASS TO PROPERTY ACT,
DEEMED READ

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 34 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 35:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTES LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 206,
DEEMED READ

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 35, Miscellaneous Statutes Law Amendment Act, 2026, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 35 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 36:
APPROPRIATION ACT, (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES), 2026-2027,
DEEMED READ

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 36, Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2026-2027, 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 36 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 37:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 3,
2024-2025,
DEEMED READ

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 37, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization),

No. 3, 2024-2025, 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 37 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 38:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2025-2026,
DEEMED READ

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 38, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 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 38 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 39:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2025-2026,
DEEMED READ

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 39, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 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 39 is deemed to have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills.
Minister of Infrastructure.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 33:
TECHNICAL SAFETY STATUTES
AMENDMENT ACT,
CARRIED

HON. VINCE McKAY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 33, Technical Safety Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the second time.

The proposed Technical Safety Standards Statutes Amendment Act will amend the Elevators and Lifts Act to become the Technical Safety Act which sets out common core provisions that would apply in all fields of work brought under the Act. The proposed Act will harmonize and streamline permitting fees and inspection powers for regulated products currently within the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, Electrical Protection Act, Gas Protection Act, and Elevator and Lifts Act. All four current electromechanical statutes will be progressively repealed and integrated into the new Technical Safety Act. The bill will align with similar legislation in other jurisdictions thus facilitating labour mobility and trade between the NWT and other Canadian territories and provinces. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 33 has been read a second time and is referred to a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly for further consideration.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 36:
APPROPRIATION ACT, (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES), 2026-2027,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North that Bill 36, Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2026-2027, be read for the second time. This bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. 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? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 37:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 3,
2024-2025,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 37, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 3, 2024-2025, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures and borrowing authorization of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Bill 37 has been read a second time and is ready for third reading.

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 38:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO.
2, 2025-2026,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 38, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2025-2026, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please raise your hand. All those opposed, please raise your hand. All those abstaining, please raise your hand. The motion is carried. Bill 38 has been read a second time and is ready for third reading.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 39:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2025-2026,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 39, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2025-2026, be read for the second time. This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstentions? Motion passed. Bill 39 has been read for the second time and is ready for third reading of the bill.

---Carried

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Committee Report 29-20(1). And before I turn the chair over to the deputy Speaker, by authority given to me as Speaker under Rule 2.24(4), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business of the House, 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 now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? I am going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, committee wishes to review Committee Report 29-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Committee Project: Housing as a Human Right. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. We'll take a five-minute break to get organized here, and then we'll come right back. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 29-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Housing as a Human Right. I'll go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development for any opening comments. I'm going to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 88-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- FORMAL AND OFFICIAL RECOGNITION
OF HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, today I rise to speak to the Report on Committee Project: Housing as a Human Right presented by the Standing Committee on Social Development. This report is the result of a comprehensive study taken by committee following direction from the House in February 2024. The purpose of the study was to examine how the right to adequate housing can be implemented through the laws and policies of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to share a quote from a researcher who presented to committee during our study. They said: There has never been a point in time where the Northwest Territories has not had a housing crisis. We have never had enough housing in the NWT since the federal government got involved with delivering housing in the North, end quote.

Over the course of our study, the committee engaged with Indigenous governments, housing researchers, non-profit organizations, landlords, developers, and individuals with lived experience. Through this engagement, the committee heard consistently that the housing situation in the Northwest Territories is both urgent and dire. Nearly 1 in 4 households in the Northwest Territories live in unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable dwellings and cannot afford alternative housing. Nearly half of homes in the territory are unsuitable or require major repairs. Close to 10 percent of households are informally sheltering someone experiencing homelessness. Outside of Yellowknife, 73 percent of tenant households rely on public housing with waitlists representing an additional 8 percent of households. These statistics underscore the scale of the housing crisis and the need for immediate and coordinated action.

The committee welcomes the opportunity to debate the findings and 44 recommendations to this report in Committee of the Whole. We look forward to hearing from Members and to advancing meaningful solutions that reflect the right of all residents to live in safe, adequate, and culturally appropriate housing. Individual committee members may have additional comments on this work and the recommendations we have made. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I will now open the floor for general comments on Committee Report 29-20(1). Are there any general comments from Members? Seeing no further comments, Members, I am going to be going to the motions. I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the eGovernment of the Northwest Territories formally and officially recognize housing as a human right; and further, specifically the Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories urgently create new legislation that recognizes the right to adequate housing as it is articulated in international human rights law in the United Nations Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; and further, this new legislation should incorporate accountability mechanisms found in Canada's National Housing Strategy Act, including developing and maintaining a robust housing strategy to progressively realize housing as a human right in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. I am going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think this is a very important recommendation, and the reason it's the first is it's a kind of paramount that underpins the rest of the -- well, the very essence of this report on housing as a human right.

When we looked at mechanisms to enshrine housing as a human right or officially recognize, it was a bit of a complicated task because even the federal government has legislation that acknowledges it as a human right but goes -- stopped short of actually enshrining it in human rights legislation, and committee was careful to draft this recommendation in such a way that it made specific reference to new legislation that would also underpin a Territorial

Housing Strategy Act or something along those lines modeled after Canada's National Housing Strategy Act rather than just amend our existing human rights legislation because we did foresee some challenges with how that would work operationally. And I think it's in -- I mean, this is broad enough that it can be interpreted by the government to see how to take action on it, but I think it's very important that this be put into legislation so there is a firm commitment from the government and it's not just a motion or a speech but it's actually something in law but that there be enough flexibility that we're able to manage the right effectively through our existing systems, ensure they're improved, ensure they're informed by this concept of housing as a human right but not in such a way that creates a kind of paralysis across the government because this is unfamiliar territory, and we have seen that embracing very progressive ideas or very progressive legislation can somewhat be a challenge. So to give comfort to anyone, you know, it's not as broad as enshrining it in human rights legislation, but it is still very significant and very important, the legislation coming forward, to underpin housing as a human right in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour to the motion. All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go back to the Member for Monfwi, please.

COMMITTEE MOTION 89-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- ADDRESSING COLONIAL LEGACIES
CONTRIBUTING TO INDIGENOUS
HOMELESSNESS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly recognize the colonial legacies that have contributed to Indigenous homelessness in the Northwest Territories;

And further, to address these legacies the Government of the Northwest Territories should use the principle outlined in the Northwest

Territories United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Implementation Act to guide policy changes in the housing sector and increase local government decision-making to facilitate the co-development of new housing policies by the Council of Leaders and Indigenous governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining?

---Carried

Thank you. I'll go back to the Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 90-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- TERRITORIAL HOUSING ADVOCATE,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create an Office of the Territorial Housing Advocate and appoint a territorial housing advocate;

And further, the territorial housing advocate and its office should operate as an independent non-partisan entity modeled after the federal housing advocate;

And further, its objective should be to advance meaningful action to address inadequate housing and homelessness in the Northwest Territories;

And furthermore, the office should be created within the 20th Legislative Assembly;

And furthermore, an implementation plan to create this office should be developed and tabled in the House within one year;

And furthermore, this office should facilitate the co-development of new housing policies by the Council of Leaders and Indigenous governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is another recommendation that committee looked at in conjunction with the foundational

piece of looking at the National Housing Strategy Act and how it operated, and committee was very interested in the role of the federal housing advocate and even looked into whether or not the federal housing advocate could also be the Northwest Territories Housing Act similar to how the Auditor General of Canada is our auditor -- our independent auditor for our government. But it was felt that having someone on the ground who is -- and, well, there's challenges with that Act too because it's not our Act, but having someone, a northerner, be able to fill this position and having boots on the ground who understands the issues here in the NWT and also the intergenerational trauma and colonial legacies that have led to Indigenous homelessness and housing challenges, we really need to find the right person to address that and to champion these issues. And I was around when the ombud became a thing and we passed the legislation there and, you know, when these independent offices come up there are people who say, well, isn't that what MLAs do or can't the ombud do it anyway so why do we need this specialized thing. And the reason, I would argue in this case, is we have some of the greatest housing need in the country. 18 percent of the households in the Northwest Territories are in major need of repair or are unsuitable compared to 7 percent in Canada, and our rates of being unhoused and unable to access suitable and adequate housing are similarly disproportionate to the national average. When you have a problem that ingrained, you need to put resources behind it; you can't just rely on the systems that already exist because clearly, they're not working as well as they should. So having a housing advocate office in place that's independent of the government that can act as a watchdog for housing policies and also as an independent advisor to ensure those policies address the very complicated makeup of -- or the very complicated housing situation in the Northwest Territories and the many levels of governments that are out there. We're not just talking about, you know, the GNWT; we're also talking about sovereign Indigenous governments and their role in the housing continuum. So we really need this expertise. We need this advice. And it needs to be independent from government so it can provide that guidance and that independent advice that's sorely needed to kind of shake us out of complacency and start thinking about these things differently and really cut through the silos, the roadblocks, the barriers, that are preventing us from real -- the progressive realization of housing in the Northwest Territories. So this one is a very important position, which is why the committee also is recommending very clear timelines for how this office gets implemented and that it

gets implemented -- or at least the plan on how it gets implemented comes into effect one year after the recommendation's made. So I think this is crucial, and I encourage the House to support it -- or the committee, rather, to support it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. Seeing none. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining?

