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**LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY**

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

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**The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nahendeh)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, June 1, 2026****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer or Reflection**

---Prayer or reflection

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

Thank you very much for the opening prayer. Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 207-20(1):  
PUBLIC SAFETY LEGISLATION

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, last year the Department of Justice committed to swiftly introducing public safety legislation that would help residents in the Northwest Territories feel safe in their communities. Today, I am pleased to provide an update about how we have delivered on the 20th Assembly's priority to make residents and communities safer.

We committed to developing three public safety bills and to ensuring that the Trespass to Property Act, Civil Forfeiture Act, and Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, respond to concerns raised by residents. The introduction of the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) Act this session will mark the introduction of the last of the three public safety bills that the Government of the Northwest Territories committed to developing during this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, over the last several months I have visited communities across the territory and repeated my commitment to strengthening public safety laws so local enforcement have the tools they need to shut down drug houses and deter crime.

Residents from across the Northwest Territories have consistently highlighted that they know where drug trafficking and other illegal activities are happening in their neighbourhoods, but they do not know how to provide this information to authorities so they can take action.

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP continues to do good work to keep our communities safe but last year I asked the Department to develop and deliver legislation that would outline a complementary civil, complaints-based process to address properties where illegal activities, like drug dealing and trespassing, are occurring.

In the last sitting, we also introduced civil forfeiture legislation in this House because we need more tools to disrupt the flow of money linked to criminal activity. The purpose of civil forfeiture is three-fold:

- Prevent people engaged in unlawful activity from profiting off it;
- Reduce the likelihood that people will engage in crime; and
- Recover money gained from or instruments used to commit crime.

Mr. Speaker, I want crime to be unprofitable in this territory. Following successful forfeiture proceedings, the GNWT may receive refunds for costs incurred during the proceedings, compensate eligible victims, and support initiatives or institutions that make communities safer.

The Trespass to Property Act, which received assent in this House on March 6, 2026, makes it illegal to trespass on private property and sets penalties for anyone who does. It outlines how people should be notified to stay off certain lands and when law enforcement can make an arrest. If landowners or occupants suffer losses in certain situations, the Act simplifies the process of recovering money.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that legislation and enforcement alone cannot address the root causes of crime, which we know include other challenges like low income, addictions, lack of housing, mental health problems, and the legacy of residential schools. These root causes require long-term and collaborative trauma-informed solutions. While the GNWT continues to make progress on those solutions, we need action now to help address the rising drug-related deaths and crime linked to the drug trade.

Mr. Speaker, our public safety legislation, and especially these three bills that we have developed, will help enable the Department of Justice to act through civil processes, providing more avenues to disrupt harmful and unlawful activity. We need more ways for the territory to step in when illegal activities harm residents or make them feel unsafe.

There is no one answer. Drug use and crime are complex issues, requiring a range of programs and services coordinated across all levels of government to solve. However, public safety legislation is a key tool we have right now that we know will make our communities safer. That is why this has been a priority for me as Minister of Justice, and this is why I am pleased to report that the GNWT has now successfully delivered on our commitment to bring these three bills forward within a year, providing a suite of public safety legislation that supports safe communities for Northerners. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Ministers' statements. Minister of ECE.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 208-20(1):  
IMPROVING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION  
ACROSS THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:**

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, every child in the Northwest Territories has the right to quality education and learning, regardless of their abilities, their circumstances, or where they live. This commitment lies at the heart of inclusive education in the Northwest Territories. Inclusive education means creating learning environments where all students feel welcomed, supported, and able to fully participate. Ensuring the right to learn matters so that every child has the chance to take part in their communities, in the workforce, and in the decisions that impact their lives. [Translation Ends].

But meeting that commitment has become more challenging. Over the last decade student needs have become more complex, and schools have faced growing pressure to provide the right supports. Families have shared their experiences of waiting months for assessments, of not knowing where to turn for help, and of children who are eager to learn but lack the supports they need to succeed. Educators and classroom assistants have spoken about the strain of doing everything they can while limited time, tools, and resources.

Growing federal funding through Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative

helped ease pressure and fill important gaps. Last year's changes and drastic reduction to those federal supports created uncertainty for students and families, pressure on educators and support staff, and instability across our education system.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, our government completed its review of inclusive schooling, drawing on feedback from students, families, educators, Indigenous governments, and education bodies. That review resulted in 11 recommendations, and our government accepted all 11. We are now moving forward with a phased implementation plan over the next two years to strengthen inclusive education in the Northwest Territories guided directly by what people told us they need.

The first step in that plan is stability. With the support of Members in this House, the government committed at least \$30 million in new funding for inclusive education. This doubles the territory's investment in inclusive schooling. More importantly, it means more consistent supports for students in the classroom, fewer disruptions to their learning, and greater certainty for families who depend on these services every day.

This investment will be felt directly in schools with the majority of funding flowing with flexibility directly to education bodies where decisions are made closer to students and communities. It will help maintain key school-based positions, improve access to therapeutic and rehabilitative services such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, and counselling, and support the use of assistive technologies. For students this means more continuity; for families, it means fewer gaps; and, for educators, it means stronger support in meeting student needs.

Mr. Speaker, the second priority is helping children get support earlier. A portion of this new investment will support early childhood screening, with the first steps starting this fall and full implementation planned for the 2027-2028 school year. Because when we identify needs earlier, children get help before they fall behind, teachers can respond sooner, and families spend less time searching for answers.

A critical part of classroom support is the hard-working classroom assistants. Through community visits as both a Regular Member and a Minister, I have heard directly from teachers, administrators, and classroom assistants who want a stronger toolbox to support students. They are deeply committed to the children in their care, and they want to do even more. In response, a portion of this

funding will support additional training so support assistants have the skills and confidence they need to work alongside teachers in helping every student succeed.

A third priority is making the system easier for families and educators to understand and navigate. Families have told us the system can be difficult to follow. They should not have to struggle to understand what supports exist or how to access them.

Starting this fall, they will see clearer, plain-language information about the supports available, who is responsible for what, and how students move through the system. We are also working with our health partners to make referrals and follow-up simpler and more coordinated so families can focus on their child rather than the process.

Finally Mr. Speaker, we must improve access to rehabilitative and therapeutic services, which remains a serious concern. Limited access to these services means some students go without the support they need to fully participate in school. This is not acceptable, and it is something we are committed to improving.

Over the next two years, the government will work to improve access and better coordinate services between education and health, including a new school-based rehabilitation service model planned for the 2027-2028 school year.

These are practical steps to strengthen inclusive education and give students, families, and schools more stability and support. This work will take time, and it will require continued partnership with families, education bodies, Indigenous governments, and communities. We will continue to listen, learn, and adapt as we move forward.

At its core, this work is about children - their confidence, their potential, and their future. It advances the 20th Assembly's vision of healthy people and communities by helping to build a North where every child has the support they need to succeed in school, in work, and in life.

I want to thank the families, educators, and Indigenous governments and residents of the Northwest Territories who shared their experiences and voices to guide this work. Together, we are building a stronger North where every child has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for WSCC.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 209-20(1):  
WORKERS' RIGHTS AWARENESS  
CAMPAIGN

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, workers' rights are the cornerstone of safe and healthy workplaces. Across Canada, workers have three fundamental rights:

- The right to know how to do their job safely;
- The right to participate in making their workplace safer; and, of course,
- The right to refuse any work that feels unsafe.

These rights are important because they empower workers to speak up, ask questions, and take an active role in preventing injuries and illnesses. Strong workplace safety depends on employers and workers working together to normalize daily conversations about safety, identifying hazards, share concerns, and build a culture where everybody understands their role in creating a safer workplaces.

Earlier, from May 4 to 9th, was Safety and Health Week and it provide an important opportunity to raise awareness about injury prevention and the responsibility we all share for workplace safety. As part of this effort, WSCC's Work Safely: It's Everybody's Job campaign helped bring the message of workers' rights to communities across the North.

The campaign features materials created by northern artists that depicts recognizable northern workplace scenarios and how these rights are put into practice. Campaign materials are available in the 11 official languages of the Northwest Territories. More than 500 employers received digital or printed resources to support discussions and awareness activities related to workplace safety and health.

While Safety and Health Week provides an important focal point, the conversation about workers' rights continue throughout the year. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for WSCC. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 210-20(1):  
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes will be absent from the

House today for a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' Statements. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1031-20(1): CELL PHONE USAGE IN SCHOOLS

**MS. MORGAN:** Mr. Speaker, the latest research on children and teen health shows that the greatest dangers to children do not lie out there in the real world. It's inside, the thing that they keep close by them 24/7, the cell phone that connects and addicts them to the virtual world. We think we're making children safer by giving them cell phones. We can track them, we can text and call them any time. We forget that children are much more likely to be taken advantage of by criminals or predators in the online world rather than the communities they live in.

When the smartphone became available 15 years ago, youth started being online and on social media for hours a day, for some almost constantly. Kids are not able to learn self-control since research shows this is rewiring their brains during their most vulnerable stages of brain development. They become physically addicted to their phones. There's been a huge rise in attention disorders, major depressive episodes in teens, emergency room visits for self-harm, and antisocial or violent outbursts.

Now, kids may believe that having a smartphone and a social media account is the only way to have friends, and parents of course want to help them fit in, but online conversations block development of the real social skills kids need to thrive. It leaves them vulnerable to cyberbullying with no escape. Many even believe that ChatGPT is their truest friend because it tells them what they want to hear.

Jonathan Haidt is the author of *The Anxious Generation*, *How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. One of his recommendations is phone-free schools, including high school. Many schools in the NWT have cell phone policies of some kind by now, but these need to be consistent across schools, strict and enforceable. We can't just forbid phone use during class time, and we can't expect teachers to be full-time phone police. They're already stretched to their limits, and it's unproductive and sometimes dangerous for them to be wrestling phones out of kids' hands every day.

So a thought to leave you with, the elite private schools where tech CEOs send their own children often prohibit all personal digital devices, including phones and tablets. They know the products they make are harmful to youth so it's time we protect our children, too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1032-20(1): BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO CONSTITUENTS

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to send birthday greetings out to two influential ladies in my life.

First of all, I would like to send a special happy 9th birthday greetings out to my granddaughter Shamron Kila for May 30th. Shamron is growing into a nice young lady and is enjoying life in Aklavik. Happy birthday, my girl, and I hope that you enjoy your trip to Edmonton and I will see you once you return.

Mr. Speaker, my Auntie Mary Eppie Snowshoe turned 88 years young on May 29th, 2026. My Auntie Mary Eppie is still active within the community, the region, and the territory, sharing her traditional knowledge. She continues to help out in the community whenever she is asked to share her expertise. My Auntie Mary is not slowing down, and you can see her walking at a fast pace on a daily basis. Happy birthday, Auntie, and I wish you many more productive years ahead.

I would like to ask all Members to join me in wishing these two remarkable ladies a happy belated birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Mackenzie Delta. Members' statements. Member from the Sahtu.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1033-20(1): MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY READINESS

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, uncertainty is the enemy of secured growth and benefits. When communities and businesses cannot clearly see the path to participation, even the most promising infrastructure projects remain just that, promises on paper.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Valley Highway represents transformational opportunity for the Sahtu and the entire Northwest Territories. A

major project boost or an economic tsunami is upon us.

Mr. Speaker, 70 percent of the MVH right-of-way will pass through the Sahtu. The total budget, estimated at \$4.2 billion, potentially, will pass alongside three small communities within walking distance. But without access to capital, is opportunity denied? Today, I want to speak specifically about the Mackenzie Valley Highway readiness and it is -- and it relates to the venture capital grants, contribution, loans, and guarantees for stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, our businesses want to participate, our community corporations want to build capacity, our entrepreneurs are ready to invest, but they need certainty and information. They need transparent access to financing options that will allow them to scale up higher locally and to position themselves as a competitive partner or partners in the nation building project. But readiness cannot be abstract concept. Readiness means our local contractors know where to access bridge financing. Readiness means our Sahtu businesses understand the application process for federal and territorial grants. Readiness means clear timelines, guidelines, transparent criteria, and dedicated support to navigate capital access.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway will only deliver on its promises if we eliminate the uncertainty that prevents local stakeholders from seizing the opportunity it creates. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, strategic potential must translate into tangible community benefits, jobs, contracts, and long-term economic growth rooted in the region. Mr. Speaker, that transformation begins with financial clarity. It begins with removing uncertainty, and it begins with ensuring our people have tools, information, and access they need to participate fully in this coming future. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1034-20(1):  
COST OF LIVING

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whenever we gather in this House, I raise the cost of living pressures facing my constituents. They are looking to this

Assembly for action and for my people in Lutselk'e, that means a serious examination of winter road access between their community and Yellowknife. Yet year after year, their voices are ignored. This call to action has only become more urgent. Costs continue to rise as tariffs and fuel prices hit our small communities the hardest. And by leaving practical options for relief on the table, this government effectively telling my constituents they must continue to bear the brunt of the affordability crisis regardless how severe it becomes. And Lutselk'e, Mr. Speaker, receives fuel twice a year and the community of Lutselk'e will pay the high price for the one year.

