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**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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

**HANSARD**

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**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nahendeh)

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*Minister of Industry, Tourism and  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER OR REFLECTION .....</b>	<b>3545</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>3545</b>
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 190-20(1): UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDIGENOUS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN .....	3545
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 191-20(1): PROGRESS UPDATE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR WORKPLAN .....	3546
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 192-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING .....	3548
MINISTER'S STATEMENT 193-20(1): MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE .....	3548
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>3548</b>
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 950-20(1): TRAINING STANDARDS FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SECURITY GUARDS .....	3548
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 951-20(1): RENT CONTROL MEASURES AND THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT .....	3549
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 952-20(1): ARCTIC WINTER GAMES TRYOUT LOCATION .....	3549
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 953-20(1): INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT POLICY .....	3550
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 954-20(1): DIABETIC FOOTCARE .....	3551
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 955-20(1): LEGISLATIVE PACE .....	3551
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 956-20(1): LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS .....	3552
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 957-20(1): VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE STAFF .....	3552
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 958-20(1): ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTINCT TLICHO ADMINISTRATIVE REGION .....	3552
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 959-20(1): WORK OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION .....	3553
MEMBER'S STATEMENT 960-20(1): FORT SIMPSON NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION .....	3553
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY .....</b>	<b>3554</b>
<b>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS .....</b>	<b>3554</b>
COMMITTEE REPORT 37-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON BILL 34: TRESPASS TO PROPERTY ACT, CARRIED RECEIVED AND REFERRED TO COW .....	3554
COMMITTEE REPORT 38-20(1): STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2024- 2025 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, CARRIED, DEEMED READ, RECEIVED AND ADOPTED, RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT REQUESTED .....	3561
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>3561</b>
QUESTION 1135-20(1): REGULATION FOR DISPOSAL OF LOW-VALUE VEHICLES .....	3561
QUESTION 1136-20(1): TRAINING STANDARDS FOR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SECURITY GUARDS .....	3562
QUESTION 1137-20(1): INELIGIBLE HIRING LISTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE .....	3562
QUESTION 1138-20(1): STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM SECURITY .....	3563
QUESTION 1139-20(1): LANDLORD OBLIGATIONS UNDER SECTION 30 OF THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT .....	3564
QUESTION 1140-20(1): DIABETES-RELATED FOOT CARE SERVICES .....	3564
QUESTION 1141-20(1): LOCATION OF ARCTIC WINTER GAMES TRIALS .....	3565
QUESTION 1142-20(1): PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS .....	3566
QUESTION 1143-20(1): LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT .....	3567
QUESTION 1144-20(1): ESTABLISHMENT OF TLICHO ADMINISTRATIVE REGION .....	3568
QUESTION 1145-20(1): REVIEW OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON LANDS AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT .....	3569
QUESTION 1146-20(1): ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL REPORT .....	3569
QUESTION 1147-20(1): PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTOR REGULATIONS .....	3570
QUESTION 1148-20(1): POLICY BASIS FOR ESTABLISHMENTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS .....	3571
QUESTION 1149-20(1): HEALTHCARE REFORM .....	3571
QUESTION 1150-20(1): REVIEW OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON LANDS AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT .....	3572
QUESTION 1151-20(1): HEALTHCARE REFERRALS .....	3573
QUESTION 1152-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PHYSICIAN CAPACITY .....	3573
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION .....</b>	<b>3574</b>
MOTION 70-20(1): REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 483-20(1): 2025-26 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL REPORT .....	3574
MOTION 71-20(1): REFERRAL OF TABLED DOCUMENT 445-20(1): 2025 REVIEW OF MEMBERS OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REPORT .....	3574
MOTION 72-20(1): PROTECTION OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS AND RIGHTS OF NORTHERNERS .....	3574
MOTION 73-20(1): STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES' MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY .....	3575
MOTION 74-20(1): TRANSFER OF HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MARKET RENTAL UNITS TO TENANTS .....	3575

MOTION 75-20(1): WAIVING OF RENT FOR ELDERS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ..... 3576

**NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS.....3576**

    BILL 46: PREVENTION OF PROCEEDINGS THAT HAMPER EXPRESSION ON MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST ACT..... 3576

**CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS .....3576**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE .....3597**

**ORDERS OF THE DAY .....3597**

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, March 3, 2026****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer or Reflection**

---Prayer or reflection

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

Please be seated. I'd like to thank the elder Judy Selamio for the opening prayer. Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 190-20(1):  
UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
INDIGENOUS RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN**

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, increasing Indigenous representation in the public service has been a goal of the Legislative Assembly for over 30 years. Guided by our commitment to reconciliation, the Government of the Northwest Territories has taken a whole-of-government approach to addressing barriers to recruitment and retention by challenging the status quo, uplifting Indigenous voices, and advancing the implementation of the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework and Action Plan launched in 2021.

Mr. Speaker, over the past four years, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made meaningful progress in implementing the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework Action Plan. Departments have advanced this work through their Indigenous employment plans, which set out concrete measures to increase, develop and maintain Indigenous employees.

Today, I would like to highlight the progress that the Department of Finance and all GNWT departments have made in strengthening Indigenous representation since the launch of the framework and action plan.

Mr. Speaker, we are improving recruitment practices through the launch of the job description review guide to help departments set appropriate positional education, and experience requirements and include

Indigenous cultural and social factors in job descriptions.

From September 1, 2022, to December 8, 2025, over 3400 positions have been reviewed for the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework Action Plan compliance by the job evaluation unit within the human resources ensuring job descriptions accurately reflect the minimum education and experience for people to be successful in the positions. The Department of Finance has also launched mandatory training for managers on the staffing process and recruitment programs.

Mr. Speaker, through the launch of mitigating unconscious bias training, we are ensuring Indigenous representation on selection committees within the recruitment process. Indigenous applicants now have the option to request representation on their selection committee, helping to enhance cultural competency, reduce bias and promote cultural safety throughout the hiring process. The department has also launched the establishment of an Indigenous eligibility list for LL pre-qualified Indigenous candidates and allowing applications to be reviewed for future vacancies before positions are opened to competition.

Mr. Speaker, we are strongly focused on supporting Indigenous employees. We have also completed our review of the leadership development program to ensure alignment with the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework. The program now incorporates strengthened Indigenous perspectives through collaboration with northern employers, the Indigenous employee advisory committee, and community partners, supporting the framework's focus on removing barriers and embedding cultural relevance. An on the land learning component further enhances culturally grounded leadership development consistent with the values and goals of the framework. Over the past three years, the Indigenous Development Training Program, Indigenous Career Gateway Program and Building Capacity with Indigenous Governments have been fully subscribed. Additionally, we have created now a career pathways advisor position in 2025 to support Indigenous employees in

identifying career pathways and achieving their career goals within the public service.

Mr. Speaker, we are also pleased to announce the official launch of the Indigenous Mentorship Program. This is a nine-month initiative designed to support Indigenous employees through meaningful mentorship relationships with Indigenous mentors. Participants in the pilot cohort will commit approximately two hours per month to the mentor-mentee relationship. While the pilot will include a small cohort of participants, mentorship resources and matching support will be available to all Indigenous employees across the public service. And I was recently pleased to meet one of these teams during a mentee-mentor meeting that fell on a day when the senior mentor had meetings with their Minister here at the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we are also committed to supporting the health and well-being of our employees. This year the GNWT introduced a new Employee Assistance Program, GreenShield Plus, which has an enhanced focus on Indigenous health and wellness. Through our partnership with Noojimo Health, an Indigenous-owned Canadian organization that provides culturally safe -- supports Indigenous employees and their families have access to virtual mental health services exclusively for Indigenous people. All of these many initiatives and actions also helping us strengthen our own accountability. We have implemented annual performance expectations for deputies that hold them accountable to their annual department Indigenous employment plan targets:

- We have launched the GNWT-wide succession planning guide to align with the goal of increasing Indigenous representation in the public service;
- An exit interview process is being launched on April 1, 2026; and
- The Department of Finance maintains continuous collaboration with the Indigenous employee advisory committee on all human resources initiatives and programs.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an exhaustive list of all the work being done; it is a snapshot of key initiatives. I do want to thank every department and agency for their attention and efforts related to Indigenous recruitment and retention. In many cases, GNWT departments have not only met but exceeded their targets. All departmental Indigenous employment plans are publicly available on the Department of Finance's website, and I encourage everyone

to review the progress being made and upcoming actions that our departments are set to achieve. Our shared goal, Mr. Speaker, is to foster a culturally safe and inclusive public service where Indigenous people can pursue and sustain meaningful employment. These values and these efforts benefit not only Indigenous employees, they benefit our current and future employees as a whole but the whole of the public service as a workplace and the people across the Northwest Territories who we serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Members' statements. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 191-20(1):  
PROGRESS UPDATE ON PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATOR WORKPLAN**

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, residents across the Northwest Territories depend on a health and social services system that is steady, responsive, and able to adapt under pressure. In recent years, our system has indeed faced significant pressures, which is a key factor in my decision to appoint a public administrator to lead the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority just over a year ago. His role is to help guide the authority through this period of transition and support the system as it responds to these pressures.

Today, in light of recent concerns raised by Members of this House about the pace and direction of the work being led by the public administrator, I want to provide a clear update on the progress underway, the challenges that have affected some timelines, and the priorities for the year ahead.

A major focus of the public administrator's work plan has been strengthening relationships with communities, regional wellness councils, and partners across the system throughout 2025. He and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority met with residents, practitioners, and community representatives in every region. These conversations continue to identify local challenges, support community-driven solutions, and shape priorities for improving access to care for smaller communities and Indigenous residents.

Mr. Speaker, the work to improve access to care in the Dehcho region is one example of this partnership in action. Staff and community partners are collaborating to enhance local services and support care closer to home. Early results of this work include stronger service delivery for remote communities through

increased staff training, a hybrid remote and on-site nurse practitioner model, and select point-of-care testing. Lessons from this work are informing planning in other regions and will support future community-focused service models.

In addition, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has advanced improvements in primary care operations. Targeted projects are supporting progress in areas such as diabetes care and scheduling for community health nurse appointments. The "52 in 52" initiative continues to encourage frontline staff to identify small but meaningful improvements each week that enhance access to care and improve the patient experience.

Work is also underway to reduce administrative burdens. The health authority has begun testing a new technological tool that helps primary care providers complete their notes more quickly so they can spend more time with patients. Staff have been clear that administrative paperwork is a challenge, and Mika AI Scribe is a practical solution being piloted and evaluated to support them.

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority has also been focused on building leadership capacity within their own governance structure as they prepare to transition away from a public administrator led model. This includes training, mentorship, and strategic planning sessions. The organizational review completed last year provided recommendations to clarify roles, strengthen decision-making and improving alignment across programs. These findings are guiding changes, using existing resources, in areas such as corrections health services, dietician services, and adult services, with implementation planned for the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, some initiatives have required adjusted timelines. Work on the people strategy progressed well last year; however, it identified issues extending beyond the health authority's mandate and required a government-wide response. As the scope expanded, additional coordination became necessary, and that work continues.

Wildfire activity in 2025 also delayed planned engagement in the Dehcho region, and some reporting tools required additional time to ensure accuracy and consistency of data.

Mr. Speaker, while we have experienced delays in some areas, we understand the importance of reporting on progress. That is why regular progress updates are publicly available, and quarterly work plan updates will

continue to be posted on the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority's governance web page. Briefings have been, and will continue to be, provided to Members and to partners like the Northwest Territories Medical Association. Monthly updates are shared with regional wellness council chairs, with staff, and with the public.

A performance indicator dashboard was launched in November 2025 on the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority's website, providing residents with easy access to information on key areas of service delivery.

In addition to public accountability, financial sustainability also remains a priority. The first phase of the budget review was completed in April 2025, and the health authority is working with the healthcare system sustainability unit to address the main drivers of this deficit.

Mr. Speaker, while significant work remains to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our system, it is important to recognize the progress. In 2024-2025, the authority's year-end deficit was reduced by nearly \$34 million compared to what had been budgeted. In the current fiscal year, targeted spending reductions have decreased the operations-related deficit by approximately \$8 million. These improvements demonstrate meaningful progress in stabilizing the system while maintaining essential services.

Looking ahead, Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is preparing for another important year of transition. In 2026, our work will focus on improving the medical travel experience, reviewing access to primary care in Yellowknife, strengthening risk management, and simplifying key processes. The public administrator will continue his engagement on health equity and will focus on supporting staff throughout the organizational changes underway. He will also continue working with me to develop options for a future governance model.

Mr. Speaker, the progress made over the past year reflects the dedication of staff, community partners, and leaders across the system. Their efforts have strengthened the foundation for the year ahead and will support a more stable and responsive system for residents. As we move through this transitional year, we will continue to focus on improving access to care, supporting staff, and working closely with communities, Indigenous partners, and Members of this House. Our goal remains clear: To build a system that supports healthy people and healthy communities and that better meets

the needs of residents today and into the future. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 192-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ASSOCIATION  
OF COMMUNITIES ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the successful conclusion of the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, held February 25th to 28th here in Yellowknife. This milestone gathering brought together mayors, chiefs, and community leaders from across our 33 communities. For six decades, the NWTAC has served as a unified voice for community governments, and this anniversary was both a celebration of that history and a clear look toward the future.

The annual general meeting began with a mayor and chiefs' bootcamp providing dedicated leadership development for newly elected and returning leaders. Professional development sessions, sponsored by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, created opportunities for skill building and collaboration. Interactive sessions throughout the conference allowed delegates to share practical solutions to the challenges facing communities across the North.

This year's theme, Strengthening Our Communities, focused on resilience and sustainable growth. Delegates engaged in important discussions about infrastructure funding gaps, climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness, and community wellness. These conversations reflect the realities our community governments face every day, from protecting critical infrastructure to supporting healthy, safe, and vibrant communities.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to participate in the Cabinet session on Saturday afternoon, informally known as the Bear Pit, which provides an opportunity for direct dialogue between community leaders and Members of the executive council. These conversations strengthen our shared understanding and reinforce our commitment to partnership.

I was also honoured to attend the closing banquet and awards ceremony where we celebrated the exceptional leadership and dedication of individuals and communities across the territory.

The resolutions adopted during this AGM provide clear direction for the year ahead. As Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I am committed to working alongside the NWTAC and our federal counterparts to ensure community governments have the tools, resources, and support they need to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, the strength of the Northwest Territories lies in its communities. I extend my sincere thanks to the NWTAC board of directors, staff, sponsors, and all delegates for organizing a successful and forward-looking 60th Annual General Meeting. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 193-20(1):  
MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member for Kam Lake, Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment, will be absent from the House today to attend the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's conference in Toronto, Ontario.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the honourable Member for Thebacha, Minister of Justice, and the honourable Member for Hay River South, the Minister of Infrastructure, will be absent from the House for a portion of today's proceedings to meet with the federal Minister of Public Safety here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 950-20(1):  
TRAINING STANDARDS FOR NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES SECURITY GUARDS

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, over the last few years in Yellowknife, we've seen security guards pop up everywhere. They're at the mall, the grocery store, apartment buildings, the day shelter, at hotels, and accommodations for medical travel patients.

In the NWT, a security guard is a low-wage job that doesn't necessarily require any particular education or training and like most of our low-wage jobs, they're often filled by recent immigrants, and guards often find themselves interacting with Indigenous residents. They might carry pepper spray, batons, handcuffs, and be directed to make citizens' arrests without necessarily being trained in the law. It

sets everyone up, including the guards, for dangerous situations.

Last November, a security guard at the Yellowknife library was seen to hit and shove a man to the ground. The private security firm did its own internal review, but we don't know the results and may never know. Then in January, security guards contracted by Northview threw an Indigenous elder down some stairs. Those guards were fired and are supposed to appear in court today to face assault charges.

Neither of those outcomes represents proper accountability. We need to make sure these kinds of incidents can't happen again. That will require the GNWT to establish legislation to regulate private security, like every other jurisdiction in Canada does aside from Nunavut. Regulation would set standards, limits on weapons that could be used. It would stop someone from, for example, acting as a peace officer in their day job and moonlighting as private security. Citizens could launch complaints to a registrar which could revoke a license for either an individual guard or a security company. In the meantime, a policy can be set to ensure that any security services contracted by the GNWT, or Housing NWT, meet a certain standard including training and direction on the use of force. The contracts should mandate trauma-informed training, cross-cultural awareness and de-escalation techniques. But, ultimately, it's regulation that will help businesses who rely on private security by standardizing the industry and providing recourse for businesses when security firms are not delivering services appropriately. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Mr. Speaker, while we might be considered frontier country in the Canadian imagination, we do not want to be an actual wild west where people are running around in uniforms, taking the law into their own hands. And at the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Premier and justice Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Members' Statements. Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 951-20(1):  
RENT CONTROL MEASURES AND THE  
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

**MS. REID:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Social Development discussed the topic of rent scales and rent control in Committee Report 29-20(1), but due to the complexity and contentiousness of the feedback that they received, chose not to make

any recommendations. Instead, they stated that consideration of these topics should fall to any future reviews the GNWT undertakes on the Residential Tenancies Act.

The Minister of Justice has noted publicly that in the 17th Assembly, when rent caps were last discussed under the Act, that the Assembly rejected these measures as not being fit for purpose. As this topic is brought to me by my constituents on a regular basis, and I do have several rental buildings in my riding, I reached out to the Minister directly. He let me know that the department does not intend to make a recommendation on rent caps or control but investigate it further in the 21st with possible amendments to the Act.

One issue I hope that the Minister will be considering in his review, as it is ongoing right now, as it dovetails with public safety legislation, is the safety and state of repair of rental units and complexes. There are numerous concerns with the ongoing state of some rentals in my riding, some reported on recently by local media. I am concerned that there are many buildings in contravention of section 30 of the Act, which outlines landlord obligations to keep units and residential complexes in good repair. I am often copied on emails from frustrated constituents that nothing is being done to solve or address these problems. My office often sends folks with questions to the NWT rental office, but it is not clear what resolution, if any, takes place.