---Carried

Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 91-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- LEGAL REMEDIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF
RIGHT TO HOUSING,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories assign the territorial housing advocate and its office to investigate how human rights and advocacy organizations can pursue legal remedies for violations of the right to housing through legal or policy frameworks;

And further, this research study should identify existing legal barriers to housing-related claims, consider amendments to the Northwest Territories' Human Rights Act or other relevant statutes and establish clear mechanisms for litigation and legal recourse;

And furthermore, the research study should be done in consultation with affected communities and legal experts and presented to the Legislative Assembly for consideration within the first year of the office creation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 92-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT
PROPORTIONALITY FRAMEWORK,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and amend the Northwest Territories' Residential Tenancies Act to include a proportionality framework that considers reasonable alternatives and ensures that evictions are used as a last resort only in serious situations such as those where criminal activities are present. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Thank you. I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 93-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- REVIEW OF PUBLIC HOUSING EVICTIONS
POLICY,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review the evictions from public housing policy to incorporate consideration of multi-generational living arrangements prior to eviction decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Moving on to Motion number 7. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 94-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- HOUSING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS
EVICTED FROM PUBLIC HOUSING,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories increase the number of supportive living and transitional housing options for individuals who are evicted from public housing. Steps and timelines to achieve this should be included in the government's costed action plan as referenced in Recommendation 22. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. I am going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just briefly I wanted to flag the importance of this one. I know it does sound like a large and overwhelming request. It is difficult and expensive to come up with supportive living and transitional housing options, but it's also so necessary as even a preventative measure. We know that as soon as you let people fall into homelessness, like a spiral of other problems tend to follow from there and those problems also get really expensive for government in terms of how to care for people when they don't have homes, the health problems, the other kinds of societal problems. And so that's why there are other programs, for example federal funding programs around rapid rehousing and -- that just recognize this importance of preventing and avoiding homelessness. And so if people are being evicted from public housing, especially given the kind of legislation that this Assembly is going to be contemplating in the next year or two around SCAN, I think we need to think really seriously about how we're going to be preventing homelessness. Even though it seems hard and expensive, I do believe it's going to be even harder and more expensive if we don't prevent homelessness and don't have rapid rehousing options for people who are losing their public housing. So I'll leave it there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay. Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those

opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to Motion number 8. I'll go back to the Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 95-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- LEGAL AID SERVICES FOR HOUSING-
RELATED MATTERS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories amend the Legal Aid Act and its regulations to include matters arising under the Residential Tenancies Act, as well as other housing-related legal matters, such as evictions, that may fall outside of the Residential Tenancies Act, as subjects to which legal aid services may be provided;

And further, the Government of the Northwest Territories should utilize the upcoming new federal Blueprint for a Renters' Bill of Rights to inform the development of effective legal aid services for tenants that reduce the power imbalance;

And further, to provide effective legal services, the Government of the Northwest Territories should allocate funding to the legal aid program to support services provided for housing-related matters. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go back to the Member for Monfwi for Motion number 9.

COMMITTEE MOTION 96-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE HOUSING
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES' POLICIES,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and ensure that Housing Northwest Territories' policies are culturally appropriate, including any related applications be available in Indigenous languages;

And further, the Government should also implement policies to train government service officers on culturally appropriate advocacy related to housing issues. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to Motion number 10. I am going to go to the Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 97-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- MODERNIZATION OF RESIDENTIAL
TENANCIES ACT,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories present a legislative proposal by mid-2026 to significantly modernize the Northwest Territories' Residential Tenancies Act;

And further, the amendments should be centered on the right to adequate housing and provide clear guidance to tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. I am going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to put extra emphasis on this one as I was speaking about this in my Member statements the other day, but just to emphasize the need to look at the recommendations that have been coming over and over again every year from the rental officer in their annual report, including a need to tackle the problem of landlords that are repeat offenders and even

the need to address issues that appear to be sort of widespread throughout a building as opposed to only being able to address them unit by unit based on one individual complaint at a time and to ensure that people can actually meaningfully exercise their rights. I mean, on the other side in terms of rights of landlords, I mean, there's been recommendations by the rental officer obviously for ways that eviction orders could be more immediately enforced. So I think this review of the Residential Tenancies Act is long overdue in terms of the rights of both landlords and tenants, and I really urge this government to make it a priority. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And the RTA has -- I mean, it's almost a third rail in politics in the Northwest Territories. It is constantly brought up as needing reform and yet elusively remains unreformed. And the committee feels very strongly that this needs to change. And, you know, whether you talk to landlords or tenants, no one is satisfied with the way it's currently drafted. It allows a great deal of latitude, and perhaps too much latitude to the rental officer, to come to decisions without a lot of guidance that could be put towards a more tenant-centered approach, founded in the right to the right to housing as contemplated by this recommendation, and I do support that.

If you have very clear expectations about what to expect from the RTA, it will make everything move quicker. And even if it is as it should be, largely, you know, centered on the tenant and the tenant's rights more so than landlords', that's still going to work better for landlords because if they don't have clear expectations it just makes things more challenging, and having very clear responsibilities on both sides is also just as important because the rental officer should not necessarily be put into a place where they have to be the arbiter of all things related to the RTA. The RTA needs to provide very clear guidance because at this point, rental officers become, you know, judges, really, and the longer they serve, the more they shape the office rather than having people kind of come into the Act, into the legislation, and having clear guidelines for how things are supposed to go. So this is really essential if we want to maintain the rights of tenants and also if we want to create, you know, a level playing field for everyone because that's going to attract, you know, more landlords into market housing environments as well because it's very clear how the rules work, and it's also going to ensure the tenants in those market conditions are protected. So I really hope that we are moving

farther than just a review of the RTA and we actually bring forward major legislative amendments to the Act before -- well, as this mid-2026. So it's coming up quickly, but that's the urgency of this crisis, and it needs to be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay. Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go back to the Member for Monfwi on the 11th motion.

COMMITTEE MOTION 98-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT -
OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF RENTAL
OFFICE,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct an operational review of the Northwest Territories Rental Office, including whether it is accessible for tenants and landlords, whether it is adequately staffed, and whether access to justice through the Northwest Territories Legal Aid Commission is integrated within the roles and responsibilities of the rental office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to Motion number 12 to Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 99-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- DRAFT DEFINITION OF HOUSING
CONTINUUM,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with Housing Northwest Territories and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to develop and endorse a draft definition of the housing continuum that reflects the northern context;

And further, this preliminary northern housing definition should incorporate Indigenous understandings of housing and home and support a reframing of housing policy and funding models to align with the lived realities of northern communities;

And furthermore, this committee encourages the use of the alternative framework developed through the "At Home in the North" project led by Dr. Julia Christensen;

And furthermore, it is recommended that Housing Northwest Territories publicly release this draft definition by the end of 2026 to support ongoing dialogue and policy development. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member for Monfwi for Motion number 13.

COMMITTEE MOTION 100-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- HOMEOWNERSHIP IN COMMUNITIES
INITIATING LOCALLY LED HOUSING
PROGRAMS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories reassess its role in providing homeownership

programs in communities that are initiating their own locally led housing programs;

And further, where there are locally led initiatives, the government should redirect its investments to empower Indigenous government-led or other locally led homeownership programs that offer cultural and community specific supports. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to Motion number 14. Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 101-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories reinstate the 1980's Homeownership Assistance Program, with modern adjustments to reflect current needs;

And further, the Government implement the Northern Transitional Homeownership Model which was presented to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to the Member for Monfwi for Motion number 15.

COMMITTEE MOTION 102-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- REVIEW OF MUNICIPAL FUNDING
POLICIES,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review municipal funding policies administered by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to ensure they do not create barriers to community-directed housing initiatives, including staff housing;

And further, to commit to a timeline for when this review will be complete. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go to Motion number 16 to the Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 103-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- INCENTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF
AFFORDABLE MARKET HOUSING,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories the current housing policy environment to identify and implement new or expanded incentives that support the development of affordable market housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been being called. All those in favour? Opposed, all those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member for Monfwi for Motion number 17.

COMMITTEE MOTION 104-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- EXPEDITED DEVELOPMENT OF A
TERRITORIAL BUILDING CODE,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories expedite the development of a Territorial Building Code to encourage the development of safe and appropriate housing and to dismantle barriers to building in the North;

And further, to publicly commit to the timelines necessary for this work to be brought forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to Motion number 18. I'll go to the Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 105-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- TERRITORIAL TRADES STRATEGY FOR
HOUSING-RELATED TRADES,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop and implement a territorial trades strategy for housing-related trades that offers training and certification programs for local residents and builds long-term capacity;

And further, this program should establish an agency of tradespeople to ensure access to services across the territory and should subsidize contractors travelling to remote communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member for Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to flag, I recognize that as soon as we talk about sort of training programs and trades, usually the answer is that that's Aurora College's decision and, you know, this government can't direct the college what to do and that's sort of the end of it. But I would argue that there is a desperate need for a more organized territorial trade strategy that doesn't just kind of leave it up to Aurora College to decide whatever they're going to decide. And certainly they should be a partner in this, but I would urge the government to consider providing more clear, you know, direction to Aurora College and see what it can do otherwise to ensure that we have training and certification programs for trades, housing-related trades, that, for example, that people can take in their communities, you know, to make it as the most accessible as we can. If we're going to really make a dent in what's needed to maintain and then build the new houses that we're looking at, we need, you know, a massive effort to ensure that people in all of our communities are trained. And I don't think we can afford to just leave it up to chance as to whether Aurora College will pick this up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

Motion number 19. We'll go back to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 106-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING
WITH INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS TO
ENCOURAGE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories sign memorandums of understanding with Indigenous governments who have settled land claims with land use policies to encourage housing development. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

Motion number 20. I'll go back to the Member for Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 107-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- COORDINATION TO REMOVE BARRIERS
TO HOUSING DEVELOPMENT,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop policies that improve coordination between Housing Northwest Territories and other Government of the Northwest Territories' departments to remove barriers to housing development;

And further, that this includes urgently increasing the supply of land suitable for residential construction, simplifying land use planning and approval processes, and embedding climate adaptation into land development strategies. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 21.