But this is no longer just a cost of living issue. Across Canada, governments are focused on supply chain resilience, economic security, and Arctic sovereignty. Yet, the lack of interest in connecting Lutselk'e to our northern transportation network shows these priorities are not applied consistently, leaving my communities on the outside this nation building agenda despite our land and resources being positioned as the foundation of Canada's future growth.

Lutselk'e is the gateway to Thaidene National Park, one of Canada's most significant protected areas. Improved winter road access would reduce supply chains, lower costs, and help the community capture economic opportunity in guiding, outfitting, cultural tourism, and local business. An interest in the eastern region of Great Slave Lake grows, including documented mineral potential. There is a need for early structure planning so that we are proactive rather than reactive. Early stage of study would work, ensure that the community can assess and engage with future opportunities on its own terms with proper information from the onset. This is the kind of nation building infrastructure that should be prioritized across the North, especially now that affordability has been recognized as central to prosperity, security. Yet, the Minister, I brought this forward, and it was refused to do the study and then the absence of evidence and reasons for this inaction, all the while the costs of living prices worsen in my community. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Members. Thank you, colleagues. This is why I am calling on the government to meet with the chief and council of Lutselk'e to talk about the potential commitment to do a PE feasibility study for the winter road to Lutselk'e in the fall business planning session. I ask the Minister -- I will have questions for the Minister

at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1035-20(1):  
COST OF LIVING

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week, I recognized the Youth Parliament MLA for the Deh Cho who spoke about the cost of living. When a young person comes into this House and speaks about families in her community struggling to put food on the table, it should set off alarm bells. Children and youth should not have to worry about adult problems but in too many homes, they do. They hear the conversations at the table, they see the stress when bills come in and groceries have to be stretched as far as they can go.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent data shows that 33.4 percent of Deh Cho households were worried about not having enough money for food. That was before the latest pressures from the global economy. Fuel is part of that pressure. In the Deh Cho, gas and home heating fuels are not luxuries. They are basic costs of living. People need fuel to get to work and keep their homes warm in the winter.

Government cannot sit back while parents are stretched to the breaking point and children are growing up around that stress. Fuel relief should be on the tables, including reducing or suspending the NWT gas tax.

Mr. Speaker, people need to see a government that understands the urgency and is willing to act, not another explanation of why prices are rising or why global forces are outside our control. When one in three households are worried about having enough money for food, that is not normal. That is not acceptable. And when children are noticing it, the situation is severe. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1036-20(1):  
EAST THREE SECONDARY SCHOOL 2026  
GRADUATES

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the 29 graduates of East Three Secondary School in Inuvik, another very successful year. Some of

these graduates will be coming out of there bilingual, Mr. Speaker, which, unfortunately, as I've stated in my Member's statements earlier on, may not be the case next year unless, of course, our government acts on that and corrects the French immersion situation in Inuvik.

Having said that, I am very proud of these individuals. I know most of these kids myself, and I am happy to read their names out today. And I apologize, I will do my best to ensure I do it correctly. So without further adieu:

- Ahmed Altaher
- Alex Binder
- Dimitri Blythe
- C.J. Bonnetplume
- Alvin Christian
- Jesabell Day
- Descartes Dulay
- Isabelle Esau
- Maribella Gingras
- Whitney Kasook
- Jonathan Kunnizzie
- Jaxon Brodhagen
- Winnie Lennie
- Nathalie Lindsay
- Paige Loreen
- Madden MaNeil
- Gabrielle McLeod
- Tye Ovayuak
- Kailene Peterson
- Fox Reardon
- Kelleigh Ruben
- Bernadette Rusit
- Hilary Savoie
- Deeandra Smith-Benoit
- Brooke Smith
- Angelina Wainman
- Kalena Wainman

- Reese Wainman, and
- Owen Whynot

Congratulations to all the graduates this year from the East Three Secondary School in Inuvik. We're proud of you, and good luck. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1037-20(1):  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON  
LANDS AND RESOURCES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 3rd of the last sitting, I raised concerns about the fact that over the past several assemblies, legislative timelines have gotten longer and longer, citing a number of examples I won't repeat again today. One factor was common among the examples I cited. They were all legislation subject to co-drafting at the Intergovernmental Council table under the legislative development protocol. Considering the significant role the intergovernmental agreement is playing in development of much of our significant legislation, you would think this would be a process which receives a fair amount of public scrutiny and input; however, the opposite is true. The legislation in question is often of significant interest to the public and Assembly, but the process happens behind closed doors without accountability to the public or the Assembly for extensive timelines which are hampering our government from bringing forward important changes being requested by various stakeholders, including in some cases, Indigenous governments themselves. For these reasons, I and my colleagues asked a number of questions of the Premier in the last sitting about the seven-year review of the intergovernmental agreement. In response, the Premier tabled the RFP for the seven-year review, and I am disappointed to note no public input, or even input of MLAs, is included in the RFP. The Premier's follow-up response to my oral question does state that MLA input will be sought and given to the internal committee considering the contractor's report, but not by the contractor producing the report. I also note that the concern I have raised about process timelines is not explicitly included in the terms of reference for the contract.

Mr. Speaker, I have several concerns about the terms of reference as written.

First is that if MLA input is considered beside the report as opposed to contributing to its contents, it is much less likely to have influence over outcomes.

Secondly, in talking to different people involved in the IGC process, it has been pointed out to me that there is potential for significant change to how it works. It could, for example, be stood up as an independent institution and properly funded to ensure timeliness of legislative development. It could receive more public scrutiny or even be subject to timelines, just as the committees of the legislature are. I do not see potential for this kind of significant change in the RFP as drafted and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned. I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1038-20(1):  
FOLK ON THE ROCKS 2026

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a beautiful weekend here in Yellowknife, and I am sure across the whole Northwest Territories. I'd like to point out that today is the first day of June. The long winter is behind us and when the snow melts and the landscape starts to turn a lush green, we don't just notice summer in the North, we cherish it. And with that shift in season comes a shift in all of us, a shift towards community, towards the outdoors, and towards the events that bring our communities together to enjoy in the warm weather. And what is summer without the greatest of all northern events?

Of course, I am speaking about the return of Folk on the Rocks, which will take place July 17th to 19th at the Folk on the Rocks site along Highway No. 3. Folk on the Rocks is one of the most unique music festivals in the country, an event set against the backdrop of our northern lakes and rocky shores under the long northern daylight where the sun carries through the still air and out across the community. And on those quiet nights when everything is still, you can hear the music and feel the energy in the neighbourhoods kilometres away.

We are all so proud of Folk on the Rocks because it showcases local northern talent alongside artists from across Canada and the entire world with a lineup that reflects both our community and our connections to the wider world, bringing together Indigenous artists, emerging musicians, and well-established performers on the same stage offering audiences a chance to experience music

shaped by place, culture, and diversity. In that way, it's not just a festival. It's a shared cultural moment that could only exist here in the NWT, and it endures because it is a part of who we are as a people and reflects back at us the creative, inspiring, collective spirit of all of us.

I look forward to seeing many friends and guests from far and wide this summer as we celebrate music, community, and the spirit of the North. Hope to see you at Folk on the Rocks, Mr. Speaker. Happy summer to everyone. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1039-20(1):  
ADDICTIONS TREATMENT PROGRAMS

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, across all the Northwest Territories, families are watching their loved ones disappear into addictions. Too often, help comes too late. When families seek support, they are often pointed towards health centres or treatment applications. Treatment can save lives, but in a crisis timing matters. When someone is at a serious risk, family needs a pathway to intervene before the crisis becomes a tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, I was young once and I faced addiction personally. I am not ashamed to say that treatment was a big part of my recovery but I could not have made it to treatment alone. I had people around me who stepped in while I still had a choice, and I will always be grateful to those friends and colleagues. But not everyone is so fortunate, Mr. Speaker. When someone is overwhelmed by addiction, accepting help is not always a simple choice. That does not mean they are a lost cause. It means the response must match the seriousness of the crisis.

Mr. Speaker, in 2024 the NWT coroner's office reported 12 drug-related deaths. For a territory of our size, that is unacceptable. Our response needs to be stronger. Other jurisdictions, including Alberta and Saskatchewan, have moved towards stronger intervention measures. As our understanding of addiction changes, the NWT strategy must change with it. We need a crisis response that can act immediately. We need safe withdrawal spaces for people who cannot manage that process at home. We need treatment to happen faster, and we need aftercare that does not end when someone leaves a facility.

Mr. Speaker, I know she is not here, but I will have questions for Minister of Health and Social Services at appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1040-20(1):  
CELL PHONE USAGE IN SCHOOLS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Similar to my colleague earlier today, I wanted to talk about the struggles some of the schools and school boards are managing with, which is the personal devices that some students have, Mr. Speaker. In today's learning environment, it helps for folks to have consistent learning but learning no matter what.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge really here is governments across the country are looking at these handheld personal devices in schools and trying to figure out how to limit and manage them, and some of them have even gone so far as banning them. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the right decision is, but I will have a recommendation later in my Member's statement.

But the most obvious portion here is that -- or issue here we must have engaged learning that focuses for students to create that environment, and personal devices cause challenges. We could spend time in my statement talking about safety and bullying and harmful effects of these types of devices, including pathway changes it has on the young person's brain, but that's already been said and it's a fact that's been said by hundreds of people and experts in the world here, so I don't need to double down on what they've already found to be true.

Mr. Speaker, the important balance here is that we must also find balance by instead of coming with a restricted, heavy-handed risk policy, we must find ways to ensure that the young people do not resent and rebel. We are trying to look after their best interests over the long haul by fostering an environment of learning, not isolation, Mr. Speaker.

It's a complex issue, and I guarantee you there's no one size fits all, Mr. Speaker, so this is where I am thinking we have an opportunity. The Minister of education could consider an advisory panel to provide some ideas on how to approach this challenge. It's not just our challenge, it's also our young person's challenge, Mr. Speaker.

Personal devices are wonderful. They're fun, they're exciting. But the fact is, if it takes you away from learning, that is the question. So who

could be on this advisory panel? Mr. Speaker, I can think of hundreds of former educators. They could be educator warriors who want to continue to give back to the system, who have retired, who've not only seen it all, but have been through it all, Mr. Speaker. They would have great advice to provide the Minister. And guess what? We could do something maybe school boards can't, take and shoulder the blame when the young people are upset that there's a crisis of no personal device in their hand.

Mr. Speaker, the important part is technology is changing and advancing at historic rates in ways that we may never be able to keep up with. But we must do our best. We must keep our young people interactive. I want to finish by pointing out something, Mr. Speaker.

Critical thinking, organic, and interactive learning should never be replaced by clever AI prompts, Mr. Speaker, because students lose the ability of critical thinking and formulating arguments.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I will table a draft motion here later today. We don't have time to debate it but hopefully this will create a conversation about the overall subject in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1041-20(1):  
RECENT EVENTS IN HAY RIVER

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, since our last session, it's been a busy time in Hay River, and I would like to highlight a few of our awesome events.

With the extended cold winter, the NWT Polar Pond tournament had excellent ice conditions in order for me to graciously glide across the ice. And once again, this event was a huge success. Funds that were raised are going back to the community and the recreation departments.

In April, the Hay River Parent Action Committee hosted an auction for education and community spirit awards. I would like to congratulate the following people:

- Tristan Sanquez - Youth Volunteer Award
- Tim Borchuk - Senior Volunteer Award
- Hay River Museum Society - Community Spirit Award

- Hay River Home Hardware - Good Business Award
- Russel & Spencer King - Rec Walk Hall of Fame Award
- And our citizen of the year Cheryl McMeekin.