While I agree that public housing rentals should be an asset of Housing NWT that can be maintained and managed publicly, and I am glad that a mixture of units are being slated to include social housing and transitional housing with additional supports, I am concerned that when public housing tenants begin to exit private rentals in greater numbers that the disrepair will multiply and gentrification will take hold. Raising rents and compounding affordability concerns for my constituents will once again lend itself to amplifying calls for rent caps and rent control, which may or may not be the best solution for the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I'll have the questions from the Minister of Justice. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 952-20(1):  
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES TRYOUT  
LOCATION

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to express my concerns

regarding the current shift towards regional sports tryouts and the unintended disadvantage this system creates for many community athletes. While regional tryouts may aim to broaden competition and identify talent across a larger geographic area, they also introduce significant barriers for families and athletes within smaller and remote communities. Travel requirements, associated costs, time commitments, and logistical challenges prevent many deserving athletes from even having the opportunity to participate. As a result, talented and dedicated community players are being excluded, not because of ability but because of circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, community-based tryouts, on the other hand, promote accessibility and comprehensiveness. They allow athletes to compete within their own region without placing additional financial or travel burdens on families. Local evaluations also encourage stronger community engagement, foster athlete development at the grassroots level, and ensure that participation is based on merit rather than access to transportation or financial resources.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when athletes from the small and remote communities felt the excitement about the Arctic Winter Games tryouts because they were eager to showcase their potential. That is not the case any longer. The athletes feel this is a Yellowknife representation and feel it is not worth it to even put their names forth to represent the NWT. I can recall teams from smaller communities represented Team NWT and brought home medals. For families, attending regional tryouts requires significant expenses including transportation, accommodations, meals, and time away from work. In northern and rural areas especially, these barriers are amplified. The reality is that when participation depends on the ability to travel, equal opportunity no longer exists.

Mr. Speaker, sport should be an avenue for growth, teamwork, and fair competition. Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, sports should be an avenue for growth, teamwork, and fair competition. A system that unintentionally excludes capable athletes undermines those values. I respectfully urge consideration of a more balanced approach, whether through reinstating community-level tryouts, offering multiple regional locations, or providing financial and travel support to ensure equal access for all athletes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Members' Statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 953-20(1):  
INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT POLICY

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2024, the Northwest Territories Ombud issued a special report entitled Ineligible for Public Service Fairness and Rehiring. The report examined the Government of the Northwest Territories' practices of barring certain employees from reapplying to the public service.

The report found that this practice has never been considered through an equal equity lens despite the major consequences that these bans have for Northerners, particularly those in small communities, where the territorial government is one of very few employees. At the time, half of those banned were Indigenous, meaning the practices disproportionately affected Inuit, Métis, and First Nation people. Despite ongoing efforts to open the public service to Indigenous employees, a goal yet to be properly realized, the ombudsman found no mechanism to review such decisions and very little was recorded to justify them.

Many employees were never informed that they had been placed on the list. Some departments could not determine who was on the list, why, or for how long due to inconsistent documentation. Many constituents come to my office disputing decisions that led to their termination.

When workplace suffers from conflict, management always has the advantage, so it's not surprising that almost internal appeals are upheld, leaving employees with few options for recourse. With these decisions determined by internal discretion and shrouded in secrecy, many wonder whether they are ever truly unbanned and this effectively functions as a cross-department territorial blacklist. The ombudsman recommended, in 2024, that these bans are halted until a lawful authorization by the Minister or Public Service Act. Yet, as of last week, people are still being notified that they have been barred from working in the public service for years.

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of territorial government that not only fails to design policies that serve our people but also struggles to hire them to administer their own services. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance later today, whether banning Indigenous people from government employment is consistent with her stated goal

for increasing Indigenous representation in public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' Statements. Member from the Dehcho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 954-20(1):  
DIABETIC FOOTCARE

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi. Today I would like to speak about an urgent and growing concern that touches far too many families across the Northwest Territories: The critical need for accessible and consistent food care services for residents living with diabetes.

Diabetes is lived every day by our elders, our parents, our young people. National data tells us that 3.9 million people in Canada, about 9.7 percent of the population, are living with diagnosed diabetes, and the numbers continue to grow year after year. We also know that diabetes remains a significant chronic health concern here in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, complications from diabetes, including lower limb amputations, continue to place a heavy burden on people and on the health system. These are not just medical complications; they are life-altering experiences that affect mobility, independence, and well-being.

One of the most serious yet preventable complications is foot disease. Without timely care, nerve damage and poor circulation can lead to infections, ulcers, and, in worst cases, amputations. Regular professional food care can prevent this but many of our smaller and remote communities still don't have reliable access to this essential service.

Mr. Speaker, this is about fairness. It is about dignity. It is about giving our residents the care they need to stay healthy and to stay home in their communities.

Early intervention and regular monitoring are proven to reduce hospitalizations and long-term complications. My constituents need regular diabetic foot care and investing in accessible diabetic foot care today will save lives, reduce future health costs, and support healthier outcomes for families in my riding and in the Northwest Territories. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Dehcho. Members' Statements. Member from Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 955-20(1):  
LEGISLATIVE PACE

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government is severely challenged with timelines related to developing legislation, reviewing it, and bringing it into force. Over the first two years of this Assembly it has become apparent to me that this is a significant systemic problem we need to turn our attention to. I will cite some recent examples to illustrate the point.

The process of development and approval of the Forest Act spanned two assemblies, with the 18th Assembly citing the tremendous strain caused by a pile-up of legislation at the end of their term, and passing the Act onto the 19th Assembly. Despite the process being largely complete when they received it, the 19th Assembly still took four years to redevelop and finally pass the Forest Act in 2023, which I would note has not come into force as of 2026.

Mr. Speaker, it has been seven years since the Public Land Act received assent and regulations bringing it into force are still in development. The Mineral Resources Act was passed in 2019 and, according to the current schedule, regulations bringing it into force will happen in 2027 - eight years since the Act received assent.

While the previous examples are large and complex bills, even smaller, targeted issues require significant timelines. For example, after a number of years of advocacy by various groups, the government agreed to make targeted amendments to the Waters Act to respond in a timely way to the most pressing issues with that outdated piece of legislation. And that process is set to take us close to the end of the term of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, the extensive timelines I have cited are severely hampering our government's ability to respond to current issues and the needs of stakeholders in a timely manner. When a government is not responsive to the needs of the public and stakeholders, they increasingly lose faith in the institution. People either seek to bypass government process entirely, or they increasingly see the NWT as a place that isn't welcoming to innovation or business.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of this sitting has been meeting the moment. To do so, we have to look within and figure out how we can prioritize public need over process and figure out what can be changed on both sides of this House to improve our legislative timelines. I'll have more to say on this subject later and my first round of questions on this matter later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 956-20(1):  
LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement from February 2025, I spoke about our energy strategy and its primary focus at the time had been solely focused on renewable, but the reality is, Mr. Speaker, we are still heavily dependent on diesel, LNG, and other non-renewable options in our northern regions.

Given the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation's M18 project is now fully funded and well underway, engaging with the significant discovery licence holders in the Beaufort Delta must be a priority for this government. I often spoke in this House about the 2021 MD LNG report that clearly states it's technically and financially feasible to develop and export LNG from the Beaufort Delta. What we need now, Mr. Speaker, is a plan. How are we supporting energy and, just as importantly, looking to lower costs for our residents?

We have spent millions on green energy initiatives. I understand the need to do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but, again, I don't see an overarching plan that integrates those initiatives into our existing, non-renewable energy grids, nor have I seen an analysis of what it means for the residents who are not able to take advantage of green energy. What cost will that be to them, Mr. Speaker?

As I've said before, I fully support a working group solution for my region, working with Indigenous governments, community leaders, and our government to find potential solutions that will attract industry back to the Beaufort Delta, to signal to the federal government that we are open for business and that the North can be an economic engine and a have-territory that can pull our weight on the national economy. As we have said in this House, it's about meeting the moment, Mr. Speaker, and the moment is upon us. Build using the natural resources we have. Let's build it. Let's be the economic engine that can power our territory for many years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' Statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 957-20(1):  
VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY FRONTLINE  
HEALTHCARE STAFF

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 958-20(1):  
ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTINCT TLICHO  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] I'm talking about -- I'm talking about the people on behalf of the Tlicho, Wekweeti, Gamèti, and also in Yellowknife as well. And also (audio) North Slave region. We have a lot of people here in Yellowknife [Translation Ends].

Mr. Speaker, the North Slave administrative region has a larger population than all the other regions combined; however, that population is not evenly distributed. More than 21,000 people live in Yellowknife while just over 3,000 live across the four Tlicho communities. No other administrative region in the territory has such a significant population imbalance. That imbalance has real implications.

Yellowknife is an urban centre with concentrated services and infrastructure. The Tlicho communities are rural and face distinct housing pressures, income challenges, social and educational needs. When communities with such different realities are grouped into a region dominated by Yellowknife populations, those differences are overshadowed. As a result, financial and performance reporting for the North Slave region is heavily weighted towards Yellowknife, making it difficult to assess and report on the circumstances of Tlicho communities. Management decisions and regional priorities are also influenced by that same population imbalance.

Mr. Speaker, I have raised this matter before, requesting a separate and distinct Tlicho administrative region. To date, it is unclear to me what is preventing this from moving forward. The issue is clear. The difference between Yellowknife and the Tlicho communities are not in dispute. The desire to establish a separate administrative region has been expressed clearly and consistently. My constituents have asked for it. Tlicho leadership has asked for it. I have asked for it on the floor of this House. Mr. Speaker, what I am asking for is straightforward. The creation of a separate and distinct Tlicho administrative region will require effort and coordination on the part of government. That work may not be simple, but it is necessary to ensure that the needs of Tlicho communities are properly reflected and supported. What is needed now is a clear commitment to move forward so that this work can begin. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 959-20(1):  
WORK OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES  
COMMISSION

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Electoral Boundaries Commission for producing their final report. It's a relentless task. They had to walk a tightrope, and certainly I admire the work they did. Their mission was very important. It looked at different types of dynamics of population, cultural, community interests, land claims, other types of regional concerns from size of communities, and even including languages, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if we consider different type of dynamics, that tightrope I mentioned that they had to walk, I mean it would be easy to say we have this many people divided by this many MLAs, and there's the outcome. But it's much, much more complicated than that and hence we get to what's called relative parity, trying to find a path that balances certain interests, whether it's language, community, etcetera, bring them together in a harmonious way. And harmonious doesn't always mean exactly the same amount of people but a representation has to be fair. And that's the key. Not only effective, but to fair and to feel fair.

Our democratic process, the way we do it, is we recognize diversity as a strength, certainly not as something to wield a power but it's a sense of how do we embrace and grow stronger. Our Electoral Boundaries Commission, again, tried their best and I think they rose to the occasion of that demand.

Mr. Speaker, the democratic process, as they point out in their report, is worth the investment. And I would say it would be a mistake to think past it. We could get caught up quickly and say well, there's too many MLAs now or more would be bad, but other regions such as the Yukon and the Nunavut territory have larger legislatures than we do, and they find a way to do it. Mr. Speaker, democracy matters, and we must get there.

If we worked on strict voting fairness, Mr. Speaker, and I am saying just the raw data, if we want to treat every community like Yellowknife, let's just say for example Inuvik and Hay River, they would only have one MLA if you followed the standard deviation. Their populations fit exactly into one riding of Yellowknife. But yet so when we hear people saying Yellowknife's getting too many, I think it's a mistake. I think we have to ask ourselves where can we balance the fairness.

Mr. Speaker, the report of the commission was clear and very articulate. They do not

recommend status quo. Status quo is a dangerous, dangerous path to take.

Currently, right now, I am going to say before the House there is recommendations, basically follow their 22, which they unanimously say this is the way to go. I'd say if this House does not find a way to support the final recommendation of the commission, I say all future commission reports are binding, and put it upon the Assembly to take the issue with it to court and let the public pay that way rather than putting it on the citizens, individuals, or communities to rise to those occasions. Mr. Speaker, let the data speak for itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 960-20(1):  
FORT SIMPSON NEW YEAR'S EVE  
CELEBRATION

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, today, I realize that I am doing it a little bit late but I am recognizing a tremendous community effort behind the first annual New Year's Eve celebration in Fort Simpson, a truly heartwarming example of what happens when residents come together to create joy and connect for families. This initiative began in mid-October where a group of local mothers met to discuss ways to bring happiness to their children during the holiday season. Their first project was Pumpkin Lane, which gathered over a hundred pumpkins for a family carving night hosted by the Open Doors Society with pumpkins donated by the Union of Northern Workers. This event also included a carving day at the Liidlii Kue Regional High School. A group of volunteers then worked to display and light the pumpkins for three evenings after Halloween bringing magic to the community.

Following that success, the same group met again to plan something special for New Year's Eve. Inspired by Joyce McLeod's event in Fort Providence, and driven by the dedication of Shawna McLeod and Dawn Bell, the idea came to life on December 31st. The day featured family games, prizes, food, and community donations, followed by a chili contest, fireworks, and a drum dance to usher in 2026. At midnight, balloons dropped with \$400 inside, adding extra excitement to the celebration. I had the pleasure of participating in several of the family games and got to watch the fireworks. Unfortunately, I did not make it to the balloon drop as the fresh air and excitement tuckered me out.

Colleagues, this event was made possible through extraordinary volunteerism, local business support, and countless hours of

preparation. The names of those who contributed have been provided, and I ask that they be deemed as read and included in Hansard.

Fort Simpson's first annual New Year's Eve celebration truly showcased the spirit, generosity, and unity of the community. I'd like to thank everyone for these amazing family activities on New Year's Eve.

#### **Volunteers:**

Shawna McLeod, Dawn Bell, Nicole Hanna, Jerri Brenton, Amy Fraser, Jackie Whelly, Whitney Tsetso, Danita Allaire, Brendan Whelly, Travis Hanna, Darren Hardisty, Ezra Whelly, Joyce McLeod, Michael McLeod, Levi hanna, Lennox Hardisty, McKenna Hardisty, Ramona Hardisty-Gillis, Lisa Alikamik, Derek Squirrel, Betty Hardisty, Deneze Nakehk'o, Rylan Hardisty, Kai Nakehk'o, Ava Erasmus, Val Gendron, Cheryl Sibbeston, Cindy Browning and Dayna Burrill.

#### **Businesses donations:**

Fort Simpson Metis, Rowes Construction, Fort Simpson Beverages, Simpson Air, Village of Fort Simpson, Fort Simpson Speedskating Club, Beavertail Jamboree, Toys for the North, Mackenzie Manor, Union of Northern Workers, Open Sky, Bradbury Services, northern Store, Open Doors, Fort Simpson Fire department, NTPC and Thimbles Dene Crafts & Sewing Supplies

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

#### **Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am going to start first because I got a little bit of a long list. First of all, I'd like to recognize Mr. David Jones, the Integrity Commissioner. Welcome back. We look forward to meeting with you. As well, I'd like to recognize some special guests up in our gallery today, the participants, the 2026 Ontario Legislative Assembly intern program participants. Some of you had the opportunity to meet with them, and these are pretty amazing young people that have an opportunity to come here and see our government at work and how consensus government works. So I'd like to recognize them. And I apologize -- I've already apologized to them at lunchtime that I may get their name wrong, and for that I apologize. The people up in the gallery: David Landry, Bianca Morelli, Emily Shi, Keena Caverio. Gee, right on. Geneva Follina, Nora Acrowi. There we go. Ev Ferry, Julia Yukiak-Bukichi, Sheikha Tuntan-Karen. I blew that one, sorry. And Tanzima King. Welcome to

our Assembly, and I hope you are enjoying yourself, taking in the sights that our beautiful territories have to offer and learning new ways and better ways of doing things along the way. You're more than welcome here. Thank you.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too wish to welcome all the Ontario interns. I especially want to wish a warm welcome to Rob Ashton, NDP leadership candidate, and Sara Jayne Dempster, President of the Northern Territories Federation of Labour. Thank you for visiting us today and enjoy the proceedings. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member from the Dehcho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize as well the Ontario interns, welcome. And Mr. David Jones, as well as my new CA Julie Landry, and some of my constituents, Jacinda Bonnerouge, Genevieve Canadian, Jacob Koza, and my sister-in-law Marilyn Bonnetrouge. It's her birthday today. Happy Birthday, Marilyn.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you Member from the Dehcho. Happy Birthday, young lady. 21? 22? Oh, 22. Okay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your gallery. Thanks to you, 19 of us get to represent the people in Northwest Territories for four years, and we're past halfway through. I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to see people in the gallery.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member from Monfwi.

#### **Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills**

COMMITTEE REPORT 37-20(1):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON BILL 34:  
TRESPASS TO PROPERTY ACT,  
CARRIED  
RECEIVED AND REFERRED TO COW

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act.

Bill 34 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on October 31st, 2025, and was referred to the Standing Committee on

Social Development for review. The committee held public hearings in Yellowknife and Hay River and received four written submissions on this bill. The committee also met with the Hay River health community committee. The committee carefully considered the feedback received throughout the review process and, in response, proposed nine amendments to Bill 34, all of which were concurred with by the Minister of Justice at the clause-by-clause review on February 25th, 2026.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Bill 34 stands referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta, that committee report 37-20(1), Standing Committee on Social Development's Report on Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. 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. Committee's Report 34 has been received and adopted by the Assembly.

---Carried

Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its report on Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act, and commends it to the House.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Mr. Speaker, Bill 34: Trespass to Property Act seeks to address significant gaps in trespassing law by creating legislation intended to govern trespass to private property, to schools, and to certain types of private interests on public lands such as leases.

Bill 34, as originally drafted, provides the Royal Canadian Mounted Police the authority to remove trespassers from private property, issue arrests, and pursue prosecutions.

Bill 34 received second reading on October 31st, 2025, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. This report summarizes committee's review of Bill 34, starting with our engagement with the Government of the Northwest Territories, the RCMP, and the public.

This report also describes committee's efforts to review and strengthen Bill 34, including nine motions to amend the bill – all of which were adopted at the clause-by-clause review – and six recommendations.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Between December 2025 to February 2026, committee engaged the public on Bill 34. Committee hosted one public meeting in Yellowknife - Somba K'e - on January 20th, 2026. At this public meeting, committee heard from the Minister of Justice and his officials, and the RCMP. A total of four people attended this public meeting.

The Minister's presentation is included in Appendix A.

Committee hosted one public meeting in Hay River on January 26th, 2026 with a total of 20 people in attendance. Committee met with the Hay River healthy communities committee on January 27th, 2026, to discuss Bill 34, with a total of 12 people in attendance.