COMMITTEE MOTION 108-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- REVISION OF REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE POLICIES,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, through Housing Northwest Territories,

collaborate with local housing organizations to revise their repair and maintenance policies in a manner that empowers public housing tenants to undertake minor repairs and maintenance themselves where appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 22.

COMMITTEE MOTION 109-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide adequate funding and investment in the development of transitional housing and in strengthening the shelter and safe home system in small communities of the Northwest Territories to relieve the burden on the Yellowknife shelter system;

And further, as the first step to achieve this, the Government of the Northwest Territories should develop a costed action plan outlining specific action steps each with an assigned budget and timeline, and table this in the House within the 20th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 23.

COMMITTEE MOTION 110-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- 24-HOUR SHELTER IN YELLOWKNIFE,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create a 24-hour shelter in the city of Yellowknife, either through an existing or new program, to ensure wraparound supports are accessible for those utilizing homelessness shelter spaces to move along the housing continuum. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on one of the early meetings I had when I started working as an MLA was with shelter providers about this very issue, and it was clear from then that the need for a 24-hour shelter in Yellowknife is crucial to supporting the shelter services that we currently provide. There's a whole host of issues of why having operational windows for a shelter service is letting the population that depends on this down, and it's also making things harder for shelter providers. So there's a definite need for this. It will definitely improve conditions on the ground. And, you know, we are talking a lot about encampments and shelter spaces and how shelters are working and aren't working for people who need them and, you know, there's no shortage of empathy in Yellowknife and communities across the Northwest Territories for people in need, but this is -- and this is a service they definitely need. So I think this is something that urgently needs to be addressed as soon as possible and that we need to bring something forward. And I know the government is bringing resources to bear on some of these challenges, but this is one that has been proposed loud and clear by the very people we rely on, the NGOs we rely on to support shelter services in Yellowknife. And it's time we listened and time we got this done, so I thoroughly endorse this recommendation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): The question has been called. All those in favour -- sorry, I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to quickly add I know we've discussed this in the House before, and in my mind there's still a lack of clarity. I mean, there's hope that the new wellness and recovery centre in Yellowknife could provide such a 24-hour shelter or these kind of supports, but I'm not clear. While the building may be planned to be open 24 hours -- I know there's a sobering centre part and a day shelter part and I imagine the sobering centre part will be, you know, open during the night. But the idea is not just to technically have somewhere that's open at each time of day but to provide a place where someone who's not necessarily in need of a sobering centre, someone who's not necessarily intoxicated, could just stay beyond, you know, a limited period, just sort of catch their breath and actually not have to be shuffled along, you know, at 7 a.m. or at 5 p.m. or whatever it is, but to be able to stay in a place and then have a chance to actually access some like mental health counselling supports or talk with support workers about what options are for moving forward. So I just want to ensure that Cabinet's understanding the intent behind this recommendation. It's not just to technically ensure that there's somewhere that is open at each given time but that we're asking for a place where someone doesn't have to be sort of shuffled to the next place on a regular round and could just relax a bit and access the supports that they need. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member for Monfwi for Motion number 24.

COMMITTEE MOTION 111-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- 24-HOUR SHELTERS ACROSS THE
TERRITORY,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create 24-hour shelters in communities across the territory, prioritized according to the urgency of shelter needs in the

communities to ensure wraparound supports are accessible for those utilizing homelessness shelter spaces to move along the housing continuum.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion. The Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this support is greatly needed in many of the small communities. We have a lot of people that have been homeless for many years, and they really do need a lot of support, a lot of trauma experience in their lives due to being homeless. And some of the people that I talk to, they put themselves in harm's way just so that they can have a place to sleep. So there's a lot of social issues that comes along with them. And some of the residents that are homeless, you know what they're saying to me? I almost got raped. That's what they're saying. So how many of those did get assaulted? And that is really wrong; that's not right. So this wraparound services support is greatly needed for many of the shelters. So I support this because it's greatly needed in many of the small communities. It's greatly needed in the Tlicho region. And if housing was not an issue, we shouldn't be having homelessness. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

Motion number 25. I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 112-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1): STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPORT ON COMMITTEE PROJECT:
HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT - NON-
PROFIT AND CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING HOUSING,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and implement strategies to assist non-profit and charitable organizations with contracts to provide social housing or Housing First, with the rise of insurance costs, specifically for their rental housing programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you.
To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.
Thank you.

---Carried

Motion number 26. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 113-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- STANDARDIZED ENCAMPMENT POLICY,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories actively collaborate with municipalities and communities across the territory to develop and implement a standardized encampment protocol;

And further, this protocol should prioritize the safety and dignity of individuals living in tent encampments while also ensuring respectful coexistence with neighboring residents, properties, and public spaces;

And furthermore, establishing clear guidelines and responsibilities will help prevent conflict, support vulnerable populations, and promote community well-being. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you.
To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Thank you.
Motion carried.

---Carried

Okay, we'll take a five-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 114-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS AND
ORGANIZATIONS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with the federal government to ensure that funding mechanisms, such as those established under the Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, provide direct and equitable funding to Indigenous governments and organizations, including those with both settled and unsettled land claims;

And further, adopting this approach is necessary to address and reduce funding disparities between regions and to support equitable access to housing resources for all Indigenous peoples across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you.
To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go to Motion number 28. And I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi.

COMMITTEE MOTION 115-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- UNIFIED TERRITORIAL ADVOCACY PLAN,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Northwest Territories collaborate with the Yukon Government and the Government of Nunavut to develop a unified pan-territorial advocacy plan;

And further, this plan should be used to advocate to the Government of Canada to ensure that federal policies and funding are better aligned with northern realities and Indigenous perspectives in light of federal

strategies (i.e. Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy) and funding that continues to fall short in reaching the housing needs of Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 29.

COMMITTEE MOTION 116-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT -
THREE-YEAR HOUSING PLAN,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories incorporate the recommendations contained in this report into its proposed 3-year housing plan;

And further, this committee expects the housing plan to clearly demonstrate how each recommendation is being addressed, including the actions to be taken, anticipated outcomes, and timelines for implementation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 30.

COMMITTEE MOTION 117-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING OF
DISTINCTION-BASED FUNDING
ALLOCATIONS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, through Housing Northwest Territories, enhance transparency and reporting of distinction-based funding allocations to ensure that the needs of each community and the overall advancement of housing in the territory are being met.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): The question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 31.

COMMITTEE MOTION 118-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY FOR
HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish a mechanism to more equitably assess eligibility for homeownership programs;

And further, these programs should take into account individual circumstances, particularly in cases involving outstanding mortgage and rental arrears, to ensure that the programs are responsive to the complex realities faced by residents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those

opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.
Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 32.

COMMITTEE MOTION 119-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- AGE AND CONDITION OF HOUSING
UNITS UNDER HOMEOWNERSHIP
INITIATIVE POLICY,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide more transparency surrounding the specific age and condition of housing units allowable under the Homeownership Initiative Policy;

And further, publicly publish the age of public housing units that have been deemed eligible for the Homeownership Initiative Program.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you.
To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.
Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 33.

COMMITTEE MOTION 120-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- HOUSING APPEAL PROCESS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories reform the housing appeals process to support the progressive realization of the right to housing and ensure more inclusive, transparent, and efficient oversight;

And further, this necessarily includes: That all appeals under public housing and homeownership programs bypass the district

director and proceed directly to the housing appeal committee to streamline the process and reduce administrative burden and barriers;

And furthermore, that the composition of the housing appeal committee be revised to require membership of individuals with lived experience of homelessness or housing need, and where possible, individuals with expertise in human rights, to ensure a more representative and rights-based approach to decision-making. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you.
To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.
Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 34.

COMMITTEE MOTION 121-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO HOUSING
RATING SYSTEM,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories transition all current housing rating systems to a rights-based approach, focusing on ensuring fair and equitable access to housing for all, particularly those in greatest need;

And further, this should involve prioritizing vulnerable groups, promoting non-discrimination, and empowering tenants in the housing process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you.
To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.
Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 35.

COMMITTEE MOTION 122-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- PUBLIC HOUSING TENANT ELIGIBILITY
POLICY,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review the public housing tenant eligibility policy to ensure that it provides those ineligible for public housing a clear and time-bound response to how they could have their eligibility reinstated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 36.

COMMITTEE MOTION 123-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- COMMUNITY HOUSING PLAN POLICY,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories revise the community housing plan policy to include capacity-building supports tailored to community needs;

And further, this should include additional human, financial, and technical resources to support implementation of housing plans. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go back to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 37.

COMMITTEE MOTION 124-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- AUDIT OF THE SMALL COMMUNITY
HOMELESSNESS FUND,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct an audit of the small community homelessness fund to determine and report on its overall policy performance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 38.

COMMITTEE MOTION 125-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- ELIGIBLE INCOME THRESHOLDS FOR
CO-PAYMENT PROGRAMS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories revise and adjust the eligible income thresholds for co-payment for the Senior Home Repair Program, the Seniors Aging in Place Program, and the Home Repair Program based on inflation and cost of living increases;

And further, a review should occur every three years thereafter. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 39.

COMMITTEE MOTION 126-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY COVERAGE,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and revise the eligible properties for the Senior Home Repair Program, the Seniors Aging in Place Program, the Home Repair Program, and the Preventative Maintenance Program, specifically expanding the eligibility coverage of each policy to include primary residences outside municipal boundaries. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 40.

COMMITTEE MOTION 127-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- DISPOSAL OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY
POLICY REVIEW,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review the disposal of residential property policy to ensure that Housing Northwest Territories' assets located on treaty territory, and subject to disposal under the policy, provide Indigenous governments with the first right of refusal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those

opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 41.