Thanks to the Parent Action Committee for hosting such a successful event that raised over \$25,000 for our schools.

On May 23rd, it was an honour to be the master of ceremonies at our RCMP regimental ball, guiding UNITE in the formal tradition, celebrating the dedication of our Members in Hay River and to the North. From the sharp look of the red surge and moving toasts and celebrating the hard work of our members, it was a privilege to be involved in such a great event and help create a memory of the celebration of their service.

This past weekend, I was able to go home and partake in the Hay River Annual Lobster Do. It's a good opportunity for everyone to go out after a long winter and enjoy some community spirit, serving over 450 people, money raised, or helping various organizations in the community.

And coming up this week, June 3rd to 5th, in Hay River, the NWT Track and Field Championship. Sadly, I am not participating because I am here. It is expected that more than 1100 athletes are going to attend this year, and I just want to wish best of luck to all the participants.

And once again, thanks to all the volunteers who make these events possible. This is what community spirit truly is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1041-20(1):  
PRIDE MONTH 2026

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the month of June is, in large part across Turtle Island, in addition to Indigenous History Month, the Month of Pride. I have said that Pride is a protest and learning more about queer history is essential to understanding our fellow Northerners who are living their authentic life.

June 28th to July 3rd marks the 57th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City, which is the birthplace of the modern fight for queer liberation. Those riots were led by a

trans woman, notably the black trans queen Marsha P. Johnson.

Today I'd like to share some words from Alok Vaid-Menon, a celebrated non-binary writer and performer: Quote, I am really informed by a thinker named Richard Rohr who says that we all have a true self and a false self, and the work of being alive is to revive the true self that we've had to submerge to please the people around us. When people see trans people, they're threatened because we're introducing a language on authenticity that holds up a mirror where they have to ask themselves, who would I be beyond what I've been told I should be? So the lie doesn't have to be conscious. It's a sense of self-betrayal, of having to mold yourself into the image of what other people want versus what you want. So much of what challenges people about transness is the clarity and precision of saying, you get to change your mind and you get to give birth to yourself. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, saying love is love is not enough if not paired with action and accountability. I am proud of this government and this Assembly for continuing positive progress in this regard. And, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of us to celebrate our fellow Northerners living their authentic, proud, bold, and beautiful lives at Pride events across the territory this summer. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1043-20(1):  
CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF YVONNE  
NORWEGIAN

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, today I'd like to celebrate the life of elder Yvonne Norwegian, a woman who carried love, strength, and traditional wisdom through the Deh Cho and beyond. Yvonne was born on October 13th, 1945, to William and Cecile Antoine.

Yvonne was a respected leader, a devoted mother, and a guiding light to countless children, families, and community members. Her presence was felt not only in Jean Marie River where she served as chief for six years but across the Deh Cho region with her strong belief in Treaty 11. As well, she worked for many years with the district education authority and the Deh Cho Divisional Education Council and territorial parks at Samba K'e and Fort Simpson with her husband Douglas.

Yvonne's life was rooted in care and service. She was a strong supporter of children and always made room for them in her heart, whether in her own home, in the community, or

in the schools. She strongly believed in acceptance, forgiveness, and loving one another without condition, and she lived those values every day. With a heart that never turned anyone away, Yvonne was always there to help, whether in person or by phone, and she made herself available to anyone in need.

She was also a keeper of traditional knowledge and many people turned to her for advice, guidance, and wisdom words. From the very beginning of her time in Jean Marie River, community members relied on her not only for counsel but also for practical support, as a helper, letter writer, caregiver, and informal nurse to elders. She was a person people truly appreciated and her kindness touched lives in many ways that may never be fully counted.

Yvonne shared 62 years of life and partnership with her husband Douglas Sr. Norwegian, and their love and teamwork formed the foundation of a family that now included 11 children (names attached and deemed read), 15 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren. She was a loving mother, wife, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt, and beloved friend, and her loss leaves a deep and lasting emptiness in the hearts of those who knew her.

I had the pleasure of working with her over the past 34 years in her many roles. I can tell you she was a very strong person who would tell you exactly what she was thinking and feeling yet she was always respectful and willing to listen to others' opinions. I can also say that I truly appreciated our conversations as we worked through the issues together.

Unfortunately, on February 19, 2026, Yvonne passed away in Yellowknife with family members around her. On behalf of Yvonne's family, they sincerely thank everyone for your prayers, kind words, and support during this time of sorrow.

Her legacy lives on in the people she helped, the leaders she inspired, and the children she loved so deeply. I'd like to share some parting words from Yvonne: Work together, don't be negative, think positive, and life will be better.

Rest in peace, Yvonne. We will sadly miss you but you will not be forgotten.

Her Children: Janice Norwegian, Erma Norwegian (Gerald), Lisa Moses (David), Wanda Norwegian (Rufus), Melanie Menacho (Fred), Median Norwegian (John), Douglas Jr., Derrick Norwegian, Alisha Grossetete, Rhonda Grossetete, and Gerald Antoine.

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

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Colleagues, I would like to recognize three people that I just finished doing the Member's statement on. Chief Melanie Norwegian Menacho, who is her daughter. Janice Norwegian is the oldest sister. And her husband, 90-year-young Douglas Sr. Norwegian, an amazing crib player. So watch out when he's playing crib with you. You're going to lose, so. Welcome to the Assembly. And I thank them very much. They drove in from Jean Marie yesterday and will be driving back on those great roads by infrastructure.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to recognize chief Norwegian Menacho. It's always great to have Indigenous leaders in the Assembly even under these circumstances. So welcome. Thank you.

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

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Douglas Norwegian, the late Yvonne's husband, and Melanie Norwegian, the chief from Jean Marie, as well as her sister Janice if she's here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers and I thank you very much for allowing us to have the honour of representing other people in Northwest Territories. I hope you enjoy the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery.

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

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 1240-20(1):  
CELL PHONE USAGE IN SCHOOLS

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

We now have over a decade of research showing the harms on children and youth from having a smartphone with them at all times, from an alarming rise in mental illnesses, anxiety and sleep deprivation, to struggles making meaningful friendships and disconnect from family members, to struggles paying attention and learning in school. So first, what is the education Minister doing to speed along

the development in all NWT schools of phone-free school policies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to thank the Member for pursuing this one for the length of the 20th Assembly. It's certainly a topic that we've been able to speak about a lot, and I really appreciate her advocacy. So to take immediate action, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on this one is implementing system-wide territorial guidelines. These are strong bell-to-bell restrictions on cell phones, and they're currently being reviewed by education bodies across the NWT to get their feedback to help directly shape these guidelines. These guidelines will be finalized over the summer and in place for the upcoming school year, and this will allow schools to implement strong local policies as early as September. Thank you.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So that is certainly positive news.

My next question, though, is what powers does the Minister have, under the Education Act or related regulations, to actually enforce these guidelines or standards for phone-free schools in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, what the Member was alluding to there in her question is absolutely under the Education Act. These school-level policies are the responsibility of education bodies, and they don't fall under the responsibility of myself as Minister. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, we are using the tools that I do have in my toolbox to implement clear territorial expectations through those guidelines that are enforceable through policies that are aligned with the safe schools framework. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, it would need to be an amendment to the safe school regulations to make sure that cell phone ban policies are put directly into those regulations for more teeth in the future. But understanding that we want something right away before that, we are taking right away the guideline approach. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so can the Minister share any examples or success stories in the NWT of where phone-free school policies have already been

implemented and enforced successfully that we can point to to show other communities or regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, we do have a great success story here in the Northwest Territories. I have to give credit where credit is due, and that would be to the Tlicho Community Services Agency who are just completing their second school year with a full ban-to-ban cell phone policy in their schools. They have seen tremendous results from it. They've seen more participation in classrooms, more participation on sports teams, less incidents in the hallways and after school. So I have to give credit to them, for sure, for implementing that. And other education bodies, including the N'dilo District Education Authority has also used that policy and implemented it into their school as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1241-20(1):  
GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
VISUAL ASSETS IN MINING WEEK 2026  
MATERIALS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, speaking of youth and youth issues, AI use is a really pivotal -- it's at a pivotal place in the world but it's certainly of concern for young people, especially in the creative space. So it was a great shock to many people in the Northwest Territories when a document was produced by the department of industry -- for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment using art that was AI-generated instead of art that was produced locally. So that department's also in charge of supporting artists in the Northwest Territories.

Can the Minister explain why this contract was issued that allowed for AI art to take money away from northern artists who could have been used to produce these pictures in this document? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right, we do have contributions that go out to different organizations that we work with and, unfortunately, one of the organizations that we work with and that we fund for an event for mining week, did use AI to generate art. I have, in turn, asked for a full communications plan for what intends to happen next year under that

contract because certainly would like to see northern artists used. Thank you.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am a proponent of AI in many cases but not in this case. My teenager always reminds me that this is not the way to use it. So will the Minister put in a directive now that any contributions that go out prohibit AI art when we could be sourcing local northern artists? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member started their questions today, there were certainly -- AI is a quickly evolving space and so on first blush at that one, I would definitely want to make sure that we're always using northern artists especially if it is coming directly from the government, from industry, tourism and investment, and any other department for that matter. We have contribution agreements though that go out to residents themselves and are looking at different ways that they can use AI within their businesses, and so I would want to make sure that we are not having unintended consequences of a directive like that and would want to make sure that I am talking to industry to understand how they're using it to make sure that any kind of directive like that doesn't have those unintended consequences. Thank you.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can -- instead of, then prohibiting it, can the Minister require that anyone receiving contribution disclose when AI is used to fulfill the art -- as a condition of that money? So if they're getting money and they're going to use AI, they have to disclose it to the public and to the department. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I love that idea and I will definitely take it up with the department because I think that where we're at right now, we want to make sure that we are embracing some uses of AI but definitely not replacing the good, fine work of northern Artists. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1242-20(1):  
CELL PHONE USAGE IN SCHOOLS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to pick up on what I thought was a couple gaps in some relatively decent answers from

the Minister of ECE when she talked about the potential of guidelines for schools to manage the cell phone challenge. My problem is guidelines are just that. They're very difficult, if not fluid. My worry is that they need to be codified in some type of formal process. So what is the Minister doing to help codify these into actual rules as opposed to guidelines? And, again, this is about the control, banning, or exclusion due to certain circumstances of personal devices. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the guidelines are being set right now along with our education bodies. And so making sure that we're working together with our education partners is a great way to codify it because we're all getting there together. There's not a single person at the education leaders' table who does not align to the philosophy that cell phone usage in our classrooms is quite distracting. I also sit at the -- or sit with the NWTTA Education Leaders' Council, and this is something that is brought up routinely and that teachers are asking for as well. And so making sure that at the end of the day we're working together, and if we need to regulate it we have tools to do that as well. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to be clear. I need clarity on this one because I don't think the Minister of ECE can actually ban them system-wide, and that's -- if my concern is not correct, please correct the record. But that said, is that the issue right at the moment, is there is no authority under the Education Act to ban it, and if there are ways to ban it can the Minister make it very clear to this House by what mechanism and process could we move swiftly on that? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the Member referenced moving swiftly and quickly in order to put something in place. And so having the guidelines that are agreed to by education bodies who are feeding into the process is definitely the way that we go about doing this as quickly as possible in time for the upcoming school year and to make sure that everybody has time to adjust their own policies where they need to. But within our decentralized system, I don't have the authority, the Member is right, to do that without regulation. So by making sure that we're working together within these guidelines is how we're going to get there quickly and how we're

going to get there for the next school year. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I get the visual anecdote of that bobby chasing a person down the street in London saying stop or I will say stop again. I am worried about the cell phone ban following a similar guideline saying don't use it or I will say don't again.

Mr. Speaker, when can we expect the regulations to come forward and what type of what I'd say is outside expertise will she be involving to get that? In other words, the old education warriors that may have some great input on how something like this works, because if you can't enforce it don't bother. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, in our decentralized system, all of the education bodies have the ability to amend their own policies. We're working directly with them on those policies so that we can ensure that at the end of the day we have alignment. The guidelines provide some guardrails and parameters to what the expectation is.