Committee sought written submissions on Bill 34. We also sent targeted engagement letters to Indigenous governments across the Northwest Territories. Committee received written submissions from:

- City of Yellowknife
- Adrian Bell
- Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce
- Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce.

These submissions are also included in Appendix A.

Committee appreciates those that offered feedback at public meetings and in written submissions. Contributors provided thoughtful input on the bill and raised important considerations related to trespassing in the NWT.

Committee categorized public comments received into three themes:

- Operationalization of the legislation;
- Expanding levels of response, and;
- The Effects on the justice system.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the floor to MLA for Mackenzie Delta. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Indigenous Rights

Indigenous rights are explicitly protected and upheld under clause 2 of Bill 34. Clause 2 describes that any action under the Trespass to Property Act must be carried out in accordance with any applicable agreements and in the event of any conflict or inconsistency, the land resources and self-government agreements will prevail over the Act. The Department of Justice noted that Bill 34 in no way prevents an Indigenous government from establishing their own trespass legislation. The Act will therefore be interpreted in a manner consistent with existing Indigenous and treaty rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and in accordance with land and self-government agreements.

### Loitering versus trespassing

At the public meeting in Hay River, there was discussion and requests for clarity regarding understanding the distinctions between trespassing and loitering in Bill 34. These discussions were noted by small business owners who highlighted the example of loitering in stores as being a consistent occurrence.

Committee notes the definition of trespass that is found in Bill 34: That a person is trespassing if they stay on a property after being directed to leave by the occupier or a person authorized by the occupier. In their presentation to committee, the department provided the example that a person can enter a store normally but would have to leave if the owner tells them to leave. Committee believes that loitering is captured in clause 3 of Bill 34 as part of the definition of trespass as an offence. In particular, clause 3(1)(b) states that a person is committing an offence by trespassing when they remain on the premises after being asked to leave. In addition, the Act allows regulations to be created that will list activities that are or are not permitted.

### Signage and notices

There were numerous questions raised during public meetings about the use of signage and how the notice of prohibition of entry would be provided. More specifically, members of the public had questions regarding the types of signage or notices, whether there are clear instructions on how signs should be posted, etcetera. Committee acknowledges these questions in hopes to provide some clarity in terms of the operationalization of providing notice of prohibition of entry and methods of signage under Bill 34 in the following paragraphs.

Bill 34 in clauses 4, 5, and 6 describe the prohibition of entry to a premises. Clause 4 notes that entry may be prohibited by notice, and subclause 4(2) lists premises that don't require any notice at all (such as a garden or field or location that is enclosed in a matter intended to keep people or animals off the property). Subclause 4(3) states that there is a presumption that the access for lawful purposes to the door of a building is permitted. Clauses 5 and 6 describe that notices can be posted for the prohibition of particular activities.

The department noted in their presentation to committee that the primary method of giving notice that someone is not allowed to access your property, in most cases is going to be by way of a sign. This is where clauses 7, 8, and 9 come into play.

Clause 7 describes that notices can be given orally or in writing or by means of a sign that is visible in the daylight under normal conditions or in accordance with any prescribed marking system. The department noted that no marking system has been planned yet as this would require additional thought and consultation. A marking system may be included in future regulations under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the floor to MLA of Range Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Schools

There were questions from the public regarding the use of the Act with schools in the NWT. In particular, there was confusion about whether school property becomes municipal property after hours, and how quickly to call the RCMP for assistance if there were a trespasser on school property. It is the committee's understanding that education bodies are defined as occupiers under Bill 34 to ensure that the legislation will also be applied to both private and public schools. It is important that

schools in the NWT understand how the Act will be applied to them, and therefore committee presents the following recommendation to ensure smooth operation of the Act and to minimize confusion for school staff:

#### **Recommendation 1:**

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories issue clear guidance and instructions to schools across the Northwest Territories on how to use and apply the Trespass to Property Act to their settings, including providing additional funds for producing prohibition of entry signage as needed.

#### **Youth**

Committee had concerns regarding the protection of youth from being prosecuted under Bill 34 and the effects that arrest and prosecution could have on their lives moving forward. Section 13 of the Criminal Code of Canada does not allow for a youth under the age of 12 to be convicted of an offence, and the NWT's Youth Justice Act follows federal legislation. Similarly, the Government of Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act applies to youth from the age of 12 to 17 years old therefore it can be inferred that criminal responsibility begins at age 12. Committee trusts that youth 12 and under are sufficiently protected under federal and territorial legislation.

#### **Impact on unhoused populations**

Numerous members of the public emphasized the need for targeted resources to support people experiencing homelessness and expressed concern that unhoused individuals could be inadvertently caught up in the legislation's application. There was also apprehension that vulnerable individuals could be convicted of trespass and lack the financial means to pay any resulting fines and therefore lead to inevitable imprisonment. Committee agrees these concerns are valid and wants to ensure the legislation is applied in a way that does not set up vulnerable people for failure. On that note, committee is recommending measures that will create a graduated response to the enforcement of trespassing, including enforcement using tickets and allowing orders prohibiting entry to a premises. (See Recommendation 2 and Motions 4 and 5).

In addition to graduated responses, fine option and restorative justice programs should continue to be made available, even for those convicted of trespassing. Committee believes implementing a range of options will help ensure that individuals convicted of trespass

are appropriately supported while also maintaining efforts to address public safety concerns. Committee would also like to highlight that Bill 34 requires clear signage or verbal notice to inform individuals when they may be trespassing (see Signage and Notice section). Committee also proposed an amendment to help ensure that "no trespass" signs are not posted falsely (see Motion 6).

Further, in their presentation to committee, the department noted that the NWT's Human Rights Act protects NWT residents from discrimination on protected grounds including race, nationality, political belief, ancestry, sex, and gender identity or expression. Anyone who tries to misuse the Trespass to Property Act provisions, such as if they posted a sign or asked someone to leave on a protected ground, would be in violation of the Human Rights Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the floor over to the Member for Dehcho. Thank you

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member for Dehcho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Expanding levels of response**

##### **Allowing enforcement by ticket**

The Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce recommended reframing Bill 34 to prioritize warnings, banning and removal over arrest to help reduce criminalization and court backlog. They were supportive of refocusing the bill for compliance over criminalization and stated that relying on arrest as the primary enforcement outcome imposes significant front-end and back-end demands on law enforcement resources.

Committee believes it is crucial to expand the available enforcement options and summary convictions measures under the bill. As mentioned in the previous section, numerous concerns were raised regarding the reality of an individual's ability to pay fines and the realistic application of a summary conviction on a vulnerable person.

Committee seeks to expand upon the levels of response for trespassing, recognizing entrenched societal struggles with the justice system and criminal penalties. As a key example, the RCMP noted concerns that Bill 34, as it stands, focuses solely on court process. The RCMP requested a measured approach whereby they could, in the first instance, issue a violation ticket and, in the second instance, issue a ticket for a higher amount. They provided the example that if there is repetitive behaviour, that may be a situation where they would seek an enforcement option

leading to a court process where the judiciary could make that determination based on the facts presented.

Committee agrees that the peace officers should have the ability to issue tickets to individuals for trespassing. This would create an additional enforcement option and move away from Bill 34's current focus on court process. Another effort to expand upon the levels of response for trespassing is included in Motions 4 and 5, to add the ability to issue orders prohibiting entry. Therefore, committee puts forward the following recommendation in an effort to expand upon the levels of enforcement of the Act:

### **Recommendation 2**

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create regulations under the Summary Convictions Procedures Act to include ticketable offences for trespassing prior to Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act, coming into force.

### **Effects on the justice system**

#### **System capacity and resource strain across the justice system**

In their presentation to committee, the RCMP spoke to the extent to which the implementation of trespass legislation would increase calls for service. The witness noted that, with the implementation of trespass legislation, there would not necessarily be a significant spike in calls, since the RCMP is already receiving a significant number of calls related to trespassing, currently treated in some cases as mischief. He further reiterated that from the RCMP's perspective, there are many tools they can facilitate and the use of trespass legislation will not be at the very top of our toolbox. He emphasized the importance of a measured approach, noting that trespass legislation can be used to manage certain behaviours.

Municipal enforcement personnel in Hay River also noted that using this legislation may help curb behaviours so that resources can be used towards more serious issues. Municipal enforcement and the RCMP in Hay River also brought forward the reality that they are already receiving calls related to trespass. During the public hearing in Yellowknife, the department noted that an increase to call volume would naturally be expected by way of introducing legislation that targets a specific activity such as trespassing.

Members of the public noted worries about overwhelming the courts with the prosecution of trespassing, including concerns with individuals

not being financially able to pay fines which may result in overwhelming correctional centres. At the public hearing in Yellowknife, the Minister stated that the possibility of increased involvement in the justice system should not, in itself, prevent the legislation from being enacted where individuals are engaging in the behaviours the legislation seeks to address.

Committee emphasizes the importance of utilizing and promoting alternative justice programs such as restorative justice and fine options that help address difficult behaviours and the complex circumstances individuals may face while still ensuring accountability. Committee also believes in supporting the RCMP with the application of this Act. Accordingly, committee put forward Motions 3 and 9 to allow the Minister, through regulation, to prescribe classes of people authorized to enforce the Act. This will help ensure the RCMP are not overburdened by trespass enforcement and related calls for services while enabling other enforcement personnel to apply the legislation where appropriate.

### **Current use of Criminal Code provisions**

The RCMP indicated they support the intent of the legislation and view it as filling a legislative gap. In its absence, they noted their options are often limited to taking no action or proceeding directly to a criminal offence under the Criminal Code. For instance, section 430 of the Criminal Code creates the offence of mischief for any person damaging property or interfering with the lawful use or enjoyment of property, among other acts. Subsection 349(1) - being unlawfully in a dwelling house - states that any person who, without lawful excuse, enters or is in a dwelling house with intent to commit an indictable offence is guilty of an indictable offence. As the RCMP highlighted, committee believes that the Act will provide another tool for law enforcement to use to help curb behaviours outside of these Criminal Code provisions.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the floor to the MLA for Yellowknife North. Thank you.

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

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

### **Measuring the effects of the legislation**

A member of the public questioned what efforts will be in place for measuring the effectiveness of the legislation. Committee believes in analyzing what value trespass legislation will bring to the overall picture of public safety in the NWT. Therefore, committee presents the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 3:**

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories ensures that statistics on prosecution for trespassing are routinely included as part of general reporting on offences and convictions in the Northwest Territories once the Trespass to Property Act has come into force, to provide insight on the effectiveness of the legislation.

**AMENDMENTS**

Committee put forward nine motions to amend Bill 34. These are included in Appendix B of this report.

**1. Defining 'occupier' as lawful occupier**

The City of Yellowknife presented a recommendation to committee that the definition of occupier in Bill 34 be limited to "lawful" occupants only, referencing a definition found in British Columbia's trespass legislation.

The department's presentation to committee noted their definition of occupier, which includes someone who has physical possession of the premises or who has responsibility and control over the condition of the premises or activities on the premises or control over persons allowed to access it. Committee believes it important to bring this definition one step further to ensure that the lawful occupiers of a premises are protected and can bring forward trespassing concerns without a debate of true lawfulness to a premises. The city provided a few examples to committee where this would come into play, including a person erecting a tent on municipally owned land with or without lawful authority could be considered an occupier under the bill as drafted. They noted that their ability to defend claims of adverse possession may be compromised or complicated. Committee would like to note that Bill 34 does not apply to trespass on public land, which would fall under the Commissioner's Land Act and the NWT Lands Act.

The RCMP were also in favour of this change to a "lawful" occupier, stating that as the definition of occupier currently stands in Bill 34, there may be complications and threats to public safety should there be situations such as a drug dealer bullying their way into a home and arguing that they are an occupier.

There were questions raised regarding the relationship this Act would have with the NWT's Residential Tenancies Act and committee understands that with the change to specifying a "lawful" occupier, landlords and tenants are themselves both included in this definition.

Case law would aid in determining the varying and competing levels of ownership.

Therefore, committee presented Motion 1 by adding to the definition of "occupier" that a person must be a "lawful" occupier. Motion 1 was met with concurrence from the Minister of Justice.

**2. Improper use of signs**

Concerns were raised regarding the improper use of no trespassing signs, particularly by those who are not the lawful occupiers of a premises, and may not have the authority to be issuing no trespass signage. While trespassing could not be legitimately prosecuted in such cases, it might dissuade people from enjoying lawful access to public lands. Committee believes that this is a significant risk and as such there should be an explicit penalty for those who post no trespassing signs without lawful authority to do so.

Committee therefore presented Motion 6 to amend Bill 34. Motion 6 was met with concurrence from the Minister of Justice.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the floor to the MLA for Range Lake.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**3. Expanding enforcement powers**

It was suggested by numerous stakeholders that enforcement powers in Bill 34 should be expanded to include peace officers (i.e. municipal bylaw officers). The City of Yellowknife recommended this change, stating this would increase the city's ability to respond to incidents of trespass on municipal property without increasing the burden on an already over-extended police force. The RCMP was in favour of this change, also providing the example of the potential use of sheriffs to broaden enforcement capability even further. While the City of Yellowknife submitted its support on expanding powers of arrest to municipal enforcement officers for the offence of trespassing, a municipal enforcement officer in Hay River noted his support for municipal enforcement to have the power to issue tickets rather than the power to arrest.

The issue of allowing private security officers enforcement powers under Bill 34 was also brought forward to committee. There were varying degrees of concerns for allowing private security personnel the power to enforce, including worry for culturally safe interactions between members of the public and private

security personnel, appropriate training for private security personnel, and the lack of regulating legislation for the profession in the NWT. Some stakeholders were in favour of including the powers of enforcement for private security personnel, while some were apprehensive due to reasons such as increased liability and a lack of training to properly and safely execute arrests. The RCMP noted that including enforcement powers for private security personnel would warrant further exploration and assessment.

Recognizing the balance for further research and proper implementation to expand the powers of enforcement to private security personnel as well as expanding the bill to include peace officers as enforcers, committee proposed Motions 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9 to amend Bill 34. These motions are all related to expanding power of enforcement to peace officers, including a provision whereby the Minister can prescribe classes of people in the regulations once research and potential future regulation of professional bodies is enacted. Motions 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9 were met with concurrence from the Minister of Justice.

In addition to the motions to amend Bill 34, committee presents the following recommendations, in an effort to regulate private security in the NWT and streamline clear guidance on the use of the Trespass to Property Act:

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories urgently create legislation that will regulate private security companies in the Northwest Territories and include a requirement for northern and Indigenous cultural awareness training.

#### **Recommendation 5**

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories create and publicize clear policy guidance for the general public, private security companies, and Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories on how the Trespass to Property Act can be used.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to pass the reading of the report on to the honourable Member for the Dehcho. Thank you.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **4. Orders to prohibit entry**

Members of the public, and business owners in particular, raised questions on their rights to ban people from their business premises who have consistently been removed due to loitering. Committee also had concerns with the fact that banning may already be occurring in the NWT in some business premises. The department confirmed in the public hearing that a standalone provision regarding orders prohibiting entry was not contemplated in the development of the bill.

Committee presented two motions that speak to Orders for the prohibition of entry due to trespassing. Firstly, committee presented Motion 4, which amended clause 3 of Bill 34 to allow for an additional penalty for the offence of trespassing, namely including orders prohibiting entry to a premises for a term not exceeding three years. Motion 5 added a section under clause 3 that outlines the summary convictions for when a person contravenes an order prohibiting entry. Motions 4 and 5 were met with concurrence by the Minister.

And, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to pass the floor to the Member from Monfwi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Dehcho. Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Masi, Mr. Speaker.

#### **CONCLUSION**

On February 25th, 2026, committee held a clause-by-clause review where the nine motions described throughout the report to amend Bill 34 were carried and concurred with by the Minister of Justice. Committee passed a motion to report Bill 34 to the Legislative Assembly as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended.

This concludes the Standing Committee on Social Development's review of Bill 34.

#### **Recommendation 6**

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Committee Report 37-20(1), Standing

Committee on Social Development's Report on Bill 34, Trespass to Property Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. 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. Committee Report 34 has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

---Carried

Colleagues, before I go any further, I'd like to recognize the honourable, now the grand chief of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Frederick Blake, known as Sonny. He has been a Member for the Mackenzie Delta the 17th, 18th, and 19th, and he was the former Speaker of the 19th Assembly. Welcome to the Assembly, Sonny.

Reports on Standing and Special Committees.  
Member from Range Lake.

COMMITTEE REPORT 38-20(1):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
ACCOUNTS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
THE 2024-2025 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,  
CARRIED,  
DEEMED READ, RECEIVED AND  
ADOPTED, RESPONSE FROM  
GOVERNMENT REQUESTED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts is pleased to provide its report on the review of the 2024-2025 Public Accounts and commends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Committee Report 38-20(1), Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report on the Review of the 2024-2025 Public Accounts, be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\*ed: [Committee Report 38-20\(1\) can be found here.](#)

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed?

---Carried

Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Committee Report 38-20(1), Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report on the Review of the 2024-2025 Public Accounts, be received and adopted by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Motion's 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?

---Carried

Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that pursuant to Rule 9.4(5)(a), the Government of the Northwest Territories table a comprehensive response to this report, including all recommendations, within 120 days or at the earliest opportunity subsequent to the passage of 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Reports on Standing and Special Committees.  
Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements.  
Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 1135-20(1):  
REGULATION FOR DISPOSAL OF LOW-  
VALUE VEHICLES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I almost got ahead of myself there. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Infrastructure.

Earlier this sitting, I raised the need for a regulation under the Motor Vehicles Act for disposal of low-value vehicles. I note that the City of Yellowknife recently wrote the Minister about this issue again. So I wanted to ask the Minister again, can he commit to bringing forward a regulation under the Motor Vehicles Act for disposal of low-value vehicles within the

term of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will commit to having that completed. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1136-20(1):  
TRAINING STANDARDS FOR NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES SECURITY GUARDS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to first begin by saying I was glad to hear another MLA spoke up about the crisis of lack of security guard legislation, so I applaud that Member, Mr. Speaker. I want to acknowledge that.

On February 4th, I brought up, and even tabled a working copy of the legislation, and of course I welcome any Member who wants to second the Private Member's legislation that I intend to bring forward.