COMMITTEE MOTION 128-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- COMMUNITY HOUSING SUPPORT
INITIATIVE PROGRAM,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review the community housing support initiative program to ensure it is reaching its goals and full effectiveness;

And further, specifically, this committee recommends interviewing current and past recipients on the feasibility of supporting housing affordability and adequacy beyond the duration of their contribution agreement in order to evaluate the initiative's long-term impact on housing;

And furthermore, it is recommended that the Government of the Northwest Territories publish the results of the program review and share it with the Standing Committee on Social Development. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 42.

COMMITTEE MOTION 129-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
FINANCIAL POLICIES REVIEW REGARDING
TREATY OBLIGATIONS,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that the committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review

all Housing Northwest Territories financial policies, including policies respecting loans and grants, to ensure treaty obligations are upheld;

And further, specifically, to ensure that policies safeguard against unfairly including treaty-related income such as dividend payments, or gifts, into an applicant's income and thus disproportionately impacting their eligibility or level of assistance;

And furthermore, this committee recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories make any necessary policy changes to achieve this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I'll go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 43.

COMMITTEE MOTION 130-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- COLLECTIONS POLICY REVISION,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories review and revise the collection policy to ensure that the policy prioritizes the well-being and dignity of individuals and their right to adequate housing;

And further, collection action should not jeopardize an individual's ability to secure and maintain adequate housing;

And furthermore, the collection policy should establish clear accountability mechanisms to ensure that collections comply with human rights standards;

And furthermore, in its review, the Government of the Northwest Territories should engage individuals and communities experiencing housing challenges. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried. Thank you.

---Carried

I am going to go to the Member from Monfwi for Motion number 44.

COMMITTEE MOTION 131-20(1):
COMMITTEE REPORT 29-20(1):
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON COMMITTEE
PROJECT: HOUSING AS A HUMAN RIGHT
- GOVERNMENT RESPONSE,
CARRIED

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of Northwest Territories respond to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---Carried

Thank you to the Member from Monfwi. Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 29-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Housing as a Human Right. And we'll take a short break, 20 minutes. We'll come back. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I am going to call to order here. I want to go to Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. There's 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.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 29-20(1) and would like to report progress with 44 motions carried, that Committee Report 29-20(1) is concluded. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that 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? Oh, you guys are all excited today. How about I pick on the guy from Range Lake. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? I didn't see anything. Okay, motion carried.

---Carried

Reports of Committee of the Whole. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 36:
APPROPRIATION ACT, (INFRASTRUCTURE
EXPENDITURES), 2026-2027,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 36, Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2026-2027, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. The motion is in order. To the motion. No? Good try. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have a few things to say.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise today to express support for the 2026-2027 Capital Estimates and to reaffirm our government's commitment to delivering infrastructure that meets the needs of Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, this year's plan outlines over \$436 million in investments that will strengthen our communities, improve public services, and support economic growth. These investments include major projects in housing, health care, energy, and transportation, each one designed to improve the quality of life, build resilience across the territory. And in particular, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point to a few capital projects that will be funded by this bill as follows:

There are tens of millions of dollars in funding to maintain and build schools in all communities across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has the second highest allocation of capital dollars after the Department of Infrastructure. This investment of \$50.4 million reflects our commitment to advance available housing across the Northwest Territories.

The construction of the Dehk'e Frank Channel bridge. This bridge is a critical connection point between several communities, including the capital city and the rest of the country. It is nationally strategic infrastructure, being the land connection to Joint Task Force North, as well as being the link to existing diamond mines and a likely link to the future Arctic Economic Security Corridor.

We are investing significantly in highway maintenance and reconstruction across the territory. There are upgrades planned for key routes, including Highways No. 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10. These investments are essential for ensuring safe and reliable transportation, supporting community access, and enabling the movement of goods and services. By improving culverts, road surfaces, bridge infrastructure, we are reducing risks from climate impacts and enhancing year-round connectivity for residents, businesses, and emergency services.

As described in detail in my Minister's statement earlier today, we also continue to ensure adequate funding to maintain and to continue engagement, advanced planning, and assessment work for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Taltson Expansion, and the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor.

At times, I may be asked why there are not larger sums allotted to these projects, given that they will be collectively requiring multi-billion dollar scale investments to reach completion. I do want to assure residents that we have sufficient appropriations with the proposals of today to do the work that is planned for this coming fiscal year. And as I noted during my statement, all three of these projects are progressing with greater pace than what had been seen in years gone by. This is reflective of the urgency that's being seen nationally in order to advance critical infrastructure that supports Canada's security and prosperity.

Work will also continue to design and build a transmission line between the Taltson hydro facility and the communities of Fort Providence and Kakisa. Funding allocated to this work is part of the 16 percent of this budget that will be helping to advance renewable energy initiatives

across the Northwest Territories in order to support greater energy independence and sustainability.

For the sake of residents who may not be familiar with our internal processes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about the process of passing a budget through the Northwest Territories consensus Government. Unlike a government where a majority party might only inform other elected Members of the details when the document is tabled, in our system the process begins with significant information sharing with all Members of the Assembly.

First, the infrastructure acquisition plan, which is the foundation for the future capital estimates, is shared in the early summer months for comments from committee. Once developed into the capital estimates, these too are then shared with the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and I had the opportunity to brief our colleagues from the AOC towards the end of August and early September. This is an opportunity to answer questions, but it is also an opportunity for government to start to gain awareness of areas where there may be some concerns. And once the fall session begins, I had the opportunity and pleasure to meet with the chair of AOC to further discuss what areas of the capital estimates Members may want to see changed or enhanced in order to support their passage into an appropriation bill.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that once again this process has produced a positive end result that improves the capital budget with additions that reflect the priorities established for the 20th Legislative Assembly. These commitments will be advanced through supplementary appropriations and future capital planning.

First, we will allocate approximately \$2 million towards the purchase of emergency backup generators for the Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson and the Chief Paul Niditchie School in Tsiigehtchic. I want to thank the Member from the Mackenzie Delta for raising this issue and highlighting an area of risk impacting the residents in his riding. But this also reminds us that to support priority focus on emergency preparedness, we need to ensure that all residents in all communities have access to adequate emergency sheltering.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank all MLAs who are Members of the Committee on Small and Remote Communities. Their ongoing work continues to shine a light on the particular challenges faced by small communities so that when there are positions

being taken or policies being changed, we can keep that in mind. And with that in mind, we are further committing to assess whether other community muster points require emergency capacity, and we will commit to doing that work in the coming year.

We will also be providing \$420,000 to complete 14 overdue school facility assessments in Yellowknife but, again, also in communities outside of the capital region, all of which would be outside of the established five-year cycle. This ensures our infrastructure decisions are based on current and accurate data. And on this item, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Yellowknife MLAs in particular for calling attention to this need. Again, as you see, Mr. Speaker, we also relied on the perspectives of others to remember that there may be others who are experiencing the same challenge.

As you can see, these assessments at \$420,000 are not inexpensive, and obviously our fiscal capacity to deliver major renovations or replacements will continue to be stretched for the near future. But having these assessments ensures that decision-making about future projects is being done with the best available information.

Mr. Speaker, renovations to the N'dilo school will be added to the 2027-2028 capital plan following technical planning work, which will be happening this coming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, one last item: Work is continuing towards a better policy-based approach to support housing clients dealing with historical arrears from legacy homeownership. And on this, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and acknowledge the work of the MLA from Monfwi, who has been a particularly tireless advocate on this issue. Obviously, just today, Mr. Speaker, we heard some 44 recommendations. I believe the approach that we are taking on this one issue is aligned with what we've heard in those recommendations today. It is my expectation that we will make this change this calendar year as quickly as possible with a view to seeing residents begin to benefit from those changes.

Last, Mr. Speaker, we will expedite the Mineral Administration and Registry System and online map staking projects, also known as MARS, in order to modernize our resource management tools and support responsible development.

Mr. Speaker, these commitments reflect our shared priorities. They reflect the collaborative spirit of consensus government, and they demonstrate our responsiveness to community needs and our dedication to building a more sustainable future.

I am proud of the balanced and forward-looking capital plan we've developed. I am proud of the changes that we've made as a group here. And I look forward to working with Members to ensure these investments deliver lasting benefits to residents across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. To the motion. Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the middle of Jay's fever, I admit I did not spend a lot of time writing this particular speech, but I did spend several months up to this amazing World Series run being briefed by our fantastic Legislative Assembly staff and by the Minister of Finance on what this capital budget includes.

Notably, Mr. Speaker, it includes the historic win for housing that Members negotiated in the last operational budget. That enough is reason for me to vote in favour of this budget. However, members and constituents we represent rightly point out that this is not enough, that there's never enough for our crumbling infrastructure of roads, schools, houses, and healthcare infrastructure. And I agree. What is there right now is upgrades to assets for accessibility. That is important. There is a new patrol facility for the winter road used as a point for renewable resource officers to monitor caribou harvest. That is important. There are upgrades to next-gen 9-1-1 services. That is important. There's ISIP funding to most of our communities. Quite important. There are small community health care critical upgrades. That is incredibly important. There is the construction of the Dehk'e Frank Channel Bridge, a critically important asset that impacts the whole territory. And yes, there are outhouses which are critically important when you need them, Mr. Speaker.