And then as far as the Member's question about regulations, amending the regulations would then come after that. And, Mr. Speaker, I would have to see where this type of work would sit within the queue of our regulatory commitments that already exist in this term, that we need to make sure that I am working alongside all of my colleagues because we are all working hard to get in there and putting a lot of pressure on a very small team of legislative drafters this term.

But that said, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the -- the Member had a third question in there, which has escaped me. I am sorry, so I am very happy to come back. We're very happy to discuss the third question with him at break as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1243-20(1):  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY  
STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION SESSION

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, following up on my statement.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days of our spring sitting, which will come to a close, planning ahead on our summer events I ask the Minister of ITI if she can support access to capital information session at a coordinated date in the Sahtu. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I can definitely work with the department from both industry, tourism and investment, education, culture and employment, as well as seeing if we can work with some of our federal partners as well on a date for an event in Norman Wells. And certainly our regional staff are very knowledgeable about the programs that do exist and happy to help businesses in the Sahtu access those. Thank you.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that reply of cooperation. It's very encouraging to move ahead and show our people that this government is behind capital availability.

I will be working with the federal Bank of Canada to help coordinate, and will the Minister exhaust all her programs and have the right personnel and staff and advisors to provide advice and options available on programs at this event there? Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we have regional staff that can be there to answer questions and also support with completing applications. In addition to programming at ITI, which offers programs for example like SEED. I can also speak with the staff over at ProsperNWT because we have just increased the loan allowance limit up to \$5 million specifically for projects that also have to do with strategic infrastructure. So I can also talk to the staff at Prosper to see when they intend to travel and see if we can coordinate with both ITI, ECE, and Prosper as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of ITI. Final supplementary. Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that reply. As I mentioned, over the coming weeks here, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of making information available to the people I represent. Will the Minister also support my office to jointly send out invitations to the key principals of this project? To name a few, strategic infrastructure department, major projects office staff, defence investment agency. Thank you.

**HON. CAITLIN CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am certainly always open to collaborate. I think that there is a lot going on in the territory right now and as the Member pointed out, a lot of implications for all of our departments. We certainly have a -- well, we have staff that are dedicated to readiness on this and also are currently working on some workforce development pieces as well, and so I think the more that we can coordinate, bring it all together, and have central access for information to people, the better we will be serving the public. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1244-20(1):  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Mr. Speaker, last week I tabled a policy paper from the University of Calgary that outlines it costs government more and arguably society to do nothing in the face of gender-based violence. That is, perpetrators who are overwhelmingly male get caught in the cycle of repeated violence that harms themselves, perpetuates trauma, and costs the system more. The 94 MMIWG Calls to Justice expressly ask governments to address the root causes of violence. So in alignment with that, the Call to Justice 14.12 that asks territorial governments to work with Correctional Services Canada to provide programming for men and boys that confronts and ends violence, would the Minister be willing to explore a similar model as outlined in this paper where police and social services coordinate to offer offenders rehabilitation-style programming proven in other jurisdictions to reduce recidivism? Thank you.

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

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. And thank you to the Member for the question. With the gender equity division, they are working with the Department of Justice on offering rehabilitation programming that addresses gender-based violence in the Northwest Territories. The national action plan to end gender-based violence funds programs including the partner program, the intimate partner violence treatment options court, and the justice administrator's funding for men's healing programs in the Northwest Territories. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to

Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls to Justice include addressing the root causes of crime, calling on a whole-of-government approach to address the root causes of crime. The wellness court, drug treatment option program, and intimate partner violence treatment option court, are alternatives to conventional courts that act as therapeutic interventions to address the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour to reduce reoffending and increase the use of restorative justice in the territorial court system. Community justice committees support the GNWT's commitment to safer communities by addressing minor offences early at the community level and in ways to reduce repeat offending. Continued investments in community justice reflect the GNWT's focus on prevention, accountability, and building community capacity to improve safety outcomes across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if you even spend a brief amount of time looking at Stat NWT's spreadsheet of criminal incidents by violation, which is from 2010-2024, you'll see that many of the charges associated with gender-based and family violence such as sexual assault, assault, uttering threats, harassment, they spiked in 2019 and they haven't gone down since.

Does the Minister agree that we need to try new approaches to prevention based on the increase of these crimes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member, again. This is something that we're seeing across the board, the increase of violence, especially against women and children in the Northwest Territories. And this goes along with housing. This goes along with illegal activities in our communities. And we're seeing that spike, especially in our small and remote communities. The need across the North is help, help within the family, help within the community, and also help for them to reach out to get that treatment perhaps or perhaps counselling or perhaps effects of trauma. The chief in Behchoko just recently announced, like in their Tlicho Assembly, that we are a traumatized nation. And I agree with that. I totally agree with that. How do we combat the effects of trauma? That's something that we are facing as the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Final supplementary. Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for bringing up the whole of government response that is currently engaged with the GNWT. However, Mr. Speaker, what steps have been taken so far to unify the approach across government on Action 66, in their own strategy changing the relationship? The ones that focus most on prevention of committing violence, those committing violence from re-offending, beyond Action 78 and 79 in that same strategy. Thank you.

**HON. LUCY KUPTANA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Beyond Action 78 and 79, we are committed to supporting the Northwest Territories community and residents to achieve their wellness goals. This includes supporting communities and Indigenous governments through community wellness initiatives. Gender equity division has also developed a strategic framework for addressing family violence in the Northwest Territories, reclaiming the capable person. We are all capable persons when we have community.

The division is now working on an action plan that will be GNWT-planned with concrete actions that will support a whole-of-government approach to address family and gender-based violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Oral questions. Member from Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1245-20(1):  
COST OF LIVING IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

Can the Minister explain what immediate action this government is taking to reduce cost of living pressures on families and small communities. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to measures around affordability, there's -- unfortunately, the number of things that are causing affordability to be challenging, not only in the North but across Canada, are many and varied, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest ones in the North continues to be energy costs. And, Mr. Speaker, in that regard, we have the territorial power support program that is just shy of \$10 million, rate equalization for communities. Government payers pay higher rates than non-governments or residents and non-profits. That comes in at just around \$7 million a year, Mr. Speaker. And of course we have one-time costs that we continue to pay so

that when there are infrastructure investments into our energy systems to reduce our reliance on diesel, which is driving that current cost, that if the government pays for that, ratepayers are not, so to the tune here in this government of just shy of \$50 million over five years to try to ensure that ratepayers aren't responsible for those costs, Mr. Speaker. Those are just some of the things in this space. We also continue to pay for the costs of home heating fuel and for clients who are on income assistance or in public housing. All of those costs, when they go up, Mr. Speaker, we do continue to cover them for folks who are most in need. Thank you.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. And thank you to the Minister for that answer. But I have to ask again, will the Minister commit to reviewing fuel relief options, including reducing or suspending the NWT gas tax? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point in time we've not taken any steps to reduce or to change the gas tax. I can say that once when it was clear what was happening -- or certainly not clear what will necessarily happen with a war in Iran, but we certainly have been reviewing and keeping an eye on rising costs, what that's doing to not only affordability for residents and for businesses, but also on the ability of our government to continue to support residents. So, for instance, even just the utilities and housing hitting a new high at \$32 million, those are all costs that we want to continue to bear. We want to continue to do it in a way that we're not ultimately taking on more debt and putting that on the backs of our future residents.

So, Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we'll continue to monitor, we'll continue to keep an eye on it, and happy to make that commitment, just not the -- no change at this point in time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member from Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1246-20(1):

CHIPSEALING OF INUVIK BYPASS ROAD

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to reviewing current affordability supports to determine whether they reflect the real cost of living in small communities, including the cost of gas and home heating fuel? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we absolutely will continue to make those types of analysis and reviews. Mr. Speaker, it's, you know -- it's very challenging times right now and while there's lots of good news on the horizon for the Northwest Territories, at this moment in time it's

costly to move things around, it's costly for residents to move around, and it's costly to pay for electricity. So we will absolutely happy to commit that we'll make those considerations known. Obviously, for folks in public housing or on income assistance, the government swallows up the added costs. But for everybody else, the folks that are working poor, that is a much more complicated situation. So yes, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to keep an eye on it. And as we do, you know, as we did in the Sahtu when there was a crisis when the fuel didn't get in. So in those situations, we certainly do step in and we keep an eye out for when those circumstances require. Thank you.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some time ago I made a Member's statement on the chip-sealing prospects in Inuvik of having the bypass road chip-sealed. Obviously, Members -- my predecessors in the past have made those. I did, thankfully, get a commitment from the Minister of Infrastructure that we, indeed, are going to chip-seal the bypass road in Inuvik this year. I got that verbally in this House as well as I got it in writing, so I am very happy with that.

So my question for the Minister of Infrastructure is, has that contract been let since we are now -- as my colleague had said, it is June 1st, the season has started. And has that contract been awarded, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to announce that the contract has been dealt with and work's underway. Looking to start it as soon as possible here, it looks like, and work's well underway to get that project done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank the Minister. So I understand some of the prep work is required to be done on that road as well, potentially some culvert work, some upgrading. So I am just, again, looking at a schedule. The contract's been awarded. Has the contract been awarded for all that work, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It looks like all the prepping work will be done hopefully by July and ready to be chip-sealed by August, around that time of August. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that and I know the residents of Inuvik certainly appreciate that and look forward to not having that dust. So just to be clear, then, so the completion date is the end of August this year, Mr. Speaker?

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this is a contract that's awarded. You know, ultimately, it's up to the contractor on the speed. Our goal is to have it done this summer and the department's been, you know, working actively with the contractor to have it completed by the end of August. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1247-20(1):  
SEVEN-YEAR REVIEW OF THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON  
LANDS AND RESOURCES

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in his responses to my previous questions on this matter, the Premier noted that the IGCS is not going to review itself; however, I note that the committee which developed the terms of reference for the review was internal to the IGC, and it appears the contractor will be exclusively engaging with parties to the agreement. So can the Premier help me understand how this doesn't constitute a primarily internal review? Thank you.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the IGC isn't reviewing itself. As an IGC member, I am not conducting a review. But the agreement states that the parties shall conduct a review of the agreement, and so it's the parties who are going to conduct a review of the agreement. And the agreement -- the purpose of the agreement is to formalize government-to-government relationships in the development of these pieces of legislation. So the review is reviewing the agreement, which is an internal document, or which is a document that really governs the internal workings of the Intergovernmental Council. So it's a bit of a roundabout explanation, but that is what is required by the agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do appreciate that explanation however, as I've

noted in my statement and as Members have noted during several areas of review, the intergovernmental agreement, of course, has a significant impact on the work of the Legislative Assembly and legislative timelines. So why was input of the public, and the Assembly in particular, into the seven-year review not included in the RFP issued on March 10th? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it's a collaborative process coming up with everything at the Intergovernmental Council, including the RFP. The objective of the review is to look retroactively at the operations of functioning of the Intergovernmental Council and the secretariat. And so that's, again, very internal on how things are working, and also to look at the lessons learned. And so the RFP calls for the interviews of 10 leaders, so the 10 government signatories to the Intergovernmental Council. The Members of the Assembly here can provide their feedback to me either through writing, and a document review is also part of that. And so that feedback from the Members can be provided through that process. So there are ways for the Members to provide their feedback as a part of our system of government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I hear the Premier kind of heading towards something there, but I would note that MLAs have not been formally reached out to for input on this. It's not clear if standing committee input, which has been given in the form of reports in the past, is going to be considered. So can the Premier detail for the House how will MLA and public input be included in and contribute to findings of the report, not just to the internal committee? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as part of the report, the contractor, like I said, will be interviewing the appropriate leadership of the Intergovernmental Council and reviewing documents provided by those governments. And so for the Members, I can receive their feedback and provide that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1248-20(1):  
ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS  
GOVERNMENTS

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in February 15, 2024, I wrote a

letter to the Premier outlining my priorities for my communities. And on February 23rd, the Premier wrote back and acknowledged my letter and asked me to reach out to the Minister. And I did. I stood up in this House asking the Ministers to come to my riding. And the Premier and the finance Minister made it to Fort Resolution that year.