So my question is, as the House may know and the Minister specifically knows this, after initiating the revitalization initiative on the Security Guards Act through a PMB path, the Minister assured me that he'd provide me any information the department has with respect to this matter and I am curious as to where that information is today so I can complete the draft of this bill. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did commit to the Member that I would share the information that was available on this issue, and I will commit to the Member to follow up with the department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Speaker, just briefly, given the lack of regulation on security guards, including training and problems, as even noted by my colleague from Yellowknife North, how do you manage complaints currently through this process given that there's nothing?

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, depending on the nature of the complaint, there are a number of pathways. Either that is backed through the employer to be addressed as an HR matter, or if it's a matter that's criminal in nature it would

be moved along through the RCMP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've noted even training for NGOs is lacking with respect and asked any future agreements include training because of this problem.

Mr. Speaker, my question is what can the Minister of Justice do on the interim of this gap until we bring forward a bill in some form that we can deal with this matter? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think at this point, as we do not have any governing legislation in this area, I think certainly, you know, our ability to work with our communities, with our Indigenous partners, with our Indigenous organizations, and the GNWT across the NWT, you know, we're having conversations with those companies that are providing this service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1137-20(1):  
INELIGIBLE HIRING LISTS IN THE PUBLIC  
SERVICE

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance, follow-up to my Member's statement.

Mr. Speaker, for many, many, many fear they are never truly removed from the rehire ineligibility list once they are placed on it. Given that the department may have access to this information across the public service, how does the government ensure that someone who is no longer on the list is not effectively and indefinitely prejudiced in seeking public service employment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is one of the reasons why we have a centralized human resource services, to ensure that we are maintaining any such lists today in a confidential and in an appropriate way. I can assure the Member, Mr. Speaker, that the number of individuals on an ineligible hire list is actually very small. After the Member's statement, I was able to get some data from a five-year period. There was less than seven people on those lists. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how does the Minister reconcile in maintaining a list of Northerners banned from rehire to the public service with her stated efforts to increase Indigenous employment when at least half of those affected by these bans are Indigenous employees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, over a five-year period there was less than seven people who were impacted by this, and it is a very strict definition of the employees who might be affected in this manner. It's someone only who is, in fact, terminated from the public service and it is for misconduct only. Under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that that is being applied in a narrow fashion and that we continue to otherwise have the other some 6,000-strong folks within the public service to whom this would not apply. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two years after the ombudsman recommended that this practice be maybe halted until it's reviewed through an equity lens and lawfully authorized in legislation, Northerners are still being placed on the rehire ineligibility list. Why has this government failed to cease this practice as directed, and on what legal authority are these bans still being imposed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that I am familiar with the specific recommendations that are at issue here, and there have been some steps made by the department to address, as we would any recommendations from the ombud, in particular about the pathway by which decisions are made, particularly with respect to having a delegation done by a deputy head, so ensuring that there is a clear pathway, and also, Mr. Speaker, that our own human resource manual be updated to reflect the practice clearly and transparently. That is available. And other than that, Mr. Speaker, again, to ensure that we are always abiding by our collective agreement, which is the foundation for determining what is an appropriate sanction for someone who may find themselves in misconduct and therefore could potentially be eligible to be -- or subject to be on the list. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1138-20(1):  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL  
EMERGENCY ROOM SECURITY

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier today, the safety at the emergency room at Stanton Territorial Hospital is of top concern for the community and certainly for the people who work there. A number of high-profile incidents have been reported in the media. I am sure there are many more that are not reported. How is the Minister of Health and Social Services addressing safety concerns at the emergency room? Thank you.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at Stanton Territorial Hospital, the workplace violence prevention strategy was implemented and within the time that this has been implemented, there has been assessments done. There are established monthly meetings with RCMP, working with Dexterra contractors on dealing with aggressive and potentially violent patients, education with staff, ensuring staff have access to safe room space, provisions of escorts out to the parking lot. They do meet regularly, and there are some statistics that have shown improvement over the time that they've established this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to encourage the Minister to share those statistics that show the improvement. I am sure that will put everyone's mind at ease.

Mr. Speaker, previously when there was a firearms incident in the emergency room, it was brought to my attention that they didn't have a code silver in place at the time. I understand that has since been rectified. But are all the appropriate codes and operational procedures in place now for Stanton Territorial Hospital to the standard that other hospitals enjoy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there is a policy and procedure development and revisions on code silver and code white, and the education has gone out to staff. There's also -- they've implemented many other changes. And I can share those with the Member instead of reading the lists of the things that they've implemented. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, the issue here is about weapons, largely. It's about the presence of weapons in the emergency room and how they cause concern to both patients and staff. Has the Minister -- is it time for a metal detector in the emergency room to ensure the safety of the public and the safety of staff? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the data that we have is since November 2025, there are ten reports, incidences, and before that, prior to that, for the two-year period before, there were 23 reported incidents. However, I know -- I do hear the Member. I know that there has been implementation. I know in our emergency room, here in Stanton, does have a secure area where staff are behind and we do have implemented increase in security. The security guards even have improved puncture-proof body vests for security. And these are things that have been raised with this working group to be able to identify the concerns of the staff. And then as they've come forward, we are -- the NTHSSA is trying to implement those concerns as they arise. However, we continue to have the work plan, and it's reviewed monthly, and it is updated monthly as these things come forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1139-20(1):  
LANDLORD OBLIGATIONS UNDER  
SECTION 30 OF THE RESIDENTIAL  
TENANCIES ACT

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In their 2024-2025 annual Report, the rental officer stated that only two successful rental applications for lack of maintenance and repair to the premises made it through. In their words, the rental office continues to receive many inquiries from tenants regarding landlords' obligations under section 30 of the Act, although very few tenants follow through with making an application. I would like to know from the Minister of Justice if section 30 of the Residential Tenancies Act is planned to have a fulsome review and recommendations from the Department of Justice expected this year. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, concerns with section 30 of the RTA will be noted in the review that is currently being undertaken. It's important to note that as part of this review we're identifying

the areas of concern, and we will intend to take those forward and have recommendations that come out of a future review in the 21st Assembly that will allow a fulsome improvement to the legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to clarify if I heard the Minister correctly. Can he explain if further policy work and legislative amendments will contemplate less onerous practices for tenant-landlord disputes over safety and repair of units and rental complexes? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would say yes to that, Mr. Speaker. There will be an in-depth policy analysis and an engagement with the stakeholders will occur as we look at the potential amendments to the RTA in the 21st Assembly. And I will say, you know, this is something that we need to do it right, so we want to ensure that we're taking the time to do the pre-work so that when we go on to that level of work we're doing it right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that rental caps and rental control might not be the best solution for the NWT, but can the Minister explain what, if any, policy or legislative review has been done or is contemplated so as to reduce the likelihood of sudden rental price spikes, rent evictions, or other gentrification efforts in privately held rental stock? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these issues have certainly been flagged for the review, and we'll receive an in-depth policy analysis from the department as we are determining what proposed amendments will come forth to the RTA. There'll be significant engagement in this process as well with the public, the partners, and all of the stakeholders to ensure, once again, that we get this right as we go through this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1140-20(1):  
DIABETES-RELATED FOOT CARE  
SERVICES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi. My questions are to the Minister of health.

What immediate steps will the department take to improve consistent access to diabetic foot care services across all regions of the Northwest Territories, particularly in small and remote communities where gaps in services continue to put residents at risk of preventable complications? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our health centre, our community health nurses, play a key role in our chronic disease management, which also incorporates services to the residents in small communities. And I know that they work closely with the community health representative to do some education on, you know, awareness on type 2. Most of the Indigenous communities throughout the Northwest Territories, you know, and the population, are type 2 diabetics so a lot of that is lifestyle changes. And I can follow up again with the department to see where we are with our education across the territory on diabetes, especially in our small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the serious and preventable nature of diabetes-related foot disease, what specific actions is the department taking to reduce the incidence of infections, ulcers, and amputations among diabetic patients, and how will these actions be monitored for effectiveness? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I mentioned, in our small communities we oversee -- you know, there's acute care. So that would be your community -- like, seeing the community health nurse. If they're seeing home support, home support, they can, you know, ensure that the home support workers know that, you know, if they're part of the home care team, they would know if they're diabetic and have these issues. However, diabetic foot care is an advanced practice and so there is training for this. What I can do is I can take this back to NTHSSA and say how much training and is there gaps in all of our small communities, and is there a way that we can provide a training, you know, opportunity for those residents in those small communities to identify some key people in those communities to do diabetic foot care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister kind of answered some of the questions -- my third question, but I am going to ask it anyways. How does the department plan to incorporate diabetic foot care into its broader chronic disease management strategies, and what investments or policy changes are being considered to reduce long-term health care costs associated with unmanaged diabetes complications? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I really appreciate the questions because I think that the --

**MR. SPEAKER:** (audio).

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Oh, sorry. With this -- I am just passionate; I used to be an advanced foot care nurse, so. And I believe that, you know, it does take an analysis, and so what I will commit to is bringing this back to NTHSSA. Within NTHSSA, we do have a territorial director of home and community care, and branch out. Because we do have a professional development PDI for our healthcare providers, and maybe we need to find and bring some opportunities, especially for our small communities. So I will commit to bringing that back to NTHSSA to be able to work towards making sure there's training available for our frontline staff in small communities. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1141-20(1):  
LOCATION OF ARCTIC WINTER GAMES  
TRIALS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can recall when the community of Aklavik dominated the sport of soccer and represented the NWT at the Arctic Winter Games. More than once, it brought home the gold ulu. There was -- this was a community stronghold on sports and recreation where the younger generation wanted to be the next in line to go to the Arctic Winter Games, but with the changes in tryouts, there's no chance for them to live their dream of going to the Arctic Winter Games. My question to Minister of MACA is can the Minister give me some insight on why the tryouts for the Arctic Winter Games is being held in Yellowknife and not in the other regions throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mackenzie Delta. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, some difficult decisions had to be made in order to cut costs. You know, with the times, the way it is with travel, you know, the cost of travel is extremely high. In order to move people around and, you know, during tryouts, there's anywhere up to 700 athletes and participants that we're moving around to do the tryouts. And sometimes it's just not easy, and it's very expensive. And we also have to adapt to getting these athletes to the Arctic Winter Games afterwards. So, you know, some difficult decisions had to be made and try to save some money in order to do these tryouts. And these -- unfortunately, these tryouts were -- the suggestion was to hold these tryouts this year in one regional -- or one spot, one regional spot, and that was Yellowknife, in order to try to cut down some of those costs. You know, and I've actually asked the department to work with the multi-sport games group to look for other solutions for the next time around and come up with some ideas. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very disheartening to hear that financial restraint has taken over the well-being of a community or a region. It should be the other way around.

Will the department look at reinstating community and regional tryouts within each of the communities and regions throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, fortunately, I agree -- I mean, I agree with the Member. But, unfortunately, you know, the way the world works and the way these budgets are working lately, it's -- we're all fighting for a piece of the pie. And, you know, we were able to secure some funding for sports this year which was -- you know, in the next three years, which was good. Help some stabilization of the multi-sport games. You know, and that's a positive step forward. However, again, we're -- you know, we're fighting -- I am fighting with health. I am fighting with infrastructure. I am fighting with everybody to try to get some money and move athletes around, and this is the growing trend right now. So on top of that, the cost of everything is going up, the cost of airfare, the cost of travel, the cost of accommodations. Just seems to never end, Mr. Speaker. So, you know, I am committed to continue to work to try to drive down the cost and make sure that our athletes in the smaller communities are able to experience the Arctic Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The well-being of our residents in the smaller communities is important, and sports and recreation is very important in our smaller communities too. We don't have the big infrastructures that bigger centres have. So, you know, financial resources, will the Minister responsible look at putting financial resources into sports and recreation within the smaller communities so we can develop athletes, and the well-being of our residents is paramount to this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I do not disagree with the Member. And, again, the reality is we're all fighting from the same pot for some of these funds, and that's the unfortunate reality. I would love to direct funds for every community to have dedicated, you know, rec coordinators, rec centres, whatever. But at the same time, it's -- you know, I am trying to -- you know, we're fighting against other departments for the funds, and that's the reality here. But it also takes a community. And I have to be honest here. It's not just about money. You know, I look at when I was younger, you could guarantee that there was a softball game playing and just kids playing around and enjoying time in the ball field and that type of stuff. And you don't see that these days. And there's many factors behind it, not just funds. It also takes a community. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1142-20(1):  
PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in my Member's statement today, I spoke about the fact that private security firms are unregulated in the NWT, meaning there are no territorial standards or licensing for security guards; however, many agencies and departments of the GNWT do currently contract private security to protect government-run operations and staff and clients, everything from public housing units to the day shelter, the hospital, counselling services, etcetera. So my first set of questions are for the Premier.

Does the GNWT currently have a policy that requires all government contracts with private security services to mandate trauma-informed training, training in cross-cultural awareness, and de-escalation techniques? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of any GNWT-wide policy that does such things; however, I did have a look at what RFPs are out there right now, and I see an RFP for security guard services, and in that it requires that all employees performing professional security guard services must have cultural sensitivity training, such as but not limited to, the GNWT Living Well Together, and it goes on.

And it also states that proponents shall be responsible for response and management of all physical and verbal violence within the facilities using approved crisis prevention, institute non-violent crisis intervention techniques.

So while there is not a government-wide policy, departments are putting these provisions into the RFPs that govern the contract with the security guard providers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So that helps to start to eliminate what the current practices may be. I am not sure how consistently they're applied, but.

Secondly, does the GNWT currently have any policy or standard regarding what would be the limits on appropriate use of force or restraint by contracted private security services such as what weapons or equipment security guards should be allowed to use and whether they should be handcuffing or arresting people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So security guards, as was mentioned, are unregulated so they are private citizens. And so the same rules that would govern you or I when we're out in public would govern security guards. So the Criminal Code is the legislation I would look to for that. There are provisions in the Criminal Code allowing for a citizen's arrest and those allow for reasonable force to be used, as well as detention. So that is -- that's in the federal realm. That's in the courts and, you know, any type of force that is used would be tested against that standard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. And so just following up on that, then, can the Premier then clarify, or make it crystal clear, does the GNWT specify whether or not its private security contractors should or should not be conducting a citizen's

arrests or handcuffing people, or is that left completely up to, you know, the individual or the private security firm that we're contracting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't see it in the RFP here. I believe I saw something in there so I don't have the information at hand, but this is a publicly available document that speaks about the expectations for how security guards will behave in environments where they're providing their services. There is an expectation that if there is the need to physically detain someone to protect the staff, protect the other residents at a facility or patients in a health centre, that that would be within the scope of the duties of the security guard, all while remaining within the scope of the -- or ensuring that what is done is what's allowed under the Criminal Code. If there are concerns with a security guard provider about the behaviour of staff and how they're exercising their duties, then that's a conversation to be had between the proponent and the government who holds that contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 1143-20(1):  
LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my Member's statement today regarding our strategic energy plan, I have a question for the Premier.

If I can get an update on the re-engagement with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on the M18 project and specifically around LNG and if there's been any conversations around how we can work together to move the development and export of LNG out of the Beaufort Delta. Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past number of years, those discussions have largely been confined to the -- at the officials' level, but recently we have started having conversations at the elected officials level about LNG and the Inuvialuit's -- how we can work together to advance projects that the Inuvialuit might want to see, how we can work together to attract investors and industry if that's the desire. And so we are starting those conversations now. We had representatives from IRC here last week, and I raised this subject because it is of great interest to myself as well as, of course, the

Member, and I think everyone in the territory should be interested in this because it is such a massive opportunity for the people of the Beaufort Delta and the people of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that. And, yes, indeed, it is a massive opportunity. I know the Premier has spoken previously, and we have talked about in this House the potential for working groups. I wonder, as part of the strategic energy plans, specifically again to the Beaufort Delta region, is there any interest in -- while working with the strategic energy plan, in forming a working group that may include MLA participation as well, regular MLA participation, and how we can further this development, including reaching out to industry. Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that level of detail, and I have to admit this is more in the Minister of ITI's realm. That being said, if the Member would like, I would be happy to invite him to sit down with officials and have a discussion so we can get some in-depth background information and, you know, provide his comments on what he would like to see going forward. I'd be happy to do that because I know how interested the Member is, and I am sure he'd provide some valuable insight. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 1144-20(1):  
ESTABLISHMENT OF TLICHO  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Behchoko is the largest Dene community in the NWT. All four communities - Whati, Gameti, Wekweeti, and Behchoko - the majority of the people are Tlicho people who speak fluently in Tlicho language. With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. Can the Minister clearly explain what is preventing the establishment of a dedicated Tlicho administrative region from moving forward at this time? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take these questions as this does relate directly to ongoing discussions with an Indigenous government. We have a very strong relationship with the Tlicho government. We have a bilateral agreement. And the creation of a Tlicho administrative region is something that

is a live discussion. We have discussed it at the elected officials level, at our bilateral meeting a couple years ago. There have been ongoing discussions at the officials level. We are working to get a better understanding of what the Tlicho government would like to see, what areas they're interested in, what information they would like. And so there's a dialogue going on right now, and I don't want to preempt that by saying we're just going to create an entire region, which is going to be quite a bit of work administratively and will take our efforts off of doing the other work that we're trying to do right now to advance government and for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories. So it's an active discussion with the Tlicho government, and we are committed to continuing to advance that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** okay. Can the Minister outline the process and criteria government uses when recognizing or establishing an administrative region and confirm whether that same process is being applied in this case? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd have to go look through the archives to see if there is such a thing. But as I think you all know, there is no consistent administrative region of the GNWT. Depending on the department, the borders are different. The Naka and education, culture and employment, infrastructure, they all have different borders for the administrative regions. And so we don't have a process to do this. It's not something that is done very often. And so I guess that's the answer, that there is no process right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** When we do terms of reference and working group, it's going to take more than a couple of years to get the region. So I just want to ask the Minister, will the Minister commit to advancing and expediting the establishment of a separate and distinct Tlicho administrative region during the life of this Assembly? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am committed to working with the Tlicho government and advancing a Tlicho administrative region at a pace that both of our governments can handle while we still continue to deliver the programs and services that we need to for our respective citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Colleagues, realizing that we've been going

over two hours, we're going to take a brief break as I have a number of Members still on order to ask questions.