There are many other critical projects and assets that are funded in this budget. Right now, I don't see a future where we have enough money to spend on all the infrastructure priorities we have as a territory. We will be perpetually behind in addressing our urgent infrastructure needs without significant generational investment from our federal partners. In the meantime, what is very important is to spend prudently and plan as carefully as we possibly can, that any large-scale project that we take on, including the big three, that is Taltson, MVH, and the Slave Geological, need prudent planning and O and M transparency for whether we can afford long-term costs, from toilets to highways, houses to hospitals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. To the motion. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'd all want more for our constituencies. We know that. We know, Mr. Speaker, that the reality is there is only so much revenue to go around. You know, you talk to each Member, and they'll tell you that, you know, obviously, they want more. There's infrastructure needs. There's program needs for the regions as well. And, obviously, we've seen our fiscal sustainability drastically reduced, mainly because this side of the House and in cooperation with Cabinet, fought last year to get the \$150 million for housing that we required. And, yes, it may not be enough. Well, we know it's not enough but certainly it's a start, and that \$50.4 million is included in this capital budget, Mr. Speaker.

What we need, Mr. Speaker, is more focus on economic development. The issue is not our spending, it's not a spending problem, it's a revenue problem, Mr. Speaker.

Major projects are great. You know, the finance Minister alluded to them. The Member from Great Slave alluded to them. And that's great, and we continue to advocate for those, and we plan for those, and we reap the rewards from those. But that's simply not enough, Mr. Speaker. We have the natural resources. We have an abundance of minerals, of natural gas. We could become self-reliant on energy and provide an economy like we've never seen before, Mr. Speaker, in this territory. We just need to have the wherewithal and the focus and the strategy to do it. I say again, and I say it every year, we still remain resource rich and cash poor, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not going to take a lot of time; I think the Minister summed it up well. I'd like to thank all the Members from the accountability and oversight committee for the work we've done this past fall and leading into this session to get some of these additions to the capital budget. Again, we didn't get everything we wanted on there for each region, but certainly we did get some significant additions in there. I certainly appreciate the work that everyone has done here. I certainly appreciate the work from Cabinet and specifically the work from the Minister of Finance in our collaboration and our back and forth negotiation to get these additions into the capital budget. And I will be supporting the capital budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. To the motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today just to talk about how here in Canada we have the Indian Act. And back in 1967, the Territorial Council, of the what is known now today as the GNWT, was created under the Indian Act. And today, right now in this House, we represent the Crown here in the Northwest Territories for the Indian, Metis, and Inuit.

A good portion of the budget that comes from the Government of Canada is approximately \$1.8 billion that we get that comes into general revenues in this government. But in March of this year, I want to point out that when the budget was put together and it was voted in this House that the budget was -- previous budget of 2023-2024, the budget was \$2.29 billion. We increased it to \$2.5 billion. The deficit was \$1.7 billion, and we moved it up to \$1.8 billion. The borrowing limit of this government at that time was \$1.8 billion. The borrowing increase went from \$1.8 billion to \$3.2 billion. And we also included in that same budget a **notionable** housing budget of \$41 million. The total that we approved in this House for this government for this fiscal year was \$1.75 billion.

Mr. Speaker, when I put my name forward to be the MLA for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the 19th Assembly, I brought forward a wish list to this Assembly. And what I was told -- and I mentioned this before -- is that the train left the station because I came in midway through a four-year term, and the train was already moving down the track. And I even asked the Premier of the day if I was able to put the wishes of my four communities onto the capital plan, and the Premier of the day had said that I couldn't do that because the train already left the station. She said she'll try to put the wishes of my riding onto the train, so it gets on the capital plan, but what happened is that that train left and we tried to throw that luggage on the train. It just bounced off.

So, anyway, after I got re-elected, I wrote a letter to the Premier on February 15, 2024, outlining the wishes, again, for Dettah, N'dilo, Lutselk'e, and Fort Resolution. Because the chief and council, the Metis council, those are the ones I have to work with. So I submitted the wish list. And on February 23rd, I got a reply back from the Premier acknowledging receipt of my wishes. But that's over a couple of years now. But not long ago, on October 22nd, I was asked to resubmit the wishes of my four communities so that they could try to get onto the capital plan. And we got a reply back that the stuff that I wanted to see for my community -- I'll give you an example.

In Lutselk'e, we got dust problems in the summertime. Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, of all the five regions of the Northwest Territories, we had the

highest funeral rates this fiscal year alone. I think we got 33. In Lutselk'e, the problem there is health issues with the dust. And I kind of stress it often because even this morning I had a breakfast meeting with the Chief Marlowe, and he was very upset that we couldn't get it onto the capital plan to look at putting chip seal into the community of Lutselk'e. Even if we were to put it onto the capital plan or do a study on it, even if it takes two or three years, let's just try and find a way that we could work with Cabinet and take a look as to how we could try and to address these issues that come from my riding. But it didn't make it onto the capital plan, in this budget.

The other issue that keeps coming back to me is the issue of Jordan's Principle for our kids in our community. Not only that we're --

MR. SPEAKER: (audio).

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. Anyway, I just wanted to say that the capital plan that's been put together this year was put together -- I guess in my view is that even though we're a Crown, there was no consultation, no accommodation, and that's a big concern to me because when I go to Dettah and N'dilo, I go to the chief and council meetings, nobody from this government, from infrastructure, comes to that community. Same thing with Lutselk'e. Same thing with Fort Resolution. So here we are now, Mr. Speaker, is that it's really tough for me to come here and talk about this because, you know, like we said we're really poor as a government, but we're rich in resources. But the day is going to come that we as a government, we could be legally challenged by Indigenous governments on Crown consultation and accommodation. And that's concerning, especially when we get \$1.8 billion from Ottawa.

So the wishes that I put forward, it's still my hope that we could still work together with Cabinet and government because we're already halfway through our term. We still got another two years. The last six months of government, we're in election mode. So between now and then, I'll continue to work with Cabinet to look for ways as to how I can get my luggage into the capital plan.

So there's a lot of issues out there. And it's right, We got a lot of issues that are confronting our communities. But for today, Mr. Speaker, as much as I would like to continue to look for ways to work together and represent my four communities, it's really tough. But I would like to look at a way forward. I'm trying to make consensus government work. But for now, Mr. Speaker, because I got a huge list here of needs from my community and it's not even

being looked at -- we had a couple projects that were undertaken in partnership with Housing NWT. We, this year, already knew coming to this government that housing policies of government wasn't really working for our communities, and I had to figure a way as to how I could address the issues in small communities with housing.

We already know that Government of Canada, back in 1991, stopped the homeownership assistance program, home improvement, emergency repair programs. The programs that we really need, it ended. But today, we got a lot of HAP houses in our community are reaching out to the 50-year lifecycle, and they're really in desperate need of repairs. And if we don't address that soon, then we already are in housing crisis. It will only add to that. So I am grateful that we got some money to do this work.

Further to that, we also got additional monies to help the community of Lutselk'e for the homes they received from Government of Canada. They got funding for ten homes. But the thing is that they needed help with lot development. So, again, I approached Housing NWT, and again, they were really understanding as to how we could work together because housing is still a top priority in this government. And, again, I'm very grateful that they were able to help us out.

I'm happy to hear that we got the monies for some of the technical report for the N'dilo school. That is much needed. But we still need help in the community halls for Dettah and N'dilo. That's under DPW; that's been paid for. That's undersize. And the kids in Dettah are using that school, the gymnasium for the kids. N'dilo, it's the same thing. The gym that's there is also used for a community hall.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, as much as I like to push really hard for what I need for our small communities because I hear from the chief, the council, the Metis presidents, and local people in the community, there are a lot of issues. And I don't know if you noticed but I didn't ask any questions of the health Minister this week because we work closely together trying to look for solutions. The same thing with Vince -- sorry, the Minister of MACA.

MR. SPEAKER: (audio).

MR. EDJERICON: I am so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying that this government, we got two years left in our mandate. I don't know what this government is going to do with their Visa overdraft of \$1.751 billion. Maybe they can look at putting more money into Jordan's Principle as an example, so that our kids are much needed that need

their education. And, again, education is a treaty right. But, Mr. Speaker, it's really -- I gave the same speech back in March, and I'm here today again talking about the supplementary budget. Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I can't support the supplementary budget for those reasons. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. To the motion. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Finance and this government for their hard work on these estimates. But, Mr. Speaker, I must be honest. Housing in the Tlicho region is in severe crisis, and I do not believe that this budget reflects the urgency that this issue deserves.

Families are living in conditions that no one in this country should have to live in.

Mr. Speaker, this government has said that improving the suitability, accessibility, and affordability of housing is one of its top priorities. I appreciate the 10 new houses allocated to the Tlicho region that's in Behchoko. But the housing needs across our communities are still far from being met. Almost every indicator shows that the Tlicho region is facing the worst housing conditions in the Northwest Territories. In Behchoko alone, there are more than 130 people on the housing waitlist. Over 37 percent of homes in the region needs major repairs, the highest rate in the territory. More than 21 percent of homes have had incidences of mold in the past year. Also the highest in the territory, Mr. Speaker. And over 25 percent of homes do not have enough space for the families living in them, which is more than twice as high as anywhere else in the territory. I don't hear a lot of other regions advocating for housing as much as I do in Tlicho region.

With the closure of nearby diamond mines approaching, it is expected that many Tlicho citizens will return to their home communities, placing even greater demand on already limited housing resources, Mr. Speaker.

The Tlicho region is also being left behind in other essential infrastructure, such as schools -- such as our schools. The school in Whati was originally built as an elementary school, but now accommodates students up to grade 12. It is overcrowded with limited space for students to learn and for teachers to do their work. This is unacceptable and needs immediate attention.

Mr. Speaker, community governments are not adequately funded to make improvements to

their infrastructures. They end up waiting, or instead, they are left to compete for the leftover funds.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government, through the Indigenous and Northern Affairs, provides the Northwest Territories with \$1.8 billion to support its subject or Crown subject, which are the Dene, Metis, and Inuit people. Yet, many of our small communities are still being left behind.