Mr. Speaker, my question is will the Minister of Finance commit to meeting with Lutselk'e Dene First Nation Chief and Council, YKDFN Chief and Council, and DKFN Chief and Council on their capital infrastructure needs before the fall business planning process and to talk about the high cost of living issues and to talk about the pre-feasibility winter road study for Lutselk'e? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly happy to have meetings with the leadership from all three of those regions, and whatever discussion topics they wish to put on the agenda, will certainly do my best to respond to them. I can't presuppose what will happen necessarily at the capital planning here, but certainly happy to have those conversations and see what options or alternatives or possibilities there may be. Thank you.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to attend the Akaitcho Assembly in July from July 6th to the 10th, 2026, in Lutselk'e, to listen to their regional issues and concerns and also on their infrastructure needs? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the dates in front of me but if I recall correctly, there is already a conflict between a couple of the assemblies on that very same week, and I may be committed to a different one, but I believe there may be some representation from among the colleagues on executive council. I will certainly commit to confirming that or having that go through the Premier's office to confirm who's available. I know that once invited, we'd certainly be happy to have the opportunity to attend. Thank you.

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

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister is aware of the rural high price in oil and high cost of living impacts to the NWT, especially in Lutselk'e where they get two barges of fuel a year, leaving the community to pay the fixed high

price for aviation, home heating fuel, and gasoline, just that drives up the cost of living in the community.

My question to the Minister is, does the Minister have a backup plan by working with the Government of Canada to get further financial tax relief for the community of Lutselk'e or reducing the GNWT gas tax until such time as the rural prices of oil drops? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the roles of the Department of Finance and our fiscal policy shop is to continue to monitor the changes in the cost of fuel, what that does to our own fiscal capacity and what it does to residents. Obviously right now our own fiscal capacity is stretched fairly thin, and taking away, you know, one of the few sources of own source revenues that we have that provides the ability to offset high prices of fuel, high prices of transportation, high prices of resupply, means that we'd be simply putting it on the backs of future residents if we don't manage what resources we have available to us. So we absolutely will continue to do that monitoring, look for opportunities, and absolutely advocate to Ottawa that we need to accelerate some of these projects that we have as fast as possible to bring more opportunities, more jobs, high-paying jobs, and better opportunities to reduce costs. And for Lutselk'e, it may or may not be a road in the immediate future, but it may well be an opportunity to change their energy reliance which could reduce the costs of living there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. Colleagues, I am going to say this again. I've said it in planning sessions, and I am going to say it again now so everybody can hear what I am saying so it's not going on deaf ears.

When you do your questions, the first one is your question, the second one isn't a preamble. It is go right to your question and the same with your third one.

Ministers, get your answers, make sure they're brief. I know you're trying to get information out there. If the information is a long answer, make a commitment you're going to share it with the Member later on. Thank you.

Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 1249-20(1):  
REGULATION OF PREDICTION MARKETS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, with that being said, Mr. Speaker, these are

some questions you can make money on. Will the U.S. invade Iran? Will Donald Trump say tariff? Will the Ebola outbreak become a full-blown pandemic? These are things that can be done in prediction markets, Mr. Speaker, and Canada has recently approved two of those markets. I am getting to the question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is in charge of regulating securities in the Northwest Territories. Many people are concerned about the role of these prediction markets. They've seen what they can do in the States, they're worried about what they can do in Canada. Can the Minister of Justice comment on the work the department has done to assess the impact of these new prediction markets on consumers in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as these decisions were just made in the not-too-distant past, the department has not had an opportunity to fully evaluate this, so I will take that on notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my questions this time are on a different topic for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

So the City of Yellowknife, the Town of Inuvik, and other NWT communities have clearly explained the need to move quickly to access more Commissioner's land within municipal boundaries in order to rapidly expand housing options and to prepare for significant federal investments that are themselves moving quite quickly. I know consultation, especially with Indigenous governments, is an important part of the process that we cannot skip over, but can the Minister commit to establish clear timelines or time limits within which lands must approve or deny applications from municipalities for the transfer of Commissioner's land. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the lands process, we do as a department have control over many steps in the process, reviewing applications, issuing transfer of documents, sales agreements, and we have been expediting those steps without delay. Also within the process, there are a number of things that we do not have control over, where the proponent or the person trying to acquire the land has. And

in those areas, whether that be surveys, legal reviews, sales agreements, etcetera, we don't have the control, so we can't set a timeline on something that we do not have control of. Probably the more important piece here is that large areas in NWT are under active land resource and self-government agreement negotiations, they're ongoing. And whether it's settled or unsettled regions, we have a legal requirement to consult, and it would be really inappropriate for us to set a timeline on the consultation process. So where we have control, we're trying to expedite. We have a legal requirement to consult, and in those areas we cannot predetermine a timeline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister comment on whether we could model a land transfer process after other regulatory processes with set timelines for specific stages of the process, such as for water licenses or land-use permits, given that it apparently doesn't violate section 35 rights to consultation to have timelines in those regulatory processes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that's not really comparing apples to apples. Whether you're talking about a land-use permit or a water license, those are temporary uses of the land whereas a title transfer is a permanent transfer of the land. And I think that's a distinguishable difference between the two processes. And during that process, we have an obligation to consult, as I said earlier, and that is something that we cannot deviate from or set a specific timeline. We have to accommodate that process throughout the negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1250-20(1):  
TRANSFERS OF COMMISSIONER'S LANDS  
TO MUNICIPALITIES

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So could the Minister consider the option of setting up, say, a surge capacity within ECC, like having staff trained up to potentially shift focus for a period of time in order to more quickly process land transfer applications in the event that there is a big influx, particularly related to, you know, federal and department of defence projects? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so we have done a couple of things. We've added two positions to

help to enhance our consultation and our engagement process. So that's been a very positive addition. We've prioritized land applications by putting forward to the top of the list the largest applications, so the largest parcels that would have the biggest impact on creating more land for housing across the NWT. We've also -- are having conversations about capacity with our external partners as well. Because this is not only an ECC capacity issue, it's a capacity of the partners that we deal with that we're talking with across the NWT. We're also having conversations with our partners at federal government and DND on the projects that are proposed for the Northwest Territories.

And as I noted, in the comments from the Member, we'll take this back to the team to look at what additional efficiencies we can find. So I will commit to the Member to take this back and come back if we can find some additional efficiencies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1251-20(1):  
FORT LIARD COMMUNITY POLICING  
INITIATIVES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for Minister Macdonald. His position is Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, 117 days ago I'd asked the Minister regarding the Fort Liard community policing initiative, and one of the challenges is to get a fair and proper understanding of how it's working and where it's great and where we can do better, etcetera. And he said there was an evaluation coming forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, it has been 117 days. I am trying to find out where this terms of reference for this evaluation framework is in the creative sense of the department so we can finally find out what's happening. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the evaluation is with the department and under review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been 117 days. I am just curious on what's taking this process so long. People are trying to find out, including myself and my other colleagues here, about trying to find out is this truly successful and can we roll this model out. So how much longer do we need to wait to find

out this terms of reference to evaluate that policing project? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take that away. I am happy to go back to the department, see if we can get a specific timeline. I am happy to table that report in the House when it is complete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In short, we're hoping that this model could be expanded throughout other communities, even in the city of Yellowknife. You never know. Mr. Speaker, can we expect this type of initiative to be tabled for the House before the end of this term so we can see some action on this topic? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this has certainly been an area of extreme interest of mine. We're working through this review. We wanted to inform our actions across the territory. We certainly look at it as a positive. We've been lobbying the federal government as we did not fit into the current funding model that supports this type of community initiative across Canada because we are not a province; we don't have a policing Act. So happy to take that away and come back to the Member with a response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1252-20(1):  
EKATI MINE SITE ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT

**MR. MORSE:** Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of ECC myself, and these are following up with what I was asking about last week.

Last week, the Minister of ECC told us that the department is not privy to the information on the public record of Burgundy's creditor protection proceedings. But, Mr. Speaker, is the GNWT not themselves a party to this proceeding? How could we possibly not have access to information on the public record? Can the Minister help us better understand. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so as I did say to the Member last week at that time, we did not have

the information available. Since then, we have recently received some additional information from the company on the figures that they provided in the documentation in the court filing. We are currently looking at that information and assessing the methodology that was used to gather that information. And because that number is inconsistent with the number that was calculated through the multiparty process administered by the land and water board and the department, and it doesn't line up with the security that was set by the board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, considering that revelation the Minister shared with us, is the department considering asking for a security review for the Ekati mine site at the Wek'èezhii land and water board, which is always an option to the department under their water license? Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently the department is evaluating the information and looking at the methodology that was used. There's still more additional information required, and then we'll make a determination on what the next steps is if we need to go back to the land and water board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I have interest in this and I am sure some of my colleagues do as well. So if the Minister could please commit to keeping AOC apprised of this matter as it comes forward. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well I am very interested in this, and I am very happy to come back to AOC and to the Member with the information as the situation evolves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake.

QUESTION 1253-20(1):  
RECREATIONAL LAND LEASES IN THE  
NORTH SLAVE

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, if summer's upon us, then it's time to ask about recreational land leases in the North Slave, something my constituents always remind me of whenever the season turns. There's a

number of applications from my constituency before the department. Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell me if those leases are going to be granted so my constituents can enjoy those cabins this summer. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I had said in the House to the Member earlier this year, those applications are in the process. What I am able to report today is I had a meeting with the leadership from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation on Monday of last week. It was a very good meeting. They've taken away some discussion items to go back to their membership, to their council, and have a conversation about leasing in the North Slave. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I mean, that's a progress update but it's not the answer that certainly my constituents are looking for. So when does this delay -- I mean, it's been going on multiple years. When does this start to be an issue of the duty to decide, for this government to decide when these delays constitute refusal to exercise jurisdiction, aka unreasonable delays? When do we meet that threshold? Because it seems like if this can go on indefinitely, forever and ever and ever, we're running into some natural justice issues there. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to have certainty on this issue, and I think it's important to get certainty for the constituents that are applying for these leases. And as I indicated in my first answer, I am currently having those discussions with the appropriate Indigenous governments on the consultation side of these lease applications and when we are through that consultation process, we will have a resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I've heard this before, so I am going to ask very, very plainly, can the Minister set a firm timeline? And if we hit that timeline, he'll just say no. Because we cannot have this drag on. It's not fair to people who put these applications forward. It's not fair to the people who have been waiting for years. And it's contrary to the principles, I think, of that unreasonable delay. So will the Minister put a firm timeline on this,

communicate it clearly to the members of the public who are waiting for these answers, so we can be done this endless limbo on these land leases. Thank you.

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my previous answer, this is a consultation process. We're legally obligated to consult. There's no timeline on consultation. So we will continue with the consultation process. I look forward to, again, meeting with the leadership at the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and other Indigenous governments to discuss land leases, and we'd like to work together with them to find a collaborative solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 1254-20(1):  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Premier a specific question about NGO funding.

So this is a challenging topic. You could go to the department for the actual NGO-specific funding, you could talk to the Minister of Finance about the overall policy, but the Premier, I think, would help sort of shoulder the overall blend of this.

Mr. Speaker, in dealing with many NGOs, no different than you throughout your career, one of the challenges is funding if not the foremost premier problem everyone is facing.

So, Mr. Speaker, every one of them has been coming to me lately and saying that the government is squeezing their money and forcing them into situations, if not a relationship they have to take less but do more. So in other words, their funding agreements are being reduced. Is there anything the Premier can do to change this either attitude throughout the system or this informal policy? Because I guarantee you everything has gone up except for NGO funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the items that I added to the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories on my own. I didn't need anyone to tell me because I understand the importance and the important work that NGOs do. A number of NGOs have received increased

funding over the last couple of years. The overnight shelters have received increased funding and supported the Salvation Army in town, the YWCA, a bunch of work has been done with transitional housing. So we have done a lot. We have -- I feel like we have improved relationships. We've opened up government training for NGOs. So a lot of work has been done. That being said, the cost of everything is going up, and we appreciate the work that NGOs do. And I believe that there is a briefing being scheduled, hopefully, with standing committee and myself on NGO funding, and I think there's an opportunity there to really get a lot of good feedback from the members, have a good discussion about what their views are, what we're thinking going forward. But there's definitely a recognition that costs are going up. If we want to support NGOs, we have to support NGOs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the answer. And, of course, I recognize if the Premier himself -- I don't remember but if he says he put it on the agenda, well, you know, good on him. I am glad he did. Somebody did. So I do appreciate that. But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, reporting requirements have gone up but there's no cost of living attached to NGO funding. So in other words, Mr. Speaker, to the question, which is, unless it's actually negotiated and accepted by whoever you're working with, you have to deal with more with less, and that's ultimately the problem, the cost of living factor. Can the Premier speak to that and tell this House how he plans to address that issue.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we recognize that inflation has been something else lately over the past five or six years, and so because of that we've sent out a directive. Departments should be bringing forward requests for forced growth for their contributions for NGOs. So that will help address that.