---SHORT RECESS

QUESTION 1145-20(1):  
REVIEW OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AGREEMENT ON LANDS AND RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to continue the pile-on of the Premier today. I promise we did not plan this in our House planning.

Mr. Speaker, it's noted in the 2026-2027 business plan update that EIA will be coordinating the seven-year review of the NWT intergovernmental agreement on lands and resources management. Can the Premier speak to how process timelines will be addressed during this review? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the review is going to look at the governance system, how well is our governance system functioning, examining the period from signing of devolution until 2023. We're going to look at what works well, what's been working well, what doesn't work well, what lessons have been learned, are the current processes sufficient, in particular in terms of how we deal with roadblocks when we run into roadblocks, are we letting them linger too long at the working group without elevating them up to the officials or the political level. So it's definitely -- we're looking at the entire operations, how efficient it's been, how effective it's been. It's really the first big review. It's a seven-year review that was delayed a couple years, so it really is the first big substantive review of devolution. We want to make sure we examine all of these serious issues. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I note in their 2023 report on the Forest Act, the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment made a number of recommendations related to the co-drafting process and how it relates to the public and committee. Can the Premier confirm these recommendations will be reviewed and addressed by the IGCS committee conducting the intergovernmental agreement review? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The IGCS is not going to review itself, or the

IGC. It's going to be put out to tender and so there will be a contractor contracted to do the review, and certainly we can bring that to their attention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the commitment to bring it to the attention, and that's news to me. It's a bit different than what was communicated in the business plan, so I appreciate getting that news, and we'll be inquiring further about that as well.

Mr. Speaker, the standing committee also recommended that the co-drafting process needs additional resources to proceed efficiently. Will those recommendations be responded to by the government as part of the intergovernmental agreement review? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what will be looked at in the review is what I mentioned earlier, and I can see how the funding piece would play into that, but we are not waiting for a review to look at how we have Indigenous governments participate or how they're funded to participate in this process. Just the other day -- you know, it could have been yesterday, maybe the day before -- we were down at PDAC, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's conference, the largest mining conference in the world, where the Minister of Environment and Climate Change signed a memorandum of understanding with the Minister of CIRNAC on our regulatory system. One of the goals of that MOU is to explore opportunities to align federal and territorial funding mechanisms to support the meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples and Northerners in impact assessment and regulatory processes. So that's only one of the objectives of the MOU. We're also looking at how we do everything. And so what the Member is asking about, that's already something that we're on top of. I will leave it there. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1146-20(1):  
ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION  
FINAL REPORT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During today's Member's statement, I talked about the electoral boundaries report and the -- the commission's final report, that is. My question is actually to the Premier with respect to the -- we'll call it the final disposition of the

report. So will the Premier be exercising a free vote in Cabinet so Cabinet Ministers can not only vote their conscience, as they say, or vote representative of their perspective? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When something comes up that is a matter for the Legislative Assembly or more of an MLA matter like this, it's always been a free vote. I don't see any reason why I would change that. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the age-old matter of cost is always an issue. Does Cabinet have a particular issue on cost or size of this change in the Assembly? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is not within the administrative authority of the Government of the Northwest Territories to decide. When the Assembly says it wants more Members in the House, then the budget for government at large goes up. So if there's more Members, hopefully we'll have at least one more Minister to share the workload, which would mean another office, some staff. So there will be cost implications, but we'll take that when it comes, if it comes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Given that I have the floor, and certainly the attention of the Speaker, would he be able to articulate the current position based on the report for the Member for Hay River North. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. I don't know if the Premier -- sorry, thank you. Mr. Premier will not be answering any questions as an MLA. Should you wish to ask the Member from Hay River North, there's the opportunity to talk to the individual in the Members' lounge or his office or your office.

Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1147-20(1):  
PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTOR  
REGULATIONS

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to now ask questions of the justice Minister.

So given that the regulation of private security firms in the NWT would require the

establishment of a new regulator and the appropriation of government funds, so it would not be able to be accomplished through a Private Member's bill, can the justice Minister commit to begin the process through the Department of establishing legislation to regulate the private security profession in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I've said many times in this House that our approach to legislation in the 20th Assembly has been to take the priorities of this 20th Assembly and focus on those legislative initiatives that align with our priorities. Currently, there's no initiative being undertaken that directly relates to the issue that the Member is raising. If the 21st Assembly has this as one of their priorities, the Department of Justice would be happy to continue on the work in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So has Justice done any analysis of potential liabilities or repercussions to the government of contracting unregulated private security firms to protect government-run operations? For example, if a resident or a client or a security guard was harmed on the job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our contracting guidelines, there are very common clauses within our contract documents that address those types of questions and considerations, and they will very depending on the situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So can the justice Minister confirm that the department's position is that the department is not liable or does not bear responsibility for the fact that we don't have regulation or standards for private security in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot provide legal -- or advice or analysis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1148-20(1):  
POLICY BASIS FOR ESTABLISHMENTS OF  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the questions are for Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

On MACA's website, it states that the Northwest Territories has 33 communities that are designated authorities - hamlets, villages, or cities located in five regions. With that in mind, can the Minister confirm if that information is correct? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as I know, we still have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** We all know that there's still 33 communities but the designations. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister provide the legal or policy instrument used to define a "region", quote, of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the policies or procedures in front of me that -- or how we get to the regions and how we design them. I will look into this for the Member and get back to her on that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Final supplementary. Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I will do a written statement. Can the Minister confirm the process used to change, update, or establish new regions of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, with that much detail we'll get the information and get back to the Member. I believe the last time regions were changed was over 20-some years ago, so I will have to get back to the Member on how that happened the last time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1149-20(1):  
HEALTHCARE REFORM

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened keenly on the Minister of Health and Social Services' Minister's statement today on the public administrator. It seems to me that the biggest achievement from the last -- or the short tenure of the administrator has been the Dehcho patient journey. Now we're seeing a promised Yellowknife patient journey. My question is, is it going to be one patient journey per region per year? Is it going to be a five-year thing where we get to one at a time? Because we urgently need healthcare reform now, and we can't wait five years for every region to have a journey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Dehcho journey was identified because within the concerns and the observations that once we analyzed all the regions, that was where the priority was needed. And due to the amount of residents in the capital and the continuing ongoing concerns with access to primary care, that is how we designated the second -- Yellowknife as the next journey. The remainder of -- like, the Beaufort Delta and the Sahtu, those areas have also already been having projects that have been going on to try to improve access to care. It doesn't necessarily mean they need patient journeys. We will, however, complete the Yellowknife and as we move forward and work with the other regions, whether or not they need designation patient journeys, we will analyze that as they come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I guess we've just got the two to look forward to and then we'll move on.

Speaking of moving on, another part of the statement was talking about the Mika AI Scribe tool. So my question with this tool that's being touted as innovative as listening to the physicians who have asked for more AI tools and more innovation, we use paper-based charting, Mr. Speaker. That's how we do charting in the hospital system and in the health system. How does an AI help with that? And to that end, is it compatible with our EMR, our outdated EMR that needs replacing? We have this state-of-the-art tool. So how is this AI actually interacting with paper systems and with an outdated electronic medical record system? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. When you're an inpatient, it is a paper file; however, in primary care there are some forms

of -- with this tool, it would be uploaded as the information goes into the EMR. However, many of our specialty reports that come back are paper and they're uploaded into EMR so that way it's accessible throughout the EMR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, the organizational review that was completed last year and the future organizational change to the governance structure of NTHSSA, we've already done these reviews. In fact, many of the recommendations -- or recommendations were made the last time that were ignored. So why are we wasting more time and money on reviews and paying an expensive public administrator to do them when we already have the answers, we're just choosing not to implement them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes when third parties come in and they make recommendations, it's not necessarily easy to implement those recommendations. And also working within some of the recommendations that were suggested, there were many options and many of the options were to remain status quo. We know that status quo is not the option to do. So what we are taking into account are the recommendations that have been suggested but also working within our system to see where are there other areas that can change as well as structurally. And one of the parts that we are continuing to work on is the NTHSSA and the department and some of that overlap and currently that work is ongoing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1150-20(1):  
REVIEW OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AGREEMENT ON LANDS AND RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to follow up a bit on the line of questioning I had with the Premier earlier. He mentioned that the review of the intergovernmental agreement is going to be done by a contractor; however, the business plan that they just shared with us a few weeks ago says an internal IGCS committee and terms of reference for that review have been established and that they have been meeting regularly to advance the review. So can the

Premier just clarify for us is this being done by a contractor or a committee? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the way I understand it, at the last intergovernmental council meeting, we tasked the intergovernmental council secretariat, which is the officials level group representing each of the governments at the intergovernmental council, with developing terms of reference that -- for the review that we could put out to a contractor to actually administer the review. So the intergovernmental council secretariat was working on the terms of reference, on developing the framework to figure out what we need to -- what questions we need to ask, what we need to get the contractors to look into, and then that will be converted into an RFP that will then go out for tender. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Assembly or MLAs have any opportunity to contribute to those terms of reference or at least see them before they're set in stone and put out for RFP? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, once again, the IGC is not the GNWT and so we don't have ultimate say over the final decisions there. That being said, the Members have been contributing to the terms of reference. Every time the Member gets up and talks about the IGC timelines and processes, that information is heard by myself. I relay it to the department that, listen, we're getting some good ideas out of the Assembly, let's ensure that we're feeding these into that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I will also say that we'll share the RFP with the Member as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that they are listening to us on the floor, and I hope that they've been hearing the comments that have been made by previous standing committees and Members in this House about how it would be appreciated if the IGCS conducted itself more publicly. To that point, Mr. Speaker, will the contractor be engaging with the Assembly and the public and reporting publicly on their findings? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I will have to get back to the Member. Thanks.

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

QUESTION 1151-20(1):  
HEALTHCARE REFERRALS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for my favourite health Minister, and it's regarding medical travel or just records in general, similar to the question asked by my colleague from Range Lake, Mr. Speaker.

What type of process -- this is the question: What type of process does the department of health need to go through when referrals are actually lost and they've gone missing? So referrals to medical appointments down south, what type of investigation process, or how do we sort this out. If the Minister can enlighten this House. Thank you.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have that level of detail of the process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a constituent who had a medical referral down south. Their paperwork was lost. This can't be the only time. So is it normal for files to be lost? And if so, could the Minister speak to how often this is the case? Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is very detailed information that I don't have here available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What type of information can the Minister provide the House given the fact that I would assume at least the structural concepts of these questions could be answered. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the health authority has an established process that sends referrals to specialty -- like, to specialists throughout our system; however, I don't have the level of detail here in the House today to be able to respond to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1152-20(1):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PHYSICIAN  
CAPACITY

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister update the House as to our doctor levels for general family doctors, or GP doctors sometimes they're referred to; so in other words, can she tell us what the capacity is in the Northwest Territories currently operating and I'd certainly like to hear details with respect -- certainly with respect to Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With those questions coming at this time, I don't have that direct information on the floor, as doctor levels, staffing levels change all the time. And so what I've updated the Members in some of the written questions that recently were reported could have changed today, so I don't have that level of information here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think on both sets she's keenly avoided the phrase I will provide the Member. So I will add hopefully she'll provide some detail.

Mr. Speaker, specific to doctors and replacements of doctors in the sense of vacancies, have any doctor been refused the opportunity to be a locum here in the Northwest Territories, certainly in the last while and certainly over the last few years, if possible. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these are questions that vary in the operations, and it's not something that I keep at my fingertips. So I know that we are constantly in recruitment of physicians and health professionals throughout our entire system; however, when there are -- you know, they have to meet certain criteria. They have to have registration and be able to practice. So, you know, I don't -- like, again, like I said the detail in this type of a question I don't have at my fingertips. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, if a doctor is in good standing and retires and offers to be a locum in the Northwest Territories -- I am getting to the very specific point is -- has the department refused doctors from staying on as locums because they no longer wish to be full-time practitioners in that field? So if the Minister can't answer the question, could she at least provide the information in writing to me. Thank you.

**HON. LESA SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many physicians who have left the territory and do return back and are locums. There are many physicians that are currently employed here in the territory that do not work full-time. And, you know, this is a conversation I just had today, actually, with my staff on looking at models, you know, within how to -- like, within our entire system, the workforce has changed. We have to be able to adapt. People want a work-life balance and that doesn't mean -- you know, in some sense that means, you know, they have family in the south and, you know, they have young children and they may want to only come and do shorter term contracts. And that's in all areas. So this type of information and these questions, you know, if the Member wants to send me a BF on specifics, I am glad to be able to respond to those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Colleagues, our time is up for oral questions. Oral questions.

Colleagues, by authority given to me as the Speaker under Rule 2.2(4) I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business of the House.

Written Questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 70-20(1):  
REFERRAL OF Tabled DOCUMENT 483-20(1): 2025-26 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION FINAL REPORT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two notices of motion. I will deal with one at a time.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Tabled Document 483-20(1), 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MOTION 71-20(1):  
REFERRAL OF Tabled DOCUMENT 445-20(1): 2025 REVIEW OF MEMBERS OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REPORT

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second notice of motion is today. It is, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Tabled Document 445-20(1), 2025 Review of Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Compensation and Benefits Report, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To Member from Yellowknife Centre. Notices of motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MOTION 72-20(1):  
PROTECTION OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS AND RIGHTS OF NORTHERNERS

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, I will be moving the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Dehcho, that this Legislative Assembly calls on the Government of the Northwest Territories to formally oppose Alberta's Bill 7, Water Amendment Act, 2025, and any upstream policies that could enable inter-basin transfers or basin mergers without robust science-based safeguards and full consideration of downstream impacts on the Northwest Territories;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories urge the Government of Canada to ensure that "one project one review" agreements preserve strong, enforceable protections for water quality, aquatic ecosystems, and cumulative-effects oversight, including in shared watersheds that affect the Northwest Territories;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure its transboundary water agreements allow for transparent, timely, and proactive notification and information sharing from Alberta and federal regulators regarding any incidents or releases with potential transboundary effects, consistent with best practices learned from the Kearl tailings seepage events;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that its

transboundary water agreements allow for transparent, timely, and proactive notification and information sharing from Alberta and federal regulators regarding any proposed or actual treatment, discharge, or release of oil sands tailings with potential transboundary impacts;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories reaffirms that First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples must be meaningfully consulted and involved, consistent with their rights, on decisions affecting shared waters and watershed governance;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories strengthen and publicly communicate its ongoing hydrologic monitoring and drought reporting for the Northwest Territories, including clear summaries of conditions, drivers, and implications for communities and ecosystems;

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 Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Notices of motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. And Member, can you just slow down a bit, please, with your motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MOTION 73-20(1):

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES' MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Monfwi, that the Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to strengthen the medical travel policy by establishing a rapid-response emergency support mechanism, including a contingency fund, to provide interim approval and funding for medical travel escorts in extraordinary circumstances while awaiting federal NIHB decisions, where the delays risk undermining patient safety, continuity of care, or the exercise of Indigenous peoples' rights to access health services beyond territorial borders as per recognized treaty obligations;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories build greater flexibility into medical travel determinations of whether in-territory care is "reasonably available,"

explicitly considering significant diagnostic, surgical, and treatment wait times;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories implement a compassionate medical evacuation policy with all reasonable speed so that medivac supports complement and integrate with the medical travel policy, including guarantees for patient escorts where needed;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that all amendments to the medical travel policy are made in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and in a manner that respects and uphold Indigenous and treaty rights recognized and affirmed under section 35 of the Canadian Constitution;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to this motion within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Notices of motion. Member from Monfwi.

MOTION 74-20(1):

TRANSFER OF HOUSING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MARKET RENTAL UNITS TO TENANTS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two motions.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Mackenzie Delta, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to conduct a detailed assessment of its market rental inventory to determine which units are suitable for transfer, taking into account building condition, community needs, and long-term housing strategy impacts;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop and implement a program allowing for the transfer or sale of selected market rental units to the current tenants occupying them subject to clear eligibility criteria including, but not limited to, tenancy duration, payment history, and demonstrated capacity for property ownership;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories be encouraged to support this initiative by reviewing any legislative, regulatory, or policy adjustments necessary to facilitate the orderly transfer of market rental units to current tenants.

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories respond to this motion in 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of motion. Member for Monfwi.

MOTION 75-20(1):  
WAIVING OF RENT FOR ELDERS IN  
PUBLIC HOUSING

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Dehcho, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to implement a policy to waive rent for all elders aged 65 and over residing in public housing units as soon as administratively feasible;

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 Monfwi. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**Notices of Motion for First Reading of  
Bills**

BILL 46:  
PREVENTION OF PROCEEDINGS THAT  
HAMPER EXPRESSION ON MATTERS OF  
PUBLIC INTEREST ACT

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 5th, 2026, I will present Bill 46, Prevention of Proceedings that Hamper Expression on Matters of Public Interest Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with the Member from the Dehcho in the Chair.

**Consideration in Committee of the  
Whole of Bills and other Matters**

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Your committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 448-20(1), 2026-2027 Main Estimates, the Department of Housing Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Now we're going to call for a short break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 448-20(1), 2026-2027 Main Estimates. We will now consider Housing Northwest Territories.

Committee, Housing Northwest Territories is included in the main estimates as information, and the totals are not votable. We will continue to review these estimates as we have for the previously considered departments; however, we will not vote on the totals. If Members have comments or questions, they can be raised at the appropriate time.

Does the Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Committee, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber. Thank you.

Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my left is Erin Kelly, president of Housing Northwest Territories. And to my right is Michael Saturnino, associate deputy minister, housing sustainability and partnerships.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** The committee has agreed to forego general comments on Housing Northwest Territories. Does the committee agree to proceed to the details contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Committee, we will defer the totals and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning with community housing services, starting on page 377 with the information items on page 379. Are there any questions? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on page 378 of the main estimates, the line item for minor modernization and improvements, there is a significant jump from slightly over \$5 million to just slightly over \$9 million. And then in the same key activities, grants, contributions, and transfers, there is a minor jump also in maintenance. Can the Minister please speak to the substantiation around improvements and maintenance costs going up. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Minister of housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will begin with grants, contributions, and transfers. In terms of the expenditure increase, \$241,000 is to adjust LHO's maintenance, materials, and contracts funding for inflation. And then \$240,000 is to increase Yellowknife Housing Authority funding allocation to add two maintenance positions. With the minor modernization and improvement, the increase of \$3.967 million is for additional funding allocation to minor M&I budget for repairs and preventative maintenance, and that's \$4.44 million. And then an internal reallocation from the minor M&I maintenance repairs budget to increase LHO's maintenance, materials, and contracts funding by \$241,000 for inflation, and to fund two additional maintenance positions for Yellowknife Housing Authority in the amount of \$240,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Yeah, thank you. I feel so incredibly silly right now, but that was a lot of words and I am not sure I understood what the \$4 million is for. Perhaps the Minister could explain it. I am very sorry; it's my own time and it's my apologies to the Minister.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of NWT Housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** No worries. It is a lot of information to take. And perhaps I will turn to Erin who -- or President Kelly who will provide more in-depth information to the minor modernization and improvement.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So there was \$4.48 million that we were able to add to the minor M&I budgets for repairs and preventative maintenance. This is from internal resources, which is what we tend to do with the internal resources when there's additional funding available, is try to put it back into repairs. So you can see it here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And just for clarity, if you're finding \$4 million internally, where was the \$4 million coming from? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide more information to that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sometimes there are things like infrastructure projects that don't get completed within this time frame that they were allotted for. Sometimes we make revenue from the federal government or from some of the market housing that we have, and we're able to put that into repairs. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I am not certain if this is perhaps the best place to ask this question, but it's a very general question so I hope the Minister is all right with that.

But can she tell me what was the infrastructure deficit before and after the \$150 million that came to Housing NWT after negotiations in this House? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In April of 2025, Housing NWT's infrastructure deficit estimate was updated to \$307 million, with a 20-year projected deficit of approximately \$1.27 billion, or \$63 million a year. The \$150 million, which included \$124 million from the GNWT, will reduce the infrastructure deficit estimate to \$257 million, with a 20-year projected deficit reduced to \$1.17 billion, or \$58 million a year. So the

20-year projection was initially \$63 million a year, and with the \$150 million injection it was \$58 million a year. But we still have a deficit overall for infrastructure estimating at \$257 million.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to ask any further questions on that before the Minister has announcements later this week, so I will stop there right now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Anything further? Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. It says here on page 377, Housing NWT operates 3,000 rental units in 32 communities. According to website, to MACA website, there's 33 communities. So maybe it's a typing error, or like -- so which community is left out that the housing is not -- have no housing rental units in that community?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this time, there's no public housing or market housing units in Enterprise. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Thank you for that information. And maybe it should have been, you know, included in there.

But there's another one too, is that HELP, homeownership entry level and market rental housing program. That's HELP program, is it?

Okay. I know that the last time we were talking, say that housing is trying to get rid of the -- or get out of this HELP entry -- or this HELP program. To date, can the Minister tell us how many -- I know there's, like -- I don't know how many is in the Tlicho region but just to let us know, like how many are these settled in the Tlicho region. I know there are some in the community. People have said, okay, they're doing their paperwork, or it's in the process. So I just wanted to ask the Minister, to date how many did we settle so far out of the -- I think there's 30, I think, in the Tlicho region. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of our HELP units, we have 140

units across the Northwest Territories that are designated as HELP units. And I know in the last couple of years, Housing NWT has been kind of rolling back and working with the HELP tenants to ask them if they're interested in either taking over their unit or turning that unit into either a market unit or other possibilities within the housing infrastructure. But in terms of the day-to-day, what we've done so far in the last couple of years, perhaps I will turn that over to President Erin Kelly to provide some -- just exact numbers of what we've done over the last couple of years with those HELP clients. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Unfortunately, I don't have the data with me by community, but we can certainly provide that information.

As the Minister mentioned, we've been working really diligently with clients to try to determine next steps for them. Some folks are indicating that they are not interested in ownership at this time and they'd like to continue to rent, so we've been looking at options with those clients. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. I am a bit surprised with that response. Maybe it's -- so can the Minister tell us what are the eligible criteria to become a homeowner of these program? HELP program, I mean. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the HELP program -- and, again, this program was initiated probably 25 years ago, and it was working with the clients, working with potential housing tenants to take on a HELP unit. With that criteria, what we're hoping at the time with HELP was that they would pay the utilities and the overall cost for the unit and pay a minimum amount of rent to manage the unit itself. So housing would speak to the tenants themselves. If they had a steady income, they were employed, they were probably either a public housing tenant or a market housing tenant at the time and there was a lot of good interactions with local housing authority so they probably graduated to the HELP program at the time. And, again, this program is a longstanding program. Over the last couple of years, housing is slowly getting out of that program and just talking to tenants about would you take this on and would you

take it on as an owner rather than housing managing the HELP program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go over to the Member for Monfwi. Thank you. What about for arrears? If they have arrears, would they be eligible to become a homeowner of the HELP program? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify, if they had arrears with the HELP program or overall arrears with the public housing program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Arrears with this HELP program, yeah.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Madam Chair, I think it's really important that housing with our district office and the LHO that we talk to tenants about the arrears, especially in the HELP program and especially with housing looking to potentially ease out of the program, that we counsel clients to pay down their arrears so they're eligible to take on the house full-time as owners. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Okay, because I know there are some people in the communities -- you know, I guess this is one of the good programs too, you know. And there are -- you know, we don't have no more HELP program -- I mean, what do you call -- HAP program, so -- and I know that because, you know, like, with that legacy mortgage that we just did yesterday, you know, the announcement, I know there's quite a few that -- you know, there's no market in small communities and I know there is a house that I think it's been on the market for three years. It's a private homeowner who bought it through the financial institutions, through the bank. But it's been sitting. I mean, they're renting it. It's good. It's being used. But it's a well-kept house. It's a new House. But it's been on the list to be sold. It's not happening. So I think this is where some of the young people are kind of, like, you know, they don't want to buy. I don't think they want to buy unless there's a program in place, you know. And I know yesterday you mentioned about the down payment deposit. Is that program still available?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With the down payment program, that's usually offered in our regional centres, and Housing NWT right now is doing a review of the programs to look at the eligibility to include those outside the larger regional centres because we are getting many questions throughout the Northwest Territories of interested -- mainly young people that want to have -- want to buy their own home, and if housing is kind of exiting, like the HELP program and other programs in our smaller communities, they want to put a down payment on a unit themselves. So housing is looking at that right now, all our homeownership programs housing is doing a review on it. And presently we're doing, like, applications in our regional centres but could consider applications from smaller communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** That's what I was going to ask about, is that small communities don't -- at this time they don't qualify for it. Even in Behchoko and Edzo, they don't qualify. We used to have that program there, that's what we were told. And then they -- yeah, they stopped funding that program in Tlicho region so I was worried about that. So do you think you'll be expanding that program, not just only to Tlicho region but to other regions as well? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Housing NWT really wants to improve our programs and the outreach, and I've asked staff and asked the president if we could expand it to the smaller communities. They're currently looking at that and they will review applications, like on a one-off basis now right now until we get a firm policy in place. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Seeing no further -- Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So my first question, under the overall active positions -- I am not sure where else to ask this question, but on page 376. So the overall staffing for Housing NWT has gone up from a hundred positions last year to 134 positions this year. I know that Housing NWT took on the day shelter. And so does the extra 34 positions, is that all staff associated with the day shelter that were transferred from health, or are there any

additional positions not associated with the day shelter? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Housing NWT will take on the operations of the Yellowknife day shelter and also the sobering centre. So we're taking that on April 1st, and that includes 30 staffing positions for the two facilities. We're also -- we've added five positions for the new homelessness programs division. So five positions, which include a manager, advisor, an advisor in Hay River, an advisor in Inuvik, and also the director of homelessness programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So thanks to the Minister for clarifying that. I wanted to turn to a few items in the business plan. So on page 12 of the business plan, it talks about how our funding agreement with the federal government, it's going to expire in March of 2028, and that's a pretty big deal, and that we need to seek a new and sustainable funding approach. The current agreement was struck in, I believe, 1997. That's a long time ago. But I think the assumption that someone had in the federal government was that over time we just wouldn't need public housing anymore, that this was just going to kind of decrease and then everyone would move off public housing and we wouldn't need funding for this anymore. And that has not been the case. And so the target in the business plan right now is to have a new agreement in place by October of 2027. Seems like a ways away, but it's coming up quick and it's the end of this Assembly. Can the Minister talk about the status of the negotiations with the federal government, if there are different stages to this, or do we just kind of keep trying and hope for the best, and then maybe suddenly one day we get a whole new agreement that is more sustainable? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With that social housing agreement that was signed in 1997 with CMHC, they funded the operations and maintenance of our public housing units up until 2038 but the one thing with that agreement was it's slowly declining year by year. And then the federal government, back in -- I think it was 2018 or 2019 signed a bilateral agreement with Housing NWT and the

Government of Northwest Territories to supplement that social housing agreement that was signed back in 1997. So the bilateral agreement -- and that was through the national housing fund -- was signed and provided supplemental funds until 2028. So there are two key dates here. It's 2028 and then 2038. We're funded up to 2038 but the supplemental funding was 2028. And perhaps I can just ask our associate deputy minister Michael Saturnino just to provide some supplementary information for the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Associate deputy minister Saturnino.

**MR. MICHAEL SATURNINO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister mentioned, the current bilateral does expire in 2028 and as does the national housing strategy. So this is one of the significant topics being discussed at the FPT table is the future of the national housing strategy. Negotiations are top of mind for all provinces and territories, and so those discussions are beginning now. We're about two years out from that agreement ending, and I can confirm that every PT has communicated the importance of this bilateral agreement and the O&M funding to the federal government. So it's currently those discussions are ongoing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go return to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do appreciate that additional detail and the distinction between the base sort of funding agreement and then the supplemental funding agreement. That's important for us to understand.

So the assistant -- or associate deputy minister mentioned the national housing strategy; however, the supplemental funding, it's bilateral. Does that mean that our bilateral agreement with the federal government is going to have to be the same as all the other bilaterals that all the other provinces and territories get, or are we at the same time making a case for the specific needs for the NWT to try to get sort of a different bilateral agreement than others are getting? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it's important when we are at the FPT table just to make the case for the North. We talk about remoteness. We talk about cost of repairing units. We talk about many of the communities that are spread out throughout the Northwest Territories and how getting to them

and providing that repair and maintenance is so critical to the everyday operations of housing. So at the FPT table, we have all our partners at the table, including the provinces and the territories. And especially in the North, with our partners in Nunavut and Yukon, we always add the northern remote perspective to request additional funding through our bilateral agreements with the federal government. And perhaps Mr. Saturnino could just provide more information to the ongoing negotiations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Associate deputy minister Saturnino.

**MR. MICHAEL SATURNINO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So to be clear, the bilateral is a product of the national housing strategy, so both are expiring at the same time. When we do engage with the federal government, of course, there's sort of align -- you attempt to align across jurisdictions but we do have our own unique needs in the NWT, and so we do present that case forward of what our needs are. They're very different than especially what the provinces would have. We also work pan-territorially with the other two territories. We're having active conversations with the other territories around needs in the North. They are unique. And I would also just comment, so those discussions and those negotiations are still ongoing.

One comment I would say is that the bilateral also is not just O&M. There's other aspects to it. We also get repair dollars from it. We get the Canada NWT national -- or the housing benefit from it as well. So there's a number of different components that make up the bilateral which comes from the national housing strategy. And those discussions are still ongoing. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So I have a different question now. One of the priorities in the business plan was to provide more supportive living options, and I know that there's some specific buildings going up and projects that are sort of transitional housing that, you know, are run by non-profits and have the wraparound supports. But I wonder what Housing NWT is doing to try to provide more intensive supports even within, quote-unquote, like normal public housing units or buildings. So maybe not the same level that an NGO would provide with sort of like a live-in centre but within, say, the -- when we have a whole building of public housing units, can we be doing more to, for example provide security, provide supports, do relationship building, just

support tenants to ensure that they can be more successful in the existing public housing units? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. NWT Minister of housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A really important conversation because what we're facing at Housing NWT now is we're not only a provider of the actual unit itself; we're providing more social supports. And that's probably a big key to our success moving forward, is working with the tenants on an everyday basis to make them succeed. And I think back to the strategic renewal that was implemented in the 19th Assembly and it had people thinking about, like tenants within the public housing units, and how we can succeed. So those 42 recommendations were really important at the time to deliver on that. And with the work that we're doing over the next couple of years, President Kelly will provide more in-depth information on our wraparound supports -- or supportive living component. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So we're really pleased that we've been able to work with the Yellowknife Housing Authority to put a pilot project in play at Aspen. So we have 18 tenants that have moved in. The security supports started today. There is a competition out right now for a tenant support navigator, which will be helping tenants within that building get some of the supports they need. I can definitely say that we have some university folks that are going to help us to monitor and evaluate this pilot, and we're looking at it as a model for other areas in housing as well.

Speaking of security supports, we do have an RFP out right now for security in Yellowknife and Inuvik, and we also have a security provider in Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Next, I have a Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Giving some responsibilities back to the communities and the Indigenous governments, back to owning their own homes, running their own infrastructure within their communities, has the Housing NWT been looking into providing support to developers or Indigenous governments to incentivize building market housing and public housing, affordable rental units in smaller communities to expand options across the northern housing continuum? It's much needed, and some of the communities

have more market housing than others, and some are limited. Is there something in that area that Housing NWT is looking at? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A good question. I think that the work we're doing is important work with our Indigenous governments and in our small communities because, again, we come in as a partner. We don't come in as the only purveyor of housing in the Northwest Territories. So interested in working, especially through the NWT Housing Forum. And Mr. Saturnino can provide more information with the forum itself and the relationships, especially with Indigenous governments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Associate deputy minister Saturnino.

**MR. MICHAEL SATURNINO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So as the Minister mentioned, the NWT Housing Forum is a collective group of Indigenous governments and Housing NWT that comes together to discuss common housing concerns and issues, opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned. Definitely lots of productive conversations there. I would also say that we have a number of MOUs with Indigenous governments so where we're having bilateral conversations with Indigenous governments. And so, you know, we do have -- presently there's a small number of Indigenous governments that are talking about social housing, but most are talking about market housing, homeownership programs. And we are actively -- we actually do discuss those with Indigenous governments.

We also have a program, the community housing support initiative, that can provide some financial supports. So, for example, when Indigenous governments or other partners are looking at submitting applications for federal funding, getting some support from the federal -- or from the territorial government, and specifically Housing NWT, is a critical component. The federal government likes to see that support. They also like to see some investment. And so we also have that program available to support their efforts as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some of these vacant units in our communities, especially in my region there, they've been vacant a long time. They've been boarded up.

On one street alone in my community, there's these units that are well over 50 years old and boarded up and been sitting there for a long time. But there's other units in the community with -- where people may have moved to another unit or for some other reason moved out of that unit, and I know for a fact in my community one of my residents passed away, and that's been over three years and that house is still vacant. And I am wondering how much authority does the local housing board have over the staff? Does the staff take their recommendations, or do they make their own decisions on how people are allocated? Because in another instance, there's two young men living in a four-bedroom house, and there's a growing family that's pleading with me to get another unit. My question is how much authority does these boards have over the staff? Do the staff have to take their recommendations and implement them, or it's just the board is just there for nothing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think it's important that we understand the structure with housing and housing authorities. We also have housing associations. So we have 24 of either an authority or an association across the Northwest Territories, and we sign community housing services agreements with either the association or the authority, and that outlines the terms and conditions of the authority itself, including either an advisory board or an authority board or an association board. So President Kelly can provide more information in terms of the authority itself and how much -- just responsibilities that authority would have and just talk a bit about some of these vacant units. Because this is something we've heard throughout, especially when we visit community or go into regions, that there's a lot of vacant units that are boarded up and owned by Housing Northwest Territories. So turn it over to President Kelly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to allocations, they're based on a point system. So when a client comes in, they fill out an application and there's certain criteria that are in there, and they develop a point rating. So people who -- their allocations are based on the points from those applications. And I guess it's really important to note that people need to update their applications if they're waiting for public housing because as their circumstances change, it can adjust their points. So I recommend that if someone is

waiting, that they're going and they're talking to the LHO on a regular basis, making sure that their application is up to date, so we can make sure that their points are correct and that they're on the list in the proper place.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Okay. The reason I am asking the questions about these boards is because a lot of these tenants, rather than going to these boards and seeking -- you know, asking them why -- you know, why am I not, you know, getting a -- moving up the waitlist or getting allocated a unit, instead of them going to those boards, because they feel the boards have no authority, they're coming to me. So they're -- rather than -- you know, if they can go to the boards and get an answer, maybe it might get resolved there. But they're coming to me and I am going to the Minister. So, you know, I don't know what's the purpose of these boards. I mean, I never asked you how to -- about any point system or anything. I asked what's the purpose of the boards if they're not -- their recommendations are not taken. Because you've got -- like I said, you got two young men living in a four-bedroom unit. There's something wrong there. And I believe I spoke to one of the board members, and they did bring it to the attention that these changes have to be made so they can accommodate larger families, but nothing's been done. And even if they move out, it'll take them about a year to prep that house for the next person.

Okay, I will go on to training and support workshops. Do you have -- are these annual workshops you have for the staff of the local housing authorities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Yeah. With the LHO training, there was a question just asking if there's training available or the number of training events or -- just to clarify. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go back to the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You got training and support workshops on page 379 for \$254,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It just helps to know which page and what subject matter because we have notes

related to each item. Mr. Saturnino will provide information regarding the training. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Associate deputy minister Saturnino.

**MR. MICHAEL SATURNINO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So as part of strategic renewal, we went out and engaged with various stakeholders, including LHOs, and definitely heard that there was a need for more training, more support for LHOs. So through strategic renewal, we did make a commitment to offer annual training. So we do offer a variety of different workshops, so some for LHO managers, tenant relations officers, maintenance staff as well. And usually, you know, these are LHOs from across the territory that come together and within those workshops, we would offer different training that would be specific to their -- to intified needs. And so that is happening on an annual basis. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Okay, thank you, Madam Chair. One quick question. You know, are these workshops held in Yellowknife, or are they rotated? And, you know, we went -- our committee on social development went to Hay River last month, and we toured some of these units. I think that would be a good spot for one of these workshops, to show the local housing authority, the staff, the maintenance workers, like how much work that organization does because they take recommendations of their board. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly could provide more information to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. They have been held in Yellowknife annually, but we have been looking at other locations for the exact reasons that the Member brought forward, having exposure to some of the things that are happening in different communities. And the other thing that we've done is we've had the Dene Wellness Warriors come in and do training with our LHO staff because some of the illegal activity, things that are occurring in units, it's not something that a lot of those folks are used to or have been trained for, so we're trying to expand that training as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Now, seeing no further questions, I remind the committee that the estimates for Housing Northwest Territories -- sorry? Oh, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to ask some questions about the business plan. I figured this would be as good of a spot as any so I will try to refer to pages to keep the Minister and staff on track. The first one is on page 10 of the business plan.