Mr. Speaker, I tried to look at the big picture optimistically, but from my perspective I see that Yellowknife and the larger regional communities continue to be the haves and the smaller communities are the have-nots. The smaller communities are going with what they have. And that is not right. That is not good.

The government, the GNWT's own statistics, Mr. Speaker, shows these problems clearly, yet they continue to ignore and neglect the small communities. This is not right, and it cannot continue. Every community, Mr. Speaker, needs safe housing, and every child needs a good school and a chance to grow.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I cannot support Bill 36, Capital Estimates. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. To the motion. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We initiated the 20th Assembly with a focus on restoring fiscal balance. That was our directive, to basically and simply straighten out and strengthen our fiscal position. Our outside support, really, to some degree, in a large degree, dictates the balances and the strength of your finances because of the simple fact that we can't raise anything, we don't manufacture anything. You might make some eggs and some fuel tanks, but outside of that you're solely dependent on the third party formula funding that's coming in.

Then we moved on and addressed the devastations of subsidizing those devastations with funding revenues, the impacts of climate change and floods and fires and evacuation and so on. Those all add up into costs, unforeseen costs that we have seen in every region. One just has to look at the shoreline impacts in Tuktoyaktuk, the evacuation in our southern larger communities, the evacuations in Fort Good Hope. And the list goes on, Mr. Speaker, on added costs, added costs. It all adds up at the end of the day. And the difficult challenges I can see this government having is really trying to restore that balance and abiding by the fiscal policy which gives you an equity position for further infrastructure development.

So that came up to two years, and now we're on the downhill slide, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague mentioned, it's actually a year and a half. We can shorten that by saying we only have two more budgets, then that's it.

So learning from Restoring Balance, so we're moving ahead. And I heard from the finance Minister's presentation here that it's now stability and resilience. Same focus as what federal counterparts are doing: Spend less, invest more.

Okay, surrounding my comments to the capital budget and knowing the fact and the situation of give and take and compromise and so on and our lesser position of raising capital, we cannot raise capital, limited amount, but by comparison to our provincial counterparts, we're so far beyond raising capital. It's not real, so. So given all that and given the fact that private contribution really helps restore the balance as well, so the cost of modular homes can be seen by reductions if we support that Fort Good Hope construction centre, which we are. In every year for the next five years, there's possibility it could produce 5 units. That's 25 homes. So let's look at the long run, invest now for tomorrow.

In today's financial position, yes, we've got to make compromise. And I think looking at the devastation and the cost and the operating income, the compromise is this budget. We can't satisfy everybody, Mr. Speaker. That's a given. So in summary, in short, I'll be supporting the budget. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member the Sahtu. To the motion. Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly don't have as colourful a speech as my colleague from Great Slave. I think that one is going to go down in history as one of the better alliterations I've heard on a budget, the outhouses to homes, or how she put it? I just have a few comments on this one, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to keep them quite brief.

The first one is that, you know, I put my comments on the record when we approved the mains last year about the housing funding that we were able to secure, that historic investment that came from the collaboration of Regular MLAs. And I think we really did achieve something there, and I put my comments on the record about it and I continue to be happy about it. So I had a feeling when this capital budget came forward, it'd be something I could support because that commitment was made. And, really, for me, it was first thing when we got it, I opened it up, had a look. Is the capital money

there? Did they keep their promise? They did. At that point, the biggest issue that I could have raised was dealt with.

As I said during review in Committee of the Whole, you know, I do have concerns about our capacity to do these things. I do want to see departments collaborating where necessary to make sure that we can achieve this priority. I think that it's important to note that it is one of our top priorities, and so that's one of the reasons that I wanted us to put so much effort into ensuring that we made a difference. And I think we are making a difference. And I also want to acknowledge the comments by Members who don't feel like we've gone far enough. And I think it's just important to note that, you know, the housing deficit in this territory, if we really start to look at it as a whole, something along the lines of \$2 billion. I think it's 19 -- or I can't remember the number off the top of my head, how many homes we're missing in order to be able to fulfill the need. But 900 different people on the waiting list; it's a huge problem. It's not something that we're going to solve with one capital budget. But I understand the sentiments of Members who don't feel like we've gone far enough. And I certainly -- you know, I've been to many of the communities that are in question here that are being spoken about, and I've seen it myself. I've seen the housing need firsthand. I've spoken to it in this House. I know the housing Minister has seen it in her community. She's seen it in many of the communities that she visits as Minister. And it's heartbreaking. It's devastating. And it's really difficult to see. And to be in a position like we're in and know that we can't necessarily meet that need, and that is the reason I fought so hard for us to get the little bit that we were able to get in there.

Something I do want to talk about a little bit is just our project estimating, capital project estimating, and despite the lessons that we've apparently learned, this remains a significant challenge for this government.

We saw projects in this budget from 2024-2025 to the 2026-2027 increase by 100 percent year over year. That's really nuts. And I was just looking at that one, just one of the projects, you know, in here, and the huge escalations that happened between that project first being estimated and coming to the point where we're building it now, and I'm very happy, a couple of Members have mentioned the Frank Channel Bridge. It's an essential project. We need to build that bridge. It's an essential transportation link. But the cost escalations have taken us to a point where it feels unsustainable to be spending that kind of money on a single piece of -- a fairly simple piece of infrastructure at the end of the day. And I look at that and I think

about the infrastructure deficit in this territory, and it simply feels overwhelming. How on earth are we going to afford to build not just one but two highways if it's costing us \$120 million to build a single bridge? The numbers in my mind are going well into the billions per road, and it just -- it's impossible to fathom how that kind of money is going to come forward without a significant and historic investment by the federal government as mentioned.

And I want to speak to that infrastructure deficit a little bit, just a thought that occurred to me a while back. I was on a trip down south and drove back into the territory. And I hadn't done that since I became an MLA, and of course you look at things a little bit differently when that lens is being applied. And I've felt this a number of times, but I felt it differently this time, just the feeling of crossing the border from Alberta into the Northwest Territories and noticing the subtle differences. You know, coming from Alberta, the road was very well maintained. It was clear that there was lots of money going into that road. You know, all the trimming on the side was kept up with. Immediately, as soon as I got into the NWT, you could just tell the infrastructure was suffering. The outhouses weren't quite as well maintained, some of them in pretty poor condition. The roadsides weren't as well taken care of. The road was full of bumps. And it's just very clear that we do not have the money to be maintaining the infrastructure we've got, let alone addressing the deficit. And I really think that this is an issue that Canada needs to be looking at. Why is there such a difference between Alberta and the NWT when you cross the border? Why is it that this part of Canada is being seen as different? And why is it a place that's considered -- well, I shouldn't say considered but it's a place that has become a have-not.

I'm not sure if I mentioned this in the House before, but another time that a significant difference stood out to me was I was working in a different job in a different life, and I had the opportunity to work on a cruise ship and we visited Greenland and a bunch of communities in Greenland, then we crossed the ocean over to the NWT side -- or sorry, the Nunavut side. And the differences in development between Greenland and Nunavut were just absolutely shocking and it really, really, really drove home the point for me, the difference between the money that is going into that country over there, just across the pond, and the money that is being spent on the North here. It was night and day. And I think, you know, it's something that stands out to me. It stood out to me in that moment as a Canadian. I remember thinking in that moment, I was like, I wish -- it was Justin Trudeau was the Prime Minister at the time, I

wish he was on this boat. I wish he could see the difference. Why is Canada investing so differently in the North than Denmark is in Greenland? It was a stark difference. And, you know, that difference stands out to me. So I think -- when I think about how overwhelming the infrastructure deficit feels when I drive into the territory as a decision-maker, it certainly gives me a lot of pause. And I think it's something that as a country needs to be addressed.

As for the capital budget itself, as I said, I'm in support of this one. I think that the big achievement for AOC in this round was the housing. We got that in our negotiation on the mains, and Cabinet, to their credit, made good on their promise and put it in this budget. It's not enough. I acknowledge that. We all know that. But it was progress, and it was significant progress compared to the commitments that were in place before. And I have spoken in the past of celebrating small wins. I continue to feel that that incremental progress towards positive change is how we make change effectively in this role. I'm happy with the progress that we made, and I commit to fighting for more. Those are my comments on the budget, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that my least favourite budget to deliberate is the capital budget. It seems to have the effect of dividing us into separate communities and regions, all vying with each other to get a greater share of a limited pot. My ideal, and likely naive vision, is that we would all be thinking about the good of all residents across the entire Northwest Territories and that as a group, we would try to prioritize the projects that meet the most urgent and greatest needs wherever they may be. But, naturally, each of us feels an obligation to fight for the communities and regions we represent, and most communities feel there's just so much more that could be built or renovated in their communities.

So when we got together, each Member pointed out how upset they were that such a tiny percentage of the capital budget was going to projects in the communities they represent. And contrary to popular assumption, it turns out the rest wasn't all going to Yellowknife. In fact, the capital is also getting a much smaller percentage of the capital budget than our share of the population would justify. So if most of the capital money isn't flowing into any of our communities, where is it going? The answer, we discovered, is that the bulk of our capital

spending doesn't go into any of our communities; it's going towards highways and power infrastructure. And even then, we're not even coming close to allocating the money that we should if we actually wanted to properly maintain those assets. So that's depressing.

I do believe strongly in asset management, Mr. Speaker, as I spoke about in my Member's statement last week, that we need to focus on taking proper care of what we have before we commit ourselves to building shiny new things, especially big things like highways that will gobble up more and more and more of our capital budget going forward and offer even fewer opportunities to enhance the things within our communities.