I am blanking on the other part of the Member's question here, but I did have a positive response for it, so hopefully that's consolation. Yeah, the cost of living, I addressed that, the forced growth which will be bring-forward submissions. I guess I will wait for the next question. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, thanks.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, clearly, we're getting somewhere so that's -- at least on the conversation, I appreciate that. So, Mr. Speaker, the issue, really, I am getting at is, is can the government

move forward with a policy that's so every NGO that continues to come back that they have the built-in cost-of-living factor into their negotiated agreements, so that way they don't have to fight every single time for that little smidgen extra when it's impacting every aspect of their organization, including the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I remember the Member's last question. It was about reporting requirements. And we also recognize that, and so we're going to be looking at the different types of NGOs or the services that NGOs provide and their alignment with the government priorities and how we can ensure that we're best supporting those NGOs providing those services that otherwise the government would have to provide, and that includes looking at things like reporting.

In terms of including an increase in the contribution agreements, that's -- you know, that's always been difficult because it's this House that appropriates funding, and so it's hard to guarantee funding that, you know, we're not 100 percent sure we're going to get. But as I stated, there is a directive to the departments to bring forward those requests for forced growth for those contribution agreements with NGOs. So the word is out. The department should be doing that, and they should be coming to the Cabinet for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 521-20(1):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 1, 2026-2027

TABLED DOCUMENT 522-20(1):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,  
2026-2027

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents: The Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027 and Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for WSCC.

TABLED DOCUMENT 523-20(1):  
PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR BILL 48:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION ACT, NO. 2

TABLED DOCUMENT 524-20(1):  
STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY FOR BILL  
48: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION ACT, NO. 2

TABLED DOCUMENT 525-20(1):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE  
REPORT 36-20(1): REPORT ON THE  
REVIEW OF BILL 29: FIRST RESPONDERS  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION AMENDMENT  
ACT

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Plain Language Summary for Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2; Statement of Consistency for Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2; and the Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee's Report 36-20(1), Report on the Review of Bill 29: First Responder Compensation Amendment Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 526-20(1):  
COUNTING WHAT COUNTS: A COMPASS  
OF PROGRESS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

**MS. REID:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Counting What Counts, A Compass of Progress for People and the Planet, the United Nations Report of the Secretary General's Independent High-Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Tabling of documents. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 527-20(1):  
DRAFT MOTION ON ADVISORY PANEL TO  
STUDY STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES  
AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN  
SCHOOLS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As promised in my Member's statement, I would table the motion, draft motion, with respect to an advisory panel to study students' use of cell phones and personal electronic devices in

schools. Even though the Minister has said she's moving towards that, I still think it's valuable information for the public for consideration. Thank you.

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

### Notices of Motion

#### MOTION 79-20(1): CONSULTING PARAMEDICS ON THE REGULATION OF PARAMEDICINE

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife North, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to immediately begin formal consultation with paramedics and paramedic operators practicing in the territory on how paramedicine can be most effectively regulated as a profession under the Health and Social Services Professions Act;

And further, that this consultation seek input from paramedics on how regulation could protect both residents and paramedics by clarifying professional oversight, complaints of malpractice, liability, and insurance;

And further, that it be done in close consultation with provincial paramedic regulators to both ensure a mutual understanding of current jurisdiction of provincially regulated paramedics working in the Northwest Territories, and to gain understanding of best practices in paramedicine regulation;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories report back on the results of this consultation, including the level of support among paramedics, and any recommended next steps for developing regulations under the Health and Social Services Professions Act;

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 Range Lake. Notices of motion. Member from Range Lake.

#### MOTION 80-20(1): CLOSING THE LAND SUPPLY GAP IN THE CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the Government of the Northwest Territories designate and transfer priority Commissioner's lands identified by the City of Yellowknife to the municipality to deliver residential and commercial land supply;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish an accelerated land transfer process that occurs in 12 months or less;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories transfer the 41-hectare Frame Lake parcel identified by the City of Yellowknife to the municipality to enable timely planning and development;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure major regional initiatives are coordinated through intergovernmental planning with Indigenous governments, local authorities, and the federal government;

And furthermore, that any actions or decisions resulting from this motion shall be interpreted and implemented in a manner that does not derogate from, abrogate, or infringe upon the existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the North Slave Metis, or any other Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories as recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982;

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 Range Lake. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 49: SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT, DEEMED READ

**HON. JAY MACDONALD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 49, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister of Justice. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 49 is deemed to

have first reading and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Minister responsible for WSCC.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 48:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS'  
COMPENSATION ACT, NO. 2,  
MOVED INTO COW

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2, be read for the second time.

The proposed amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act will expand and update certain presumptive coverage for firefighter and first responders, removing the need at the start of their claim process to establish a connection between workers on the job and their illness and for any listed diseases, including heart disease, heart injury, 27 types of cancer, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Oh sorry, Minister responsible for WSCC.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 8.2(7) and have Bill 48 moved directly into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister responsible for WSCC. The Minister is seeking unanimous consent to move Bill 48 into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Are there any nays? Seeing no nays, we will move Bill 48 into Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 3, Bill 41, Bill 48, Tabled Document 445, Tabled Document 483, Tabled Document 521, Tabled Document 522, with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh in the Chair.

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

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

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, your committee wishes to consider Bill 41. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 521-20(1) and Tabled Document 522-20(1). Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. We'll take a short recess, 20 minutes. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I will call the Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act. I will ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to introduce the bill. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. VINCE McKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here to present Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Licensing Act. The purpose of this bill is to strengthen consumer protection, modernize the legislation to reflect today's real estate industry, and improve the regulations of the real estate professions.

The bill contains the following amendments:

- It changes the name of the Act to the Real Estate Professions Licensing Act;
- Creates a separate license for property managers;
- Creates a separate license for home inspectors;
- Expands the superintendent's authority to create a code of conduct and approve standardized forms to enact public protection; and,
- Updates languages throughout the Act to be gender neutral.

The provisions related to the home inspectors will not be brought into force until supporting regulations are developed. The department will engage with relevant industry to inform developments of these regulations or any code

of conducts and standardized forms before implementation to ensure they reflect the industry standards to better protect the consumer.

And that concludes my opening remarks, and I am prepared to answer any questions Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the chamber?

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Yes, I will, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chambers.

Thank you, Minister. Please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. VINCE MCKAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The witnesses here with me today from Municipal and Community Affairs are Kevin Whitehead, the director of public safety; and, Ryan Semac, senior advisor of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will now turn to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the committee that reviewed the bill, for any opening comments on Bill 41. I will go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act, received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on February 11th, 2026 and, as you know, was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

In the course of committee's review, the committee received a briefing from the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and solicited written comments from stakeholders and the general public. The committee received six written submissions on the bill. And I do thank those members of the public who wrote in to share their comments and suggestions to amend the bill and accompanying regulations.

The committee completed its clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs on May 27, 2026. The bill was not amended during the committee's review, but I do note that the committee made a number of recommendations related to the regulations in their review and so, again, just

wanted to thank the public for writing in. It was certainly helpful in the committee's review and those recommendations that committee made.

And I thank the committee for their efforts in reviewing this legislation. Individual Members of the committee may have additional comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 41. Are there any questions? Is the committee agreed that there are no further general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Can we proceed to clause-by-clause review of the bill? Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** The committee will defer the bill numbers and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill.

Clause 1, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Clauses 1 through 13, inclusive, approved

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Returning to the bill's number and title: Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act, does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. To the bill as a whole, does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Does committee agree that Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agency Licensing Act, is now ready for third reading, committee?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Thank you, committee. Does the committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act? Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Minister, thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chambers.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 521-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses forward?

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on my left I have Bill McKay, the deputy minister of finance. On my right Mandy Bolstad, the deputy secretary to the financial management board.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Does committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document? Committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will begin on page 5 with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Are there any questions?

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education, not previously authorized, \$1,494,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just about the offsetting amount that was lapsed in 2025-2026, does that mean that -- I guess that means that the money wasn't spent, but can the Minister give us updates on those projects.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, certainly can. Just one moment, Mr. Chair. I will see if perhaps the deputy minister or -- may have that information. I will just -- do you have that?

If I could just be clear, this is with respect to the warehouse replacements -- okay, yeah, sorry, Mr. Chair. I was looking at -- my materials were a little bit different on there. But the warehouse replacements at Sir John Franklin and the school project. So -- do we want to go through

each one? Sorry, Mr. Chair. I apologize, I just wasn't expecting quite the question that way.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay. I will go back to the Member from Frame Lake to put your question out there again so the Minister is clear. Thank you.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to try and be clear. I was just trying to figure out what happened with the projects; did they just not happen, are they going to happen in a future year? Yeah, like, for example if we can focus on one, the Ecole St. John -- Sir John Franklin High School boiler, I assume they still need a boiler if we haven't replaced it yet. So I am just -- that was what I was getting at, is what happened to the projects and are they going to move forward at some point.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, each project is going to be a little bit different. I can start with the warehouse replacement project. So in that case that does have a contract in place, and that one is expected now to be fully complete this spring. So there were some delays but it -- in part due to some of the contractor having some changes internally and that delayed them being able to complete the contract. But they were now able to get it online and, as I've said, that is expected to be completed this spring.

With respect to the next one, the Ecole Sir John Franklin School boiler, with respect to that project, Mr. Chair, there was -- this was assigned for completion for a project officer back in 2025 but there were some design delays in the design; however, that is moving along now. There was some re-scoping as that design work was getting done. We are expecting a completion over the current summer year so that it should be ready for the fall or shortly thereafter.

And last but not least, Mr. Chair, with respect to the Ecole Itlo School project, that is at a stage where the school is already occupied as folks may know here in Yellowknife. This was where money does get held back to deal with remaining deficiencies or warranty related items, but those are all now expected to be closed out this spring and that should be the end of the project. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** And thank you, Mr. Chair. So there's a sentence in here that I am just curious to understand for a bunch of the items in the sups and so I will ask it here, and I hope it -- it's

probably the same explanation in all cases but I could be wrong.

Just that the offsetting amount was lapsed in 2025-2026. So does that mean that the amount that offset the cost of this was lost? Can the Minister just help us understand what is meant by an offsetting amount was lapsed. Is this like money that was coming in from the feds that we've now lost? Can the Minister just help us understand the accounting exercise that goes down when an offsetting amount is lapsed. I just want to understand that better. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, I will take a go at it but I may pass it on to the finance folks who are with me. But in essence, if it lapsed and wasn't being replaced, being carried forward, then it would be gone from the accounting activity. But in this case, because it was carried forward, it was approved for carryover, there's not a net change to the financial position of the government. The money that we would have spent in one year we've now said we aren't spending. We're going to ask to add that to the next year's sort of budget, which is the exercise that is before us here. This exercise here is what allows us to take money that would have been lapsing and therefore lost into the new year where it's going to be spent. So that is part of the consideration that we undertake to determine carryovers, is whether or not -- what the stage of a project is and whether or not it should be allowed to continue. When you're midway through a project would be exactly the case for a carryover and exactly the case where you would not want to lose that money and therefore it gets carried over so the project can be completed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Frame Lake.