It talks about updated legislation, updating the Housing NWT Act. And it says in the business plan the legislative review is underway and there's a proposal planned for 2026-2027, quarter 1. So I think -- I always have a hard time with the way fiscal years work and everything. But I think we're in quarter 1 now. So is that on track; do we expect to see that LP within the next couple of months here, or?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Associate deputy minister Michael Saturnino will provide an update related to the legislation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Associate deputy minister Saturnino.

**MR. MICHAEL SATURNINO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the legislative project has been -- to this point, we've been -- we've undergone the planning, going through research, doing all the preliminary work that we typically do, jurisdictional scans, digging into the issues that were, you know, within the legislation that we want to -- like, to narrow the scope.

Specifically on the Member's question, this refers to the fiscal year, so it'll be quarter 1 of 2026-2027. So the April to June time frame would be the target for a legislative proposal. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And so is the department confident that they'll be able to go from legislative proposal to draft -- or to having legislation drafted and a bill in the House within a time period to get this done within the term of this Assembly? We are -- the time is ticking. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Thank you for the question. Yes, that's the current plan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking forward to reviewing it and getting that through the Assembly, especially considering my statement today about moving legislation quickly.

The next question I have is on page 16 of the business plan. I just note that the department has a goal of getting 25 Housing NWT units demolished and moved out of communities to make land available for housing development. They have a goal of getting 25 units done by October 2027. We're only at four units in 2026, and they have seven units currently approved for demolition. So we're not quite halfway there. I am just wondering if the department is still confident they'll be able to meet their goal by the end of the term of the Assembly?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think Housing NWT is still confident that it could meet its goal. One of the things that we are finding, especially in smaller communities, even our larger centre, is the room within the solid waste site and if there's certain types of, like, asbestos or other materials that need to be remediated. So there might be some challenges there. But President Erin Kelly can provide more information related to that business plan item. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister mentioned, we think that we are going to be able to get to this goal. And we do recognize that there are many units that people are looking to have demolished so our hope is that there'll be more available funding and we'll be able to do more than what we have. And it's looking positive from a federal government funding perspective, but we'll see how that results. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And before I go on with questions, I do just want to make a note of complimenting Housing NWT on all the outcomes based goals in their business plan, certainly appreciating that. It's something we talked about at the beginning of our Assembly when the business plans were

updated. Didn't see that from a lot of departments, and I think HNWT is a great example of, you know, just setting an outcome that they're trying to achieve and working towards it. I see that in the business plan here, so good work.

But I want to -- the next item is on page 19 of the business plan. I am curious about this project, mixed-use building, the 50 units being built in Yellowknife which combines advanced manufacturing for mass timber structural components. So it sounds like HNWT is taking an innovative approach there. I am just curious, how does that relate back to creating capacity and building entrepreneurship and building local economy? I am just curious how that works. If the Minister or her staff can help us better understand this project and how it's leading to local job creation and construction. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Madam Chair, President Kelly will talk about the 50 unit and the builder. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There's been a number of RFPs and projects that have gone out recently, and many of them are focused on developing capacity locally. And one example is the core project that we've been working on in Deline, where we're hopeful that that can be expanded out so that there's more work for folks in local communities. The 50-plex is looking at a different technology that can go up faster and be more efficient. And so when we say that we're looking to build jobs and capacity, it's true when you look across all of the work that we're doing.

In the case of the 50-plex, it's looking at different innovative ways that we can get units built faster. And in this case, this mass timber, what we're hearing is that in the coming months you'll be seeing things going up really quickly at that site. So we're learning from that process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will return to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And certainly very excited to see that and really appreciate Housing NWT's work there. As I am starting to run out of time, I did have one kind of just basic and fundamental question to ask the Minister.

Can Housing NWT confirm how many new units are anticipated to be added to the public housing stock by the end of the 20th Assembly? And just to be clear about the question, I am not asking how many units is Housing NWT building but how many units are being added to public housing's overall stock, knowing that some get removed when things get built so I am just curious. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide an exact information on how many units. I do know with the \$150 million fund that 152 units will be provided, along with \$30 million for M&I projects and preventative maintenance, deferred maintenance that has been deferred over the many years. So we put \$30 million aside, and then \$120 million was the 152 units that will be built over the life of this Assembly. And more information will be either President Kelly or the associate. Okay, Mr. Saturnino will provide the exact number. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Associate deputy minister Saturnino.

**MR. MICHAEL SATURNINO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The 152 units being funded by the \$150 million capital plan are all replacement units. So they're not new -- they're not net new. They're replacing aged units. There was, in the last government, an incremental investment of a hundred new units into public housing. Some of those did carry forward into the current government so there -- many were completed in the 19th Assembly but they carried forward. Those would be new, net new. And then beyond that, I would point out that on the recently announced Rock Hill project, we're adding 10 new social housing units. And also in the 50-plex, those are all units that are intended to allow us to exit leases with private contractors. So it is a little bit of a complicated question as far as net new, but we are building units. It's allowing us to exit leases. There is a bit of an increase. I think as we kind of move forward and we look at something like Build Canada Homes, which is intended for new units more so than replacement, that's where we would see the focus sort of shift. But given what our current infrastructure deficit is and what our 20-year infrastructure needs are to replace units, we still have a very big focus on replacing existing units that have reached the end of their service life. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will allow Member from Monfwi to ask another question.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yes, or else I could wait until we do the, you know, summary. But I can -- if it is okay, I can ask, you know -- I can ask this question here. Community housing services, administrations, you know, for the upcoming fiscal year, \$7.7 million, and funding for local housing organizations to provide property management, so does that include the administrations like the office staff or administrative team? And so that includes the maintenance as well maybe? Okay, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With the administration funding of \$7.74 million, that's funding our local LHOs for their administrative staff within the LHO. And then in terms of maintenance, it's \$15.182 million, and that's for the LHOs to undertake demand and preventative maintenance activities. So LHOs are provided funding for maintenance, and LHOs are provided funding for administration. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Member from Monfwi, do you have any more?

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. So that \$15.2 million, so how are these funds allocated? Because, you know, in Tlicho region alone, you know, in Behchoko there's a lot of houses that are boarded up and some are beyond -- you know, I mean, it's been boarded up for 10 years, and I think it needs to be demolished, some of them, but -- so how is this fund, you know, going to be allocated or being allocated? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I think that's throughout the Northwest Territories, is the LHOs are faced with an aging housing stock and they're trying to keep up, especially with the preventative maintenance side of managing the housing stock within community. And many times, LHOs won't be able to find the part for either the furnace because it's so old or, you know, another part of the system within the housing unit. But in terms of the allocation itself and how we allocate those funds throughout the Northwest Territories with our 24 housing associations, President Kelly could provide more information with the allocation itself. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So one of the reasons that we do unit condition ratings is to know what the state of the units is in and so that we can make good decisions about where we allocate our maintenance funding. And I should -- this is base maintenance funding that is being provided, but there are other types of funding that are provided for major repairs, for example, or if we get federal funding for repairs, that also would be divided up amongst the communities, and they would look at those unit condition ratings, and so how old the house is, what shape that it's in, and allot the money based on those types of things. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Now we're going to move on. So seeing no further questions. I remind the committee that the estimates for -- okay, I will go back to Ms. Morgan.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate your indulgence.

I just wanted to ask about the apprenticeships. It's the line in the budget on page 379. There's \$861,000 allocated for apprenticeships for LHOs to hire apprentices to try to get more qualified tradespeople into the communities. Now, I don't see anything in the business plan about targets for numbers of apprentices or whether we're sort of meeting those targets, if we have them. So I guess my first question is, do we have a target for a number of apprentices that we're hoping to have on any given year or in the coming year specifically? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Housing NWT increased the number of apprentices from 12 to 15 in the most recent fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Okay, so that's good to know. Does that mean that we're using up the full amount, \$861,000? Like, are we fully subscribed in terms of the maximum number of apprentices we can handle, or could we -- or do we have room in that funding to take on even more if we could find interested apprentices and interested, like, supervisors, mentors? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The fund is fully subscribed. And what we're doing is Housing NWT is actually having conversations with our other sister departments about apprenticeships and trade opportunities and labour market development within community because, truly, like, with the projects that are coming on stream, that we really need local capacity so we're encouraging apprenticeships. And also apprenticeships is part of the terms and conditions with our projects within community. Like, if we're putting out an RFP for a housing build within community, that company needs to add some apprenticeships to the overall -- the overall proposal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. That's good to know that that's underway. And I wonder if some of those successes could be shared with other departments that I know are struggling to find apprentices and put those requirements in. I think infrastructure was saying they're struggling to find apprentices and integrate those into the ongoing work.

Okay, last question. In the business plan on page 14, it talks about a new asset management program, and there's a policy and a roadmap. And I know the Minister was speaking earlier about needing more sort of ongoing maintenance happening at the local levels with the LHOs. Can the Minister give any examples or idea of what is this new, like, high-level asset management program going to do for people on the ground or what is that going to do for LHOs in terms of keeping more on top of needed, you know, maintenance, repairs, improvements? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Madam Chair, if I could defer the question to President Kelly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So I think a good on-the-ground example would be the use of the Azzier system, which is a new system that will help us to manage repairs and have data input on devices. So instead of writing things down and then having it data entered, the LHO is now going to be able to enter information on what needs to be repaired

and be able to check what available parts are there with a system, which is really great.

I think another part of this pilot that's more on the -- pardon me, that is a pilot and that is also more on the ground is that we are going to be in the process of hiring technical teams to support repairs at the district level in the Nahendeh riding, the Sahtu, and the Beaufort Delta, where we've had some challenges sometimes with proponents bidding on some of the RFPs that we've had. And so they're going to be going out and helping to get some of those things done as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Okay, thank you. Seeing no further questions. I remind the committee that the estimates for Housing Northwest Territories are included as an information item only. The committee will not be voting on the activity total.

Moving on to homelessness programs, starting on page 380 with an information page on 382. Are there any questions? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So I am just trying my best to follow the money on emergency shelters. So on page 381, the line item has moved from \$2.997 million to \$16.154 million. And within that particular line item, I believe the vast majority is grants, contributions, and transfers to run emergency shelters of about \$11.691 million. I hope I am getting this right. It's my understanding that EIA transferred some responsibilities to Housing NWT for this upcoming fiscal year, and the revised estimates said the strategic approach to homelessness line item under EIA was about \$3.211 million. I guess I am trying to find the substantiation of the money that moved to housing as well as the substantiation of what amount of money is going to which shelters. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, it could be a little confusing because there's two different streams of funding. But in terms of the funding through Housing NWT, so 2.11 was transferred from health and social services to Housing NWT for the Yellowknife day shelter and sobering centre operations. And then 3.77 was forced growth funding for the Yellowknife day shelter and sobering centre. So those two combined would be operations for the Yellowknife day shelter and sobering centre. And then 7.27 is initiatives funded for the emergency shelter program, and that's shelters that we run throughout the

Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I believe there might have been a breakdown shared with committee but if not, hopefully the Minister can share that with committee in writing. That would be wonderful. It's been a long two-ish months, Madam Chair. I apologize if people have already seen that before.

So regarding the operations and approach to staffing for the YK day shelter and sobering centre, I understand that that is sort of a temporary holding spot while the wellness and recovery centre comes online. Is there any contemplation, then, of how that may shift when the wellness centre is available? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister for Housing NWT. Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide more information related to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We need to take a look at the budgets and what will happen with the wellness centre to get a better understanding of that. But we do know that the budget works for what we have right now, and that's that \$7 million the Minister referred to earlier was -- right-sized the budgets for the other shelters across the NWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So if that \$7.27 million is right-sizing, what was the deficit? Was that the full deficit of what was needed across the territory? Could I get a little bit more explanation on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide more information related to the deficit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Housing NWT was running two shelters in Inuvik, and there was over a \$3 million deficit for that for many years. What was completed

was an analysis of costs across all of the shelters, and these two were looked at as well to right-size the budgets across the board for shelters in the NWT. And so that number is what was required to get everyone on the same level for shelters across the territory. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I guess all of this is sort of culminating to my main question, and it sounds like more work needs to be done to understand as new assets come online with health, which is how does Housing NWT expect to continually fund this new division? I assume it's being made permanent. And if new assets come online, will the costs to housing decrease? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of our homelessness division, this is something that we are operating this fiscal year. So we have -- we're taking over operations of day shelters, sobering centre. We've right-funded the Inuvik -- the two shelters in Inuvik, plus the shelter in Hay River, plus the shelter in Fort Simpson. And then we're just operating with our small team with the homelessness division.

So in terms of right-funding, I think over this next year, we'll get a good sense of the operations itself, especially in Inuvik because it's now moved from Government of the Northwest Territories to an NGO. So we'll get a good sense of the operations itself. And, again, the NGO in Fort Simpson operates the shelter, and the NGO in Hay River does that as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all for me right now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Next, I have the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that transitional housing falls under this item, although I don't see it specifically referred to here, so maybe I should just confirm that I am on the right page?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide information

related to the temporary transitional housing unit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** The temporary transitional housing unit is being run out by Folk on the Rocks. There have been 17 folks that have been through there. Two have left and gone on to either market housing, one, or to addictions treatment, another. There have been some challenges but we're working to get folks in there. And then the most recent announcement that you would have seen for the replacement at Rock Hill is where the permanent transitional housing will go when that is built. So we have a plan where the transitional will move over to the old Rock Hill site as part of that 64-unit build with a daycare. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you. Yeah, I appreciate that. The deputy minister answered a question I hadn't even asked yet, so it's amazing; they're reading minds over here.

What I -- I am curious -- I think that the temporary transitional housing project out by the airport has a 24-bed capacity. It seems like the need is out there. Does the Minister or her staff have any insights as to why we haven't been able to fill that facility yet?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The contract for the operations of the temporary transitional housing unit is with the Yellowknife Women's Society, and they do have a specific criteria related to the temporary transitional housing unit due to the location of the unit itself out by the Folk on the Rocks site. So perhaps President Kelly can provide more information related to the criteria, the operations of it, the ongoing discussions with the Yellowknife Women's Society. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The contract with the Yellowknife Women's Society is with EIA, and the repair of the building is with Housing NWT. And I think one of the reasons there were some challenges, there had been some freeze-ups and other things that occurred, and we needed to work with a vendor on those things but now things are in order and people are being moved through. And as I mentioned, it's good news

that there's been those folks that have been in there already, and we're going to be filling it up -- they're working to fill it up as soon as possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Okay, thank you, Madam Chair. And, yeah, I did want to mention that I am very excited about the Rock Hill announcement and look forward to, yeah, finding a permanent home for this program. With that, I know that there are -- I don't want to identify them specifically. But I understand there is at least one other THARP program house in our community of Yellowknife. I am just curious -- I can't remember if it's one or two other locations. But are those locations kind of up and fully functioning and populated now, or are they still awaiting residents?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will defer to President Kelly to provide an update. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The THARP units are a collaboration between health and social services and Housing NWT. The one in Yellowknife is up and running. The one in Inuvik will be up and running shortly. Our understanding is in April at this point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that's it for questions on this page.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Next, I will go to the Member for YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You'll all be happy to hear that most of my questions are already answered, and my final question is just to get clarification.

Under compensation and benefits, there's about \$3.3 million there but we don't see a staffing chart for, like, how many positions there are in each community for this item. So how many staff in total fall under this set of programs, the homelessness programs, that make up the \$3.3 million for compensation and benefits? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Funding for the Yellowknife day shelter and sobering centre operations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. And so the entire, like, \$3.3 million is for the staff associated with the day shelter and sobering centre. Okay, thank you, that's all. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Next I will go to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Regarding this homelessness program, you know, and I -- you know, in Tlicho region, especially in Behchoko alone, we have a lot of people on the housing waitlist but in the other small communities, there's a waitlist as well, like Whati and Gameti and even in Wekweeti, you know, there is a waitlist for people to get into programs. So right now I have a lot of people in the small communities where they're couch surfing or it's overcrowded, like in Wekweeti, you know. I didn't think that there would be because, you know -- but there is. Like I've said many times, a lot of people are coming home and, you know, for whatever reason happens in Yellowknife, you know, we have the family back in many of the small communities, so. And then, you know, in Yellowknife, there's a home-based program, you know, that cater to teenagers and, you know, support them in school and everything. You know, the home-based program is good but we do have some of those kids in the small communities where relations -- because of the relationship and some of the young people are homeless, and they're putting themselves at risk. And they really do need a safe shelter, like the home-based, with a home-based program so they have -- at least they have a chance to complete their high school and, you know, work. But because there's nothing so a lot of them are putting themselves at risk and getting into relationships or, you know, having families at a young age and that's to get out of the -- you know, the situation that they're in. But if we had a home-based program like this in some of the regions that really needs it, our young people will do a lot better, and I know that we will see maybe a graduation increase. And I am sure you probably have that in your riding as well. And I know that in 19th, one of our colleagues from, you know, different region also had the same issue. And this is nothing new. It's been like that for quite some time but it's just that it was never addressed. But until the home-based program in Yellowknife came up, and I thought hey, that's also in my region as

well because we have some of those youth, you know, some of the youth that are homeless.