Now, I also want to acknowledge that, of course, highways are useful. I'm not anti-highway. And we often just take them for granted without even thinking about the cost. But highways are not a panacea. They should not be assumed to be the solution to all of our problems, especially when they clearly create new challenges.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is my appreciation for asset management that makes me pleased to see that the government has recently committed \$420,000 to assessments for schools across the territory. This is a really positive direction that will hopefully help focus our decision-making in future capital budgets towards the areas of greatest need.

I also want to acknowledge the continuing strong commitment to housing. As we have heard many times this week, adequate housing is the key to everything else, whether it's safety, health, economic development, you name it. So if there's any investment that's worth going into debt for, it's housing.

Mr. Speaker, I support the things in this capital budget. It represents many urgent and necessary improvements. I still feel that we can go further in terms of prioritization of capital needs and ensuring we use our limited resources to have the greatest impact. But that is a work in progress, and it will take political will from all of us in this room. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the opportunity to say a few comments. I am going to focus on one particular area of the budget, but first I want to talk about budgets in general.

So we're not here to talk about the operations budget, and let's be clear, we're not. But there's only two times a year the Members collectively have the ability to have some type of influence on needs and outcomes. So how do we know what a perfect budget is? Whether it's the capital or operations -- and, again, the capital is the one before us, and it's usually the one that reflects us or feels like it reflects our needs and the messages we send. So whether we see that in operations or capital, it's the same issue, and it's the same argument. But when you're a Member, as the public doesn't necessarily appreciate, they don't -- they just view, well, why don't you just get what you ask for? And often you have to try to explain by the time we see the budget, whether it's capital or operations, it's almost 99 percent done. And from the days I started in 2003, there was a lot more detailed to and fro of discussions about what capital initiatives are in there, why they're in there, and how we can get more things in our community ridings. So whether you're looking for an extra speedboat in the Sahtu, that's when they throw that on the table. Whether you're looking for that small bridge to get from, you know, the community of Gameti to Wekweeti, like, those little things, that's the conversation often what happens in those times. Now, those big projects don't happen overnight, but what happens, though, is they get earmarked for future projects. So obviously the bridge wouldn't show up that week, that next month, or next year, but what it would say is we agree with the planning, and we're committed to the overall strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the collective will of this side of the House typically represents 11 people versus the opposition of the Cabinet who proposes the budget of 7, and often the public says, well, you have the majority of votes. How come you can't get what you want?

But I often find that people misinterpret the values and hopes in consensus government without the practical realities of what actually happens. Many people run as politicians, and when they get here, most of these decisions often reveal more of a process of bureaucratic style. So political ambition is trumped by bureaucratic outcomes, and often I'll hear is, well, we do this because the public service told us this, and the reason this school is being fixed is because the public service has told us this is the evaluation. Long are the days of good old Gordon Ray by saying, we're going to work together, and what do you need for your town. And often we'd hear the stories of they would put arenas in communities and plan their recreations or even hear, well, water pump is in your community during the capital process is important; we're going to find a way to help

have that happen. Now it's often I hear in my experience, being back for two years, I find it's, well, the public service has told us this is the direction we're going, and it's -- you know, the reason this road is being fixed is because the system itself has told us this is how it is. So it doesn't feel like politicians are being politicians anymore. And I don't mean it has to strictly be transactional. I mean, certain things need to be fixed. That's the truth. But often it's going to a community riding and saying, you know, what matters to your community? Shouldn't that be in the budget? And, you know, since I've been here, I've never really heard that message. I hear, well, here's the capital budget and there's a giant thump on the table of 800 and some pages -- and that's just more of a reference, Mr. Speaker, not a specific amount -- and that's the budget. And what's happening here is that people tend to miss the -- there's a loss of interpretation. I guess, really, I'm trying to say is that what ends up happening is it's like we're put in a room and said you guys figure it out. But we're really, at the end of the day, 11 individual parties if you think of it that way, jurisdictions, ridings, etcetera, whatever we want to call it; it's all semantics. But in essence, you're 11 individuals; it's very difficult to coalesce when you're 11, you know, whether you're in Tu Nedhe and saying, I want dust control. I'm just using this as an example. You're in the Deh Cho, and you say, well, I need this water thing fixed. And you're in the Sahtu, and I need that. So people are so focusing on individual ridings, it's almost impossible for a collective push to get an outcome on any of these budgets, whether operational or capital. So back to here's the opportunity.

The only time Members truly can wield any sort of collectiveness, and I say is that either something really bad happens, which I'm not obviously hoping for, because, I mean, that's not really the outcome I want. Truly, you may think I do, but I don't. Or there's something surges with this strange wheel of excitement that people can't stop the energy that's coming, they all want to be on board. And housing might have represented that in a lot of ways. I believe community housing needs to be stronger. And as a Yellowknife MLA, believe it or not, I strongly believe some of Yellowknife's housing not only -- I cannot be clear enough about this -- not only Yellowknife's housing will be solved, but it'll take pressure off the needs we have in our city by providing viable realistic options in the regions and in the communities.

Now, some people disagree, and I get it. I get it. They don't think that that's right. We should get more housing in Yellowknife. Yeah, we should. But we also have needs in the communities that will change that balance. So

how do we get there? Well, we work through this.

The first plan as we see is being broached here which is this set of \$50 million opportunity that we're going to see a wave of housing, I look forward to seeing it. And not trying to upset anybody when I say this next phrase, but, you know, I hope it doesn't turn into a debacle in ten years from now we look at with an auditor general's view of the problem and go, oh, where things went wrong. I hope we don't get there. I really don't. I sincerely hope that it rolls out in a relatively way. Not perfect. It's never going to be perfect, so let's get past that. Let's just hope it works and is effective and helps and serves people who need housing, you know. But do I see a reflection of me in the capital budget? Do I see a reflection of the Yellowknife Centre in the budget? And do I see a reflection of the community of Yellowknife? Things like that. And I think that's when Members start to ask, is this budget for me? Can I get behind this budget?

I'm not going to suggest in any way there isn't anything good in this budget, but I definitely know that this Cabinet, whether it's the Premier, the finance Minister, and everybody else, for goodness sakes -- I don't want to leave anyone out because I don't want anyone sad -- but the fact of the matter is this is our chance to ask for operational needs to be tied to the support for the capital budget. And, Mr. Speaker, you know this. Everybody knows this.

And so what would have mattered to me mostly is to see some push to fix the Avens problem. Now, I'm not going to go at length and explain that. We've already had a motion that's passed, and we've already had some details. And to me, I feel very sad that this budget could have said, okay, if your support on this capital budget is transactional, what you're asking for is -- and believe it, as they say, wait for it -- 0.00017 of the overall budget. That's all. It's that small because it matters that much to me.

Since I've been back, Mr. Speaker, I've had two phone calls from Ministers. I kind of feel lonely like the Maytag man. Nobody phones, right?

I had one Minister call because they thought there was a crisis. And I don't know why the other one called, although it was nice. But that said, no one asks me what I do -- want in the sense of through this process how -- I would have liked that. And they know that. And if I had heard that we were going to straighten out the Avens problem in some manner -- and, again, I'm not going to go at length -- I'd be behind this budget. And I think that that's really the fundamental reason why I feel frustrated with how it is. Whether it's concerns, as my good

colleague from Tu Nedhe says, he doesn't see himself reflected in this budget. To me, that's how I felt I would have been reflected in this budget. And that's -- you know, sometimes needs are transactional in politics. It's that simple.

Mr. Speaker, if people haven't noticed yet or figured it out, I am going to end with this: This is so important to me, this particular initiative, as -- I am wrapping up. As I finish, this will not break Avens without that support, but I want to tell you this is going to put a lot of stress on that organization. And it causes me to look at every decision I have to make forward, whether it's this capital budget or the next operational budget or the following capital budget, etc. That this is important to me and the community. And so if anyone over there is listening -- I'm not suggesting they're not as in zero listening. But if anyone's listening, it'd be nice to hear a phone call saying, hey, we need your support for this. I'm listening on Avens. And that's the type of phone call I'd like to receive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, I've listened carefully to what the Minister of Finance spoke of in terms of working with a standing committee process, and I've listened to what the other Members have said both for and against the government -- sorry, the budget, rather, the capital budget, and I have some thoughts and some takeaways as well.

You know, the housing money is really seen, I think, by many Members as a centerpiece for this budget, and certainly for the last round of budget negotiations. My concern with this is we often get ahead of ourselves with ambitious capital plans -- the Member for Frame Lake mentioned this -- that we can't actually deliver on for a variety of reasons. Whether it's windmills or bridges or hospitals, it all seems that our procurement is challenged.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this housing money as well gives me additional concern in light of the auditor general's recent report. That was about homeownership programs largely, less about building. But if we build things, we can't officially get people into them, then they're not going to do us very much good. Furthermore, you know, saying 212 houses, homes, new homes, new builds, and the renovations we're going to get afterwards, it's a drop in the bucket to the actual need. The ambitious target that many Members, some Members, really stuck to was 500 homes. Not all Members. I think 500 homes

is very reasonable. It's not Nunavut 3,000. It's 500. And we're delivering less than half. And when the need is exponentially greater than that, we should be shooting for the stars. And we're just not. And this budget continues to fail to do that. We don't need to settle for less when this is one of our four top priorities as a government, when this is a need, a crisis. The Standing Committee on Social Development just issued an excellent report with 44 recommendations that show us how deep and broad this chasm of housing crisis is. And I hope those recommendations are received by the House. But that's the kind of thing we need to see. Ambitious, far-reaching plans to transform systems, to build new assets, to invest in solutions. We're not getting what we need for housing even with the little bit we have and the little progress we've made.