**MR. MORSE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for that explanation. That's definitely helpful. No further questions on this page. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education, not previously authorized, \$1,494,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Education, Culture and

Employment, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$1,494,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Infrastructure on page 6. Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, assets management, not previously authorized, \$420,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So maintenance funding to conduct facility assessments for educational facilities, can the Minister explain that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this came up during last year's 2026-2027 Capital Estimates discussions where it came to light that there are some schools that are outside of our usual cycle. So all schools that are within the GNWT's portfolio do have a regular scheduled assessment as to their status and whether they need maintenance, whether they need renovation, etcetera. That's just the state of the asset. But there are some schools, specifically schools in Yellowknife that are not GNWT-owned and therefore were not part of that regular process and were off cycle, so this amount puts them onto the five-year cycle and allows, therefore, that every school in the Northwest Territories is now going to be up to speed in terms of being on that five-year cycle. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** So a five-year cycle, are all other schools in the Northwest Territories getting an assessment done? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. They should be, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** I don't have any other questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Mr. Chair, my question to the Minister on these facility assessments here, is the Deline school on the list of assessments here? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That wasn't part of this supplementary estimate because the Deline school should be getting a regular assessment by the Department of Infrastructure. I don't know the last time the Deline school received an assessment. I can certainly make a commitment to get that information. I know that having been in the community a few times that the community has raised a concern as to the state of some areas of repair of the school. So again, you know, where they are at in that five-year cycle, Mr. Chair, or whether there's some outstanding deferred maintenance, again I don't have that here but certainly happy to make that commitment. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick reply here. I look forward to the Minister's reply on where that facility is on the list here. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? I will go to the Member from the Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the Aklavik school on record for having an assessment done any time soon? It's one of the older schools in the Northwest Territories. It requires a lot of upgrade, especially in the sewer part there. There's many times throughout the last couple years that the students had to be sent home because there was a strong smell in the school. But the school really requires upgrades and/or replacement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, again, there's a budget to do the school assessments, and all schools should be having their assessments done every five years. But then once the assessment is done that might determine what the state of repair is or what might need to happen, then that goes into the capital planning cycle. I believe, although again I will want to confirm, I do believe that the Aklavik school is in line for some repairs so they would have had the assessment done, the planning process, and

be in line for some repairs. I can certainly get the dates by which that is expected and obviously, if I am incorrect in that timing, I will certainly get back to the Member as well. But, again, I think it's a matter that -- I think that's in queue for its fix. I will commit to get that information to the House. Thank you.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The school was built right around the old septic tank right inside, and it was replaced by a new septic tank under the school, but the new septic tank is not meeting its needs. It's overflowing on a continuous basis where there's sewage soaking in the ground and the smell is going in the school, and something has to be done right away, a quick assessment on -- if it's during the summer, it would be a good time to do the assessment and get some of these modifications done on the school as soon as possible before the new school year starts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it is my understanding that ECE is aware of exactly this concern and are working on a timeline to have this resolved before the start of the next school year. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? I will go back to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell me if the school in Fort Providence is scheduled for an assessment at this time? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the full list of when each assessment is happening, but I can get that information, and I am happy to provide it to the Members. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Looking at another assessment for the school in K'atloodjeech Reserve. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, again, they are -- all schools should be on a five-year cycle. There obviously can be some variation if -- I mean, for example the school in Aklavik obviously had an immediate need that may -- may -- although I am just using this example, may have bumped one school out of the succession. But there is a five-year cycle that takes place. So, again, I don't have that full list in front of me. The sup is really just focusing on the two schools that were not part of the cycle and to get them onto the cycle, so. But I can ask our friends over in ECE and/or infrastructure for that list. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** I have nothing further, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Further questions from Members? Seeing none, no further questions.

Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$420,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Infrastructure, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$420,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee will now consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs on page 7.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, community operation, not previously authorized, \$4,259,000. Does committee agree? Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the community operations, if the Minister can give us some information on the community government infrastructure project that were not completed, and it's being carried over. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are -- yeah, there are a few, Mr. Chair, and I just realized my -- mine's not opening. Perhaps I will turn this over to the deputy minister, please.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the deputy minister.

**MR. BILL McKAY:** Sorry, Mr. Chair, just looking at the materials here, there's 23 projects complete, 42 projects are in progress for this funding. So they weren't able to -- the department wasn't able to expend all the money so they're asking for a carryover to continue to implement those projects, which are allocated with this money, so there is quite a few projects on that -- that are using that funding. And the agreement with Canada allows for them to carry over this funding and continue to implement those projects. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you for the information. There's 43 projects that's not completed. Do they have a breakdown of where and which community or which region these projects are at or from? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I do have a breakdown by community but not by project. That's what -- I was just trying to see if I could find that more specifically to be a little more helpful. I mean, different communities may have multiple projects so, and I do have a fairly long list with multiple communities as well as breaking down in some cases by region. So what I suggest is I am happy to provide that to committee and that would be a little easier than reading out every community and community government and regional government and Indigenous government that is listed here. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you for the information. Yes, I would like to get that information as well, especially with the community government operations and knowing they're mostly -- usually underfunded.

Another one too is that continuation of community government infrastructure project under small community funds. So how many communities we're talking about, especially with the small community funds, a project,

infrastructure project under this program?  
Thank you.

We have a lot of projects, we have lots of needs in small communities, so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe there may be seven still, if I have the right fund correct, that there's still seven projects outstanding. Most are already complete. Thank you.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. I don't have any questions for this section now. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$4,259,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$4,259,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Legislative Assembly on page 8. The Legislative Assembly, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$154,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Legislative Assembly, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$154,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Legislative Assembly, capital investment expenditures, total Legislative Assembly, not previously authorized, \$154,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on page 9.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, education, not previously authorized, \$14,853,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Behchoko school planning, do they have an update of when this planning phase will be completed? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this is a project that has been around for some time. It is one that we are working between the GNWT as well in partnership with the Tlicho government. I will just see, so there is a planning budget here. As far as next steps, Mr. Chair, there are some revised timelines. There's been some initial concept and design planning completed and site assessments done. The construction would be expected to take four years, Mr. Chair, but I don't know that we're quite at that stage just yet. I am expecting that the work would be looking at the earliest in 2026-2027, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to a Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. I know there's a lot of people that are anxious, and especially parents, regarding this. I think a lot of people are excited. So thank you for the information.

And Mezi Community School, I have two schools here from the Tlicho region, so -- and barrier free. Is there an update on that one too as well? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with respect to this project, there's a few different activities taking place. There's been some site work that is complete. Interior construction is complete. Overall work is at a positive state. Yet there are some deficiencies and warranty items so an amount does get held back for carryover in those circumstances to ensure that those deficiencies do get completed. Anticipating that that should be done this spring and certainly in time for the start of the next school season. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. Well, it's good to know that it's going to be done now within, you know, the spring and ready for

the new school year. It's good to know the timelines of this project. So thank you. I have no more questions on this. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? I will go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick one on the Mangilaluk School renovation. I know that one has been delayed. Are we now on track to complete that this year, Mr. Chair?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I expect that full completion will be this fall. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Nothing further, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Are there any further questions? I will go to Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the urgent needs of the upgrades in Aklavik, would there be any chance of getting this school bumped up to infrastructure projects where these -- I don't know if we require an assessment. I think all of the community have been calling me, and probably the department, on why there's not a real solution to address these problems because kids are losing a lot of school days because of this being sent home in the middle of the day or in the morning saying there's no school. So is there any chance that the infrastructure projects could include the community of Aklavik school in this year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I don't want to leave the impression that this list is the only work that will happen within education, culture and employment. So I appreciate the question and the opportunity to just make that clear. As I said, ECE is aware of the problems at Aklavik, that they are urgent. These are only projects that were already in progress and then weren't quite finished previously and then therefore the money has to carry over from the past fiscal into this fiscal in order to complete them. But the Aklavik project, as I understand it, was a new project that came on by way of urgent need. And it is, again, my understanding that ECE is

aware of it and then are working to fix it, are aware of what the fix in fact may be. So I don't have that timeline in front of me because it's not part of this sup. But I will ask for that timeline. I am confident my colleague will be able to provide that quite quickly as I understand she is aware of it. Thank you.

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

**MR. NERYSOO:** No further questions, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do believe there's a typo here on the subtotals or the totals there. The list of renovations and projects is tallied up to 14,653 and the bottom line is -- or pardon me, 14,653 and the bottom line is 14,853. So I just point that out.

And my question goes to the Colville Lake portables. With the supplementary allowance, would this bring closure to those portables and title asset transferred by the end of this construction season? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So first, Mr. Chair, there's two parts to what you're seeing under the 14.8. There's all of the school carryovers, that's 14.6. But there's the additional \$200,000 for Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic to provide emergency generators. That brings us to the 14.8.

With respect, Mr. Chair, to the Colville Lake portables, this obviously has been some time in coming. As I understand it, right now we're at a near final stage, roughly 80 percent stage of completion. This is coming after the portables made it up the winter road this past year. Full completion is expected right now, possibly by August, so certainly in time for the school season or else by early this fall. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from the Sahtu.

**MR. McNEELY:** Nothing further, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, education, not previously authorized, \$14,853,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$14,853,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Environment and Climate Change on page 10.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,623,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, wildlife and forest management, not previously authorized, \$1,623,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Environment and Climate Change, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$1,623,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Finance on page 11.

Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, \$4,159,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, Office of the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, \$4,159,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Finance, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$4,159,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you.

Committee, we will now consider the Department of Health and Social Services on page 12 and 13.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$3,541,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of health and -- oh sorry, my apologies. I will go to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. You've got child and family services office, where is that located? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is in Fort Providence, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I will go to the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** No further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Okay. Seeing no further questions.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, \$3,541,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving to the next activity.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social services programs, not previously authorized, \$17,725,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health and social programs, not previously authorized, \$17,725,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the next activity.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, long-term continuing care, not previously authorized, \$7,809,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I note the \$3.52 million for the long-term care facility in Inuvik, it's my understanding that it's still a continuation likely of the geotechnical

work and the design work. I am not 100 percent sure of that. My question is simply, where does that now take us to understanding that it is I know the intention, or was the intention of the department, to be ready to go, shovels in the ground, hopefully in 2027 on this project so just wondering what this funding does for that timeline. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, we are expecting at this point in time that the final design will be ready this spring, which would put us into development for procurement over the current year's summer. That brings us to getting a design or construction ready estimate over the winter and therefore construction should be on track for the summer with that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** So the summer of 2027, just to clarify, I think is what the Minister meant but I will just clarify that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I am not sure what I said, but that's correct, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay. I will go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

**MR. RODGERS:** No further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions? I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a home care vehicle in there. Where is that vehicle going? Do you know the community that the vehicle is going to? Is the home -- all home care places going to get a vehicle? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe that is going to Fort McPherson -- or sorry, Inuvik rather, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** I have nothing further, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Seeing no further questions.

Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, long term and continuing care, not previously authorized, \$7,809,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$29,075,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 14.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$150,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$150,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the next activity.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, mineral and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$275,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions -- oh sorry, I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister explain what amount this is referencing in terms of what was delayed and why the offsetting amount was brought forward, if the scope of what was delayed could be discussed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I certainly can, Mr. Chair. Just give me a moment. Obviously, the MARS has been a long-term project and one that has interactions with LTOS. So part of the delay has been in terms of aligning between MARS and LTOS and/or MARS and also the Mineral Resource Act regulations and wanting to ensure that it is purpose built. So just trying to

see where we are at exactly right now briefly, Mr. Chair.

There's -- we are at a point now where we're anticipating that the MARS will be ready for -- within the next fiscal year and -- well, depending upon the coming into force date precisely of the MRAR regulations and then final -- the final MARS tools would come and be ready thereafter for between the -- in the following fiscal year in 2027 and 2028. I am could certainly -- I am happy to provide more information by way of a written response if that would be more helpful, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am sure I and AOC would welcome that written response so I will leave it there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there any further questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$275,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving to the next activity.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$2,613,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, reading through the detailed itemized list of infrastructure projects not completed in 2025-2026, I note that there is not any mention of the degradation of the Twin Falls Park. Was that not on the books for 2025-2026? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't recall the state of that project. If it was not on this list then it didn't have -- it may not have met the definition for a carryover or again -- or whatever amounts were required last year may have been expended and completed. So, again, I will have to -- it's not in a circumstance warranting a carryover but that doesn't necessarily speak to the state of the project. But I will have to get that information for the Member. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Nothing further on that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Are there any further questions? Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to know if there's anything that is set for, I guess, work done at Alexandra Falls. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, again, there may well be work planned for the coming year at Alexandra Falls. Again, without the full capital budget in front of me I don't want to rely on my memory entirely. This would only be parks or park projects where money that was allocated for the 2025-2026 year wasn't fully utilized but where a project was already in progress and that they needed to carry forward amounts that were not spent into the coming year so that the work could be ongoing. And there's some specific definitions for that. But there may well be work planned for the coming year on Alexandra Falls, only just that it -- again, it may not have required carryover in order to continue. It may well be that it is underway and that the money is being expended like as planned or as -- yeah, as planned. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Nothing further, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$2,613,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$3,038,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$12,387,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And on asset management, you get deferred maintenance of \$375,000. Can you elaborate on that, please. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with respect to deferred maintenance, this is -- oh, a few small different projects, Mr. Chair. There's a boiler replacement, Somba K'e water tank replacement, Harry Camsell generator. So all fairly small items and all expected to be completed over the current summer season. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Highway No. 8 reconstruction, \$3.5 million. Where and when is this reconstruction going to take place? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, there's a couple of things that are underway here. There's some widening and rehabilitation work happening between Kilometres 242 to 240. That's ongoing. And there's some gravel production also required for ongoing resurfacing for a wider range, roughly 260 to 272. That too is at its procurement stage that is in order to conduct the next stage but -- so yeah, both of those are ongoing, Mr. Chair, and that's the reason for the carryover. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Mackenzie Delta.