So I just wanted to ask the Minister if they're working -- like, I would like to see a home-based program so -- in Tlicho region as well. So if the Minister or the department of -- or Housing NWT are working with the Indigenous government or Indigenous organizations to possibly, you know, like, create a home-based program for our youth that are falling through the cracks and, you know, like, give them a chance to -- to have a safe place to sleep and give them a chance to complete their high school education. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I think the question or the comment from the Member around programming, especially around youth and homelessness, we're finding that in -- like she mentioned, in many of our smaller communities. The home-based program here in Yellowknife is funded through health and social services, but we do have a couple of opportunities through housing, and they're small, but still conversations with the local Indigenous governments or with the MLA. We do have a small community homelessness fund, and we also have a community housing initiative fund that we can talk about potential programming in community and those related to youth. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. So that is -- the small community homelessness fund, is that application-based? First-come, first-served? Or how is this fund allocated? It's a good program. I know it's going to benefit some of the communities. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is something that we could bring up at our meeting with the Tlicho government when we talk about housing and our MOU, and continuing that memorandum of understanding is potential funding for -- like, a home base in another community in the Tlicho, in the Monfwi riding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Yes, I really do appreciate it. Thank you. I think that will be nice. It's going to help some of our

young people, a lot of our young people, and not some but, you know. At least if there is a housing or if there's a -- you know, like, then they can fall back on so they're not really stuck. Because right now, since we don't have anything, they're kind of stuck. And then I just don't want to -- you know, a lot of them to get into an unwanted relationship and because, you know, they are our future. They are -- you know, like, we need to do more for them. So that's why I am -- you know, I am really, like -- I want to see something for them in the regions.

And emergency shelters, I know -- you know, like Whati or Gameti, they don't have -- none of our community have emergency shelter. You know, I mean, this is overnight, you know. But a shelter where, you know -- like, with what happened in our community, you know, with the unit that -- we have -- we don't have enough, like, from the local housing, so we have to go look elsewhere, you know, outside. So even in -- in any of the small communities, I don't think we have -- we don't have any emergency shelter. I know this is different but, you know -- but it would be nice if we can, you know -- if we can look at possibly doing one or, I mean, having that program in the small communities. Maybe you can put that on your agenda when you're talking about a home-based program. So thank you. I think that's about it for this section.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT, do you want to respond?

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, again, having that working relationship with the Tlicho government allows us to have these ongoing conversations about how to improve housing and how to help, especially with the homelessness file, considering, like the Monfwi riding, there's a lot of people on the waitlist waiting for housing. And I think that it's really important that we just advocate for future housing needs. And looking at numbers, like numbers tell the tale of people waiting for housing and proper housing supports. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Next I will go to Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, there's a big increase from your emergency shelters on page 382 from your revised estimates of 2025-2026 from 2.9 to 10.2. Can you give me some information on the big increase in your main estimates? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So we just spoke about this earlier, but it was incremental initiatives funding for emergency shelter programs. We talked about the increase in emergency shelter programs, the forced growth initiative, the funding for the two shelters in Inuvik, the funding for Fort Simpson shelter, Hay River shelter, and also the transfer of the day shelter and the sobering centre here in Yellowknife to Housing NWT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just following up on my colleague's -- what she stated about homelessness in our smaller communities.

Recently, in your Minister's statement on homelessness you often used the phrase throughout the Northwest Territories, and you're still using it, but yet you're funding only programs in Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Fort Simpson. And, you know, there's -- I get a lot of comments from residents saying why can't this government put a place somewhere in a community like Fort McPherson. We have a lot of people that are couch surfing. They're sleeping in abandoned buildings because they have arrears with housing or they're way out on the waitlist. If you're going to use the phrase throughout the Northwest Territories, like, implement it. You know, it's something that I often go by units and, like, LJ's has trailers there that he bought and he uses it for his workers. I know how much that cost him. But, you know, I think that something should be done in that regard where we can help our people in the smaller communities here. Rolling all this money into Yellowknife, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, and Hay River, to me you're just putting a welcome mat out there saying come to the larger centres, we'll look after you. At the same time, you go to your larger centres, they have a residency clause there that you have to live in -- let's say in Inuvik, you have to live there for a certain amount of time before you can go be -- participate in some of their services. I think that's just more of a statement saying, you know, like be careful with your words, like using throughout the Northwest Territories often, and it's just four regional centres that you're referring to. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Do you want to respond to that, Minister of Housing NWT?

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that tomorrow's announcement on the territorial housing needs assessment is

going to give us a clear indication of the housing needs across the North, and it's across the North. Especially, you look at our waitlist, but it's going to provide more data on the need for housing across the North and throughout the Northwest Territories. Because we know, every one of us knows, especially as MLAs, you know, the need, the number of BFs that come in, the people that are couch surfing, the suppressed households. This is -- it's going to be -- when I looked at the report, I was pretty astounded with the numbers, and -- but I shouldn't be surprised because this is something that we're seeing right from Sachs Harbour to Fort Smith. People need housing. And many of these houses are old, old houses, and the systems are breaking down because they're so old. And that's why it's really important that we continue and press the federal government to provide us, you know, federal housing funds to build more infrastructure within community. But also our systems are breaking down in the community too, where in the past families used to take care of families but now we're faced with so many different issues within community that it's hard for people to actually look out for each other. There's really -- people are facing hard times. And I will say across the Northwest Territories or in the Northwest Territories because it's true, and you can see from the waitlist.

And in terms of the homelessness programs, I mean, these are programs that have been instituted well before my time but there is increased need for shelter support systems, and mainly in the regional centres, because that's where people get caught in the system, either from leaving correctional institutions or health-related issues or they have to migrate to a regional centre because of a health-related or an education-type issue. So I understand that we do have much increased need in small communities. Regional centres have been funded for emergency shelter support systems for a number of years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member -- okay.

Seeing no further questions, we will proceed to the next activity summary without voting on this activity total. Moving on to homeownership assistance programs, starting on page 383. Are there any questions?

Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So in the business plan, it says that the department's going to do reviews of some of the programs, including the home purchase program. We'll start with that one.

It says that the timeframe is 2028-2029, but has Housing NWT already started to review how effective the home purchase program is or come up with any ideas for changes that need to be made to the design of that program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Our homeownership programs and home repair programs have been -- are being reviewed by Housing NWT presently. And President Kelly can provide more information in terms of the details related to the reviews. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This has been a real focus because we've seen that there have been some things that have been ineffective in the past. As the Minister mentioned earlier, for the home purchase program, the down payment piece, we've opened it up for folks to go into the district office who are in communities that are ineligible and, if they meet eligibility criteria, to try to support them in that way. So this is ongoing work right now, and it's taking -- it's going to take some time, but we're reviewing homeownership broadly to see if there's ways that we can improve upon and learn from what we've done in the past. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So can the Minister just confirm, then, that while so far the down payment program was only available, like, in regional centres, is it available now in smaller communities to people to take advantage of the down payment program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Madam Chair, yes, I've asked Housing NWT to consider those outside the regional centres for the down payment assistance program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that, and I really appreciate the Minister's willingness over her time in this role to really look at policies and whether they make

sense and to make changes. That, I think, is quite remarkable.

I also just wanted to ask, I know that in the past few years Indigenous governments have taken on much more of a role in, you know, getting funding and building homes and trying to ensure local people can own more of these homes. Has Housing NWT considered working with Indigenous governments or transferring over any of these programs to Indigenous governments that are more active seemingly right now in this space of trying to help people and communities own their own homes? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide more in-depth information related to this question, because it's daily conversations with IGs, Indigenous governments, especially those that we've signed MOAs and MOUs with. So President Kelly will provide more information related to this. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So we've definitely considered what programs and heard from Indigenous governments on what programs they're interested in, and a lot of the focus is on the home repair programs for owned homes. And so there's been a number of relationships built through the MOUs and outside the MOUs where we're supporting Indigenous governments to do that part of the programming, to do some homeownership repairs. We haven't transferred the program over but we've supported them to do the homeownership repairs. There are those that are interested in that transfer, and we continue those conversations.

With respect to homeownership assistance programs like these ones, we haven't heard that much input from Indigenous governments, to my knowledge anyways, of wanting to take on that aspect, but we have seen some really innovative work done by Indigenous governments on homeownership that we're certainly watching. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will keep it short. I think it's good that the Minister at Housing NWT has made this a priority. I've certainly heard a lot about the importance of homeownership from my colleagues in the past few years and trying to move away from being

dependent on a public housing system. And so I think it's an important theme. I certainly don't have the answers, but I am glad that this is a priority topic that the Minister is engaged in. So I will leave it there. No further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Seeing no -- oh, Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Seniors aging in place, retrofits, and repairs. So I just wanted to ask the Minister, for the last fiscal year this fund 1.6, was it used up to date? Like, did we use it to the capacity? When did this program run out? Because I know that I've been getting a lot of phone calls or, you know, talk to elders that, you know, they were approved but they have to wait until the next fiscal year. So do they need to do an application? Do they need to do another application even though they were approved within the last fiscal year, and they realize, okay, they have no more funds available.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I find this, again, throughout the Northwest Territories, where sometimes we have -- we issue RFPs and they're delayed, depending on the contractor or the contractor's schedule or who's available with contractors and local community to do the work. So sometimes things are delayed. One thing we are finding, especially in the Tlicho region and also in the Gwich'in settlement area, is working with our MOU with the Indigenous government. We have a conversation, say this is delayed, could your development corporation take this on to get this senior's home repair completed, those kind of conversations are happening at the regional level.

In terms of the funding, the funding is set aside. Once they're approved and they receive notification that they have been approved, it's just usually finding the contractor to do the work. So in terms of a reapplication, I think that they would contact the district and the district would just affirm that, yes, we're just waiting on quotes or we're waiting on a response with the request for a proposal. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. So they don't have to redo the applications and just move forward. Okay, that's good, then, because, you know, in the past, elders were getting tired. You know, they were, like, upset because they have district office going into their

house, invading their space, you know, asking them the same old questions again and taking pictures and it's, like, they're not getting anywhere. So because of that, a lot of elders said, no, don't come in my house because I know I am not going to get approved. So that was the attitude at that time because it's just that the policy wasn't, you know, friendly, and it didn't work for some of the people, and so it's good then, you know, they don't have to redo the application.

And then so when you ask your partner to, you know, complete the work, do they -- does Housing NWT reimburse them for the money that they spent to fix up the unit? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's through a contract. So once they've completed the work and there's an inspection after the work is complete, usually the funds are paid out for the contract. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you. You know, we were talking about having -- you know, we have a lot of people on the waitlist. It's not just the young people. It's the seniors. It's the elders, you know, 65 and over. They're on the waitlist for independent living unit, so -- and we have two, I know that in Behchoko, and there's one in Whati and in Gameti. There's nothing in Wekweeti. So I just want to know if the Minister had been talking to the local leaders over there, possibly doing an independent unit, because it -- you know, some of the elders living in their own home, it's good, but it's costly for some of them. And so if we had an independent unit there, I am sure, you know, like, the elders would enjoy their golden years, you know, living -- still being independent. And not just over there too but we do need more independent living units for senior citizens in Behchoko as well. So the waitlist, it's from young to the elderly and it's just -- you know and I know how some of these get in. Like, I mean, you know, they shouldn't be on the waitlist. They should, you know -- because right now some of those are living in an overcrowded house, and they don't have their own place. And I know a lot of them would like to, you know, live on their own. And so that's why I am asking that. I know in Tlicho region, we need more independent units. So is there a plan in place or that have you did an assessment or, you know, to see, regarding the needs? So is there a plan in place that, you know, Housing

NWT is going to build more independent units for senior citizens in Tlicho region? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With the territorial housing needs assessment that's going to be released tomorrow, one thing it does is it provides, like, a community profile for each community in the appendices of the document. So it just gives a clear indication because every community is different in terms of needs. And then looking at Housing NWT, we do have a 20-year infrastructure plan that shows the growth of housing within community for each community across the North, and it's usually based on a waitlist, condition of the units within the community, the ages of the residents within the community. So it provides more demographics, unit condition rating, waitlist, condition of unit. Like, these are all -- these are all important -- what's that word -- it's just important criteria that we add to the 20-year infrastructure plan. But, again, I think with the communities themselves, this territorial housing needs assessment will provide a really good profile for each community and confirm the need across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I know my colleague talked about the home purchase program, and I know that in Tlicho region, you know, it's really, really greatly needed because, like I said, you know, there's a house that's been on the market for three years. No market value, so young people can take advantage of it. And living in small communities, you can't save. So how can you save? You know, because there's -- everything is expensive, fuel, utility bills, groceries. So there's no -- you know, there's no room to save. And if that was possible, I am sure a lot of our young people would, you know, buy. But it's just that it's a down payment, usually it holds them back. And so I know they will benefit from the home purchase program or the down payment program in the Tlicho communities. And even though where there's no market, like, maybe Wekweeti somebody would like to build a house, you know. But it's just that you're taking a chance, you're taking risks, you know, so. But it's needed. And there's nothing in Tlicho region, so it's -- it's nothing new. It's -- I've heard this even prior to 2021, that that program was there and then it's not there anymore, so. And then some of the young people, yeah, they bought, but then they took their chance. And

just like with one that we are experiencing, it's no buyer. So thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of NWT Housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to reinforce that Housing NWT will consider applications outside the regional centres for the down payment assistance program, especially those in smaller communities that are interested in purchasing their own house. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to Member for Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** This is -- it's something that I talked about too before were unsettled estates. You know, there's over 60 people that are living in a house that's -- they don't own that house because of estate, it's not settled. It's not in their name so they're not the rightful owner. And, you know, like to settle one of the estates, like it's going to cost a lot of money, sometimes like up to \$40,000, so that they legally own that house. So right now there's a lot of people in my region that are living in a house that's not theirs but they've been living in it for quite some time, for many years of a deceased relative, a parent, especially parents. So I know they asked about the home repair program. And do they qualify for the home repair program? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Minister of NWT Housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand with the criteria that it needs to be the homeowner to apply for the home repair program. So part of the criteria is you own the home, and it's within municipal boundaries. So I think that's part of the criteria with Housing NWT. And with unsettled estates I think that's, again, something that could be very difficult to settle within family, and it is costly to do that, so applying for an administrator through the court system to settle the estate is probably the best bet for the family. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. With that, I am going to call a break, and we'll continue on with the next section when we get back. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Committee, seeing no further questions for this activity, moving on to housing operations, support, starting on page 385. Are there any questions?

Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I got really excited because my last question was about the last page of the business plan, the very last page, so in the entire, huge business plan that we have. I know I get excited about weird things, Madam Chair. That would be the evaluation plan for Housing Northwest Territories. I am specifically interested in the market rental program. It's not going to be in the 2026-2027 -- or, yeah, not in the 2026-2027 year but in the 2027-2028 year, and it's noted to be in the initial planning stage. Could the Minister please provide some details and substantiation around what that evaluation will be evaluating. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's good to hear that Members are excited about housing because it is so important that we deliver, especially in our business planning items with our mandate and our priorities. I think with the market rental plan, President Erin Kelly can provide the Member with some information related to that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to reviewing market housing, I would say that we have been looking at our reviews over the next while, in particular because there were some added based on our response to the OAG. So I don't have a specific date for this one. But I can say that we've recently hired an additional staff member to our policy group who has evaluation background and is doing great things with the evaluations that we have on the go right now. And so I am positive about when we can get to that one. I just don't have an exact date at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And that's really good news. I am hopeful that that means that the items that are slated for this upcoming fiscal year, being the emergency repair program evaluation and the homeownership repair program evaluation are on schedule. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, those are on schedule.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Madam Chair, that is all for me. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Seeing no further questions, we will not be voting on the activity total.

Moving on to non-residential building operations starting on page 388. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions, we will not be voting on the activity total.

Moving on to the rent subsidy program starting on page 390, are there any questions?

Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So this appears to be a federal subsidy program for people who spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent. The budget is \$2 million. I am wondering if we can get more details about this.

So, for example, how -- like, is it fully subscribed? Do we get lots of people applying for this federal subsidy and what happens if more people apply than we have money for? Like, do we have -- will the feds pay for more than \$2 million if we have lots of people who qualify, according to their criteria, applying for this benefit program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of Housing NWT.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. President Kelly will provide more information around the subscription to this program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. President Kelly.

**MS. ERIN KELLY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is one that last year was undersubscribed, and this year we did a bunch of advertising to try to increase subscription. It did increase it, but it didn't fully increase it to the allocation. We believe that it's because of the small rental market in the NWT. And one of the things that we are going to do is work with ECE because we believe that there may be some folks -- you can't have income assistance and access this benefit, but there may be folks that are accessing IA that could access this one instead. So our next step is to go and work with ECE and continue to put it out there and advertise it to try to get more folks accessing this benefit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Great Slave.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's good to have more information about this program. I had not really heard much about it, and it's good to know too that if you're on income assistance you don't qualify for this program. But yeah, I will look out for some of the advertising that's out there and let people know that they could be taking advantage of federal dollars instead of territorial income assistance potentially in some cases.

Final question, though, does the Minister happen to know if we did get more applicants than we have money for in this \$2 million pot, have the feds committed to pay for, like, all eligible applicants that apply, or if they -- is there a firm cap at \$2 million even if there's more people that are eligible? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister of NWT Housing.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, this program is undersubscribed, and with the funding pot itself, it's 50/50. So 50 percent from the federal government and 50 percent from Housing Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Okay. Thanks for that clarification. I will leave it there. That's fine. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Seeing no further questions, we will not be voting on the activity total.

Moving on to unilateral CMHC and other programs starting on page 392, with an information item on page 394. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions, we will not be voting on the activity total.

Moving on to lease commitments on page 395. Are there any questions?

Thank you, committee. Committee, please return to the Housing Northwest Territories summary on page 373. Are there any further questions or comments from the committee? Seeing no further questions, does the committee agree that consideration of Housing Northwest Territories is now complete?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you, Minister, and thanks to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chamber.

What is the wish of the committee? Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. There is a motion on the floor, the motion to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

I will now rise to report progress.

---SHORT RECESS

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from the Dehcho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 448-20(1) And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you..

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from the Dehcho. Can I have a seconder? Member from Hay River South. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

Report of Committee of the Whole. Third Reading of Bills. Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr Harjot Sidhu):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 4th, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Oral Question 1071-20(1), Cost of Living
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
  - Written Question 32-20(1), Medical Travel Costs, Budget Pressures, and Travel Volumes

- Written Question 33-20(1), Medical Travel Delays, Coordination, Communication and Repeat Travel

- Written Question 34-20(1), Medical Travel Escort Policies Eligibility and Appeals

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 69-20(1), Taking Action on Energy Affordability and Security in the Northwest Territories
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 45-20(1), Civil Forfeiture Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 3-20(1), Carbon Tax Repeal Act
  - Tabled Document 448-20(1), 2026-2027 Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 4th, 2026, at 1:30 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