I welcome the money for school assessments, to be sure. But in the finance Minister's own words, these assessments are overdue. This is not new money that is a luxury. This is money that should have been provided before. These assessments should have been done before. Yellowknife school -- four Yellowknife schools are in desperate need of repair. Two need retrofits or full replacements. One missed its 40-year retrofit and probably needs a full replacement. And three have contaminated drinking water supplies. So I welcome the technical assessments, but I would much rather know those schools are safe for our kids. And this budget doesn't do that.

Mr. Speaker, as you know I'm passionate about economic development, and I issued a red alert earlier, trying to shake the government out of complacency. Online map staking is a key recommendation from industry that we need to get mining going again in the Northwest Territories, to restore our competitive edge, and actually compete with northern neighbours and remote jurisdictions. Critical minerals aren't forever. Lithium's not forever. The opportunity window will close on these things. The tax credits will end. If we don't have our systems in place now when the going is good, we may miss that window. And then, as some Members have said, all we'll have left is government. And that's not sustainable. So when I hear MARS will be expedited with no detail, what does that mean to anyone listening? A commitment is great. Politicians make commitments all the time. But if there's no tangible outcomes attached to that commitment, how do you hold it to account? How do you know it's going to happen? How can you turn back and say, well, you said you were going to do this, but you haven't? At any point in the future, before 2027-2028, when MARS is supposed to be implemented, the

Minister can say, I am working to expedite. We are expediting it. But unless I have a schedule that shows how that process is going to go, unless I know there's new money put behind solving the problems there, unless there's an MOU on the table or a draft shared with committee behind the scenes of how they're going to work with the IGCS to make that happen, it's just words. And if I am going to support the budget and want to see MARS expedited, I need more than words. We need to see tangibles.

Mr. Speaker, I asked questions during the Committee of the Whole on this budget about the Ingraham Trail. Unfortunately and very sadly, one of my constituents was killed in a motorcycle accident this summer near highway -- or kilometer 21. I'm still unsure if that area of the highway will be repaired. I'm still unsure if guardrails will be installed. The Minister has committed to bringing that back, and I look forward to that information. I just don't have it at my fingertips. And I'm very concerned about the safety of that highway. My constituents, who spend a lot of time there, are very concerned with that highway. And until I have certainty that that is, in fact, going to be addressed, I'm not sure the \$2 million for the next two years is going to go far enough to do that. There's a lot of work that needs to be done on that road. And if one person dies, that's a reason to invest more resources.

Mr. Speaker, our fiscal strategy Restoring Balance, which Members have spoken about, was unilaterally imposed. It was announced. There was a document. We've spoken about it. Now it's been unilaterally re-imposed with new terms that we're still not sure about. Yes, we approved borrowing limits. Yes, we get briefed on this stuff in committee before it comes public. But we don't know what the bigger picture looks like. We don't know how much we're borrowing to invest, and we don't know what strategic investments are going to be made over the next coming years. We know the big projects, the major projects, the ones we want, the ones we're fighting for. But those projects, they need billions of dollars that aren't coming from this government, that will need to come from the federal government. There's stuff we have to be able to do here, though, to keep the lights on in the economy, quite frankly, and build towards something better. And our fiscal strategy is key in that. We need to see that going forward. We need to understand what it means, how it works, how we're going to hold it accountable, what metrics for success there are, and how, ultimately, we're going to make this government sustainable, because I'm not sure we're headed in that direction either.

Mr. Speaker, consensus decision-making is not just an exchange of two letters and a response that pleases the majority of Members. Consensus decision-making is making sure that everyone feels involved in the end product or the final outcome of a decision. And yes, it does mean that Members can say, this is my hill to die on and I refuse to move. And then the process needs to work around that. Now, it's slow, and it can be painful. But that's what it's supposed to be. But it is not a simple majority voting for something or deciding for something. It is taking the time to understand the needs of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the needs of Monfwi, the needs of Yellowknife Members, the needs of every Member, and finding ways to include that. And it certainly takes more time than two letters.

And at the end of the day, accountability needs consequences. And I brought this up before, Mr. Speaker. But we talk about this all the time when we have various issues how do we make sure that government is being held to account? And if we always say, well, the budget's good enough, so let's go along with it because let's show we're working together. There reaches a point where we're always working together, and nothing's ever changing, and the people who entrusted us to be here don't see the accountability they expect us to bring with the job. And that's why it's important to be able to vote against things that you don't feel go far enough or address the moment that we're in, the biggest challenges we face. That's what accountability looks like.

Detractors can say, you know, it's a distraction, and we should always vote together, we should always be unanimous, that's what consensus government is. That's not what consensus government is. And if we can't have that level of accountability in here without it causing frictions, then we have a real problem in our democratic institutions. So when Members vote against things, it's not because they aren't being cooperative or productive; it's because their constituents need to be represented and the bigger picture for the territory needs to be represented as well, and if they don't see themselves in that picture then they have to speak up. You can't keep giving the same pass over and over again and expect anything to change. And unless we change how this system works, we're going to repeat the same mistakes that got us into this place in the first place, flat revenues, mounting debts, and very little economic development on the horizon. And once the dam bursts on that, this government will have to look at painful decisions from within that it is currently putting off. But that will not last forever if we don't have a robust plan for our future. And those diamond mines close soon, Mr. Speaker.

Ultimately, another thing I must be mindful of, we are all treaty people. When I hear the representatives who are -- sorry, the Members who are and represent the Tlicho and the Akaithcho people saying this doesn't suit their region or their regions, their people, and I think of my community of Yellowknife being on their shared traditional territory, I must listen to their concerns as well, I think, if it properly addresses the needs of those treaty partners. And I don't think they've met that charge; I certainly have heard that today. So for all those reasons, I can't support this budget -- I won't support this budget until we start seeing real plans that addresses the moment we're in. It's not just a housing crisis. It's an economic crisis. It's a health care crisis. Enough complacency. It's time to move forward with real risk-taking, with real leadership, not forwarding concerns onto multilateral -- sorry, the Council of Leaders, or forwarding things onto the Prime Minister's desk. This government needs to step up at those tables, have a clear vision, and fight for that vision, fight for Northerners, and make a difference when we spend money that people can actually feel in their everyday. 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. So the Member from -- sorry, the finance Minister, do you wish to conclude debate?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just have a couple comments on process. I'm not going to get into anyone's views of who's -- Mr. Speaker, just a couple words on process. I think I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Speaker, I do agree with the comments just now. Consensus is not unanimity. That's not the point. Consensus is a process. It involves conversations and discussions and information sharing in this government. I can't speak for the 16th or 17th or 18th Assembly, but the 19th and the 20th Assembly, it's a process that begins over the course of many months, a lot of information sharing, discussions that aren't structured, that are not one-offs, that are not individualized, that are not backroom deals, that are not one-off deals. The way that we've been doing it here, myself and the chair of AOC, is to get together to collect the positions of Cabinet, to collect the positions of AOC as best as can be reflected, not unanimity. Cabinet isn't unanimity, Mr. Speaker, but it is a place where we at the end of the day do come forward and present with Cabinet solidarity. But the process of getting there is by far not one of expecting or

demanding unanimity, and it's often a place of much voracious discussion. But we can get to a place where then the different Members of this House can sit down through the chair, through myself, after many months of review, to determine whether or not there is something that we can move forward on as a collective sufficient to reach a decision here culminating in today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I always accept, and frankly expect, that there will be people who vote against the budget, whether or not there are small projects or major projects in their ridings. And that's certainly their purview to do so. But, overall, Mr. Speaker, we do want to try to consistently do our best to look at what risks befall the territory, what fiscal capacity we have to reach them, and then to never give up on the fact that we have to continue to act as leaders to move forward, to advocate, to speak out, to go to the federal government, to work with Indigenous governments, so that at the end of the day the whole of the Northwest Territories will ultimately be continuing to move in a positive direction. There's quite a number of challenges, Mr. Speaker. One budget isn't going to fix them all, but one budget can start to fix some of the problems that we find, whether it's identifying the fact that we may need to look at our school assessments, whether it's identifying the fact that we need to look at, you know, having a major bridge, or whether it's continuing the work we're doing in housing. So, Mr. Speaker, we'll keep doing all that work that's across the territory, doing it in a way that, again, follows a process of analysis, of risk analysis. It's not always very dramatic but it is one that, having increased over the last few years, how we do that planning, to improve that planning, trying to be more evidence based about it and not simply be one by one by one so that we can get a handle on where we're going.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude, and I would ask, please, for a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance asks for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

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

Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Monfwi -- the Member for Range Lake, my apologies. The Member for Monfwi.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please stand.

Results of the recorded vote: 12 in favour, 4 opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 36 has had its third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 37:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES AND
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION), NO. 3,
2024-2025,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 37, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures and Borrowing Authorization), No. 3, 2024-2025, be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

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

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):

The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake.

MR. SPEAKER: All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 13 in favour, 3 opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 37 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 38:

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO.
2, 2025-2026,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake that Bill 38, Supplementary Appropriation Act, (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2025-2026, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

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

The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote are 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 38 has had its third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 39:

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 2,
2025-2026,
CARRIED

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes that Bill 39, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2025-2026, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

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

The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha.

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

The results of the recorded vote, 16 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. The motion is carried. Bill 39 has had third reading.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, October 31st, 2025, at 10 a.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
 - Written Question 21-20(1), Changes to Child and Youth Counselling Services
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
 - Motion 65-20(1), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 4, 2026
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act
 - Bill 35, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 33-20(1), Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges Report on the Review of Motion 56-20(1): Code of Conduct Referral to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privilege
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, October 31st, 2025, at 10 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Unedited Hansard