**MR. NERYSOO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Are there any further questions? I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And this lists a plow/dump truck. Where is that truck going? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is going to Behchoko.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, that's it. I was hoping for one in Providence, so. Thank you. That'll be my ask. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$12,387,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving on to the next activity.

Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, strategic infrastructure, energy, and supply chains, not previously authorized, \$4,988,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On this one, given that it has been identified so clearly as one of the top priorities of this government, I am curious to know how it's possible that about \$5 million of approved funding lapsed in 2025-2026 for the Mackenzie Valley Highway project. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** I am sorry, Mr. Chair, I missed the crux of the question. If I could ask her to please repeat. My apologies.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I mean, so I am curious to know how it's possible that for a project identified as one of the very top priorities of this government that about \$5 million in approved funding could have lapsed in 2025-2026. You know, knowing that we certainly know that sometimes priorities shift or less attention gets put on certain projects and then maybe funding will lapse or it won't move ahead as quickly, but for this project in particular, which, you know, we hear about almost constantly and is identified as a top priority, why is it that \$5 million in funding last year has lapsed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, there's a lot that's happened in this project since -- well, even since a year ago, arguably even since six months ago. And not the least of which is that there was an expectation at one time, roughly a year ago, that we would be in public hearings at this point. We're now not. But we're not for good reason which was that we entered into a work plan with Pehdzeh Ki First Nation and did the realignment work on the first hundred or so kilometres of the routes so that to better align with their view of what and how we should be accommodating their traditional uses and their traditional knowledge awareness of the area. So that changed some of what the funding would have otherwise been spent upon with respect to public hearings.

As well as which now, Mr. Chair, with the referral to the major projects office, there's been a lot of work that we would like to give -- we would have been doing for only the first phase of the project. Now, Mr. Chair, we're much more engaged with doing the whole route. So rather than just doing the first phase community engagements and discussions and meetings, we're re-examining the way to accommodate doing the entire route and to do so in a way that is most appropriate and streamlined. So it's just that the work is shifting, and so the way that the money was allocated to be spent is now not necessarily -- wasn't necessarily where it was needed. So there was certainly enough money to get all that work done in the last while; it's just that -- and now as we move forward, we'd be looking at having, you know, again, as I said, that -- the public hearings will be likely this fall, again, subject to the confirmation and direction of the board which would then use up that funding and technical studies and design work for the second half might now take place. It can be -- the design work can be completed on the first phase, which, as I said, was, I think, quite reasonably delayed or appropriately delayed. And just mindful of time, I will stop it there, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** That's all for me. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was a very detailed explanation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, strategic infrastructure, energy and supply chains, not previously authorized, \$4,988,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving to the next activity.

Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$2,930,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, programs and services, not previously authorized, \$2,930,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Infrastructure, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$20,305,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will now consider the Department of Justice on page 16.

Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, corrections, not previously authorized, \$623,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, corrections, not previously authorized, \$623,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Moving to the next activity.

Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$2,879,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am curious about the courthouse upgrade, why it's been taking so long, why these amounts keep getting delayed. If the Minister could elaborate on these particular amounts and their delay. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a couple of different projects at the courthouse with respect to washroom accessibility, first, Mr. Chair. That is expected now to be in completion by this fall with the construction starting over the current summer

season. That was modified in light of some of the other work that was happening so that it better aligns, but there were that -- the delays, I believe, were asked. There were some delays with respect to just not having all of the supplies on site and so there was a delay there waiting on certain materials to arrive. But as I said, with those arriving and with alignment on other work, that is expected to be completed by the fall.

On the larger or additional courtroom renovations that are taking place and different upgrades, that is still, as I believe, in a design stage, Mr. Chair. There is an updated schedule being prepared right now. It's going to be multi-year but we are expecting planning, design, and construction to begin now, which is the -- or have been, which is the reason for the carryover. It will be continuing through at least until the 2028-2029 fiscal. Mr. Chair, just to be clear, this is a -- you know, it's a security -- there's security improvements that will involve multiple floors as well as the exterior, and so that is the reason for a more lengthy delivery period. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the accessibility pieces in particular would interest me, not to belittle any of the other pieces that are also important, but the accessibilities, in particular, it's interesting that it's taken this long. This was based on, I believe, a human rights complaint. Has the department learned any project management lessons or is it because of the supply chains? What is the -- what was the holdup here? Was it accessibility to contractors, that sort of thing? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think part of the challenge on this particular project was that there may have been some delays in terms of the awarding of the contract, that it had to be re-tendered, so -- and with that, Mr. Chair, that immediately took some additional time.

As for a wider or bigger lessons learned or type document, that is often a consideration that is undertaken after a project. I don't know whether this would meet the criteria for that, but I can certainly make that inquiry and get back to the Member. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to that update, and I cede my time.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the value for money of the Yellowknife courthouse is a longstanding concern of mine. And I know it seems like every year we are throwing more money or continuing to lapse money that we're throwing at this courthouse. In the past, there have been commitments from governments to look at this value for money issue. I know in the past there actually have been studies that have shown it is not good value for money. So is there any update to that point? Are we looking at continuing to rent and spend a significant amount of taxpayer dollars on building improvements for an asset we don't own in perpetuity, or are we going to make a more long-term sustainable choice to ensure we have best value for money? Because this asset is going to continue to eat our resources to a significant degree. We're not talking about minor improvements. We're talking about multi-million dollar improvements. So I don't know if the Minister has any perspective on that. I've brought this up before. I think other Members have as well. And it seems like it's just, we'll study it, we'll look at it, and then it never gets looked at. So what is the perspective on continuing to dump money into, again, an asset that is the only courthouse in Canada, I believe, that is not owned by the public? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so obviously -- I shouldn't say obviously. With the supplementary appropriations here in front of me, I don't have detail on the wider examination that has taken place over the course of many years, arguably repeatedly, with respect to the courthouse and whether or not a full courthouse project should be undertaken to build new, or even to potentially buy a building versus continuing to make leasehold improvements. There certainly are other courthouses in Canada that are in various, you know, malls and office buildings, etcetera. Maybe not, you know, Supreme, Superior Court. Actually I don't know which ones. I know there are others, Mr. Chair. But looking, really, just at our own situation that analysis has been done, as I said, on multiple occasions. Obviously with the supplementary appropriation not being on that issue, I just don't have that information in front of me. I can say the cost to build a purpose-built courthouse or to buy one is very significant and was not considered to be a good investment given the needs of the territorial government to be funding other projects in the spaces of health care and education, which would fall entirely to

our responsibility as would, very likely, the courthouse. So whether or not that balance has fallen on the idea of doing what we need to ensure that we meet the safety standards and the safety needs of the staff and persons that are delivering justice services and not to invest in an entire purpose-built courthouse. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, you know, I appreciate that we, on this side of the House, often ask for schools, for medical centres, for things, all sorts of pieces of infrastructure that are important to our communities and rarely do we hear from our constituents that a courthouse is the number one priority. But that's not really the point I am trying to make here. The point is more that the current arrangement is non-efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and that is relevant to the government's fiscal position, so -- and I know you don't have all the details here -- or the Minister doesn't have all the details here, but we are talking about this money, and it is relevant to the project.

The Minister mentioned in this exchange about potentially buying the asset. How much work has gone into that? I know there's been a lot of work that's been done on building a purpose-built building which, I mean, is probably in the hundreds of millions of dollars at this point given the security concerns and the land availability and all that. So let's put that to the side because I don't think it's viable in the short, medium, potentially even long term. But certainly buying the asset from the current -- yeah, buying the asset seems like it could be an option. Has that been pursued or explored at all? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, so I can't speak with having documents or analysis in front of me. I don't have that here with respect to the supplementary estimates that are tabled. There have been, you know, over the last several years, single-digit millions of dollars spent over the last few years just to make appropriate and necessary renovations to ensure that the building was one that could be used for justice services. The last estimate I had for a new purpose-built courthouse was in the order of over \$200 million. As far as buying the building, I don't have an estimate here but, you know, again, a large building, if the new cost is \$200 million, I am going to venture to guess that an asset is probably worth something fairly

significant. And, again, so I don't have the latest numbers here. I do believe there's been some work done in the past on exactly that question. I just don't have that here at the supplementary appropriation. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. All I will say, Mr. Chair, is if there's any information or updates around that value-for-analysis piece, I think it's important that we at least be able to speak to it when we are considering any amount of investments in facilities that are not owned by the GNWT that require significant leasehold improvements around operational concerns like security and not -- and that are used as public facilities. So that being said, I have no further questions but I do hope that information can be made available to the public and to myself. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I am going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

**MRS. YAKELEYA:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. I don't have any questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$2,879,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Justice, capital investment expenditures, total department not previously authorized, \$3,502,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Members, there is a schedule on page 17 that details the impact of capital estimates. This schedule is not a votable item and is included as information only. Are there any questions on this schedule? I will go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So when I add up all of the spending that was previously authorized and then lapsed that were, you know, asked to carry over to this coming year, just for capital investment expenditures almost \$210 million of the \$286 million was previously authorized and was not able to be spent in the previous year. And out of the total voted

amount -- total voted appropriations, \$344.5 million. So, like, the lion's share in both cases were previously authorized. So to me, this may raise concerns about whether we are still approving unrealistic amounts of capital or infrastructure expenditures that we're not able to spend in any given year.

And I know that in the last Assembly, a sort of target or cap had been identified of around \$260 million of that being around the maximum amount that we can realistically spend, like get projects going, get enough, you know, labour, get, you know -- to actually spend that money in the territory in a given year.

Can the Minister comment on why the amount of lapsed capital investment was so high from 2025-2026 and whether there's been consideration of changing that cap or further limiting how much we planned for in terms of capital expenditures. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, unfortunately, the tabled document I have doesn't have page 17 on it but I -- so I hope I am hitting the same numbers that the Member has.

The information that I have is that the total carryover of \$85 million is actually only about 16.2 percent of the planned budget, which is fairly low. There will be changes year to year for a variety of reasons, whether supplies, materials, challenges with having to re-tender or re-go back through a procurement process, there may be no bidders sometimes. And then certainly with various supply chain challenges that can occur to -- whether to -- you know, at multiple stages and it only can -- easily take one community emergency for a project to be delayed. So being 16.2 percent is not -- I wouldn't consider that very unfavourable, and it actually is an improvement over the last few years. So back the year before that, 2024-2025, that was 19 percent. And in 2023-2024, it was 34 percent. So we are on a downward track, Mr. Chair. And certainly don't want to make it seem like we don't want to continue to improve even further but just to say that putting -- doing things like having the cap, the total cap, and hopefully with some of the changes that have happened in procurement and also with -- in terms of capital planning processes that have been shored up over the last few years, we can continue to see improvement in that percentage. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I will clarify, I guess that -- I guess, when I talk about the lion's share of funding, it's the lion's share of funding that we're seeing in these sups, not the total capital budget from the entire year. So I do admit that. So it's good to hear that the total percentage of the year's worth of capital planning -- or capital budget was about 16 percent.

But given that there's still, I would say, a significant amount of lapsed funds and the fact that we are sort of staring down potentially vastly increased capital expenditures in the territory, both through our own proposed major projects and federal defence spending, is there any worry that going forward we're going to be able to spend most of our -- or all of the money we set aside in capital budgets or whether we'll start to struggle even more to find, you know, labour, supplies, given so many additional capital projects that we're expecting to see in the near future? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Chair, I think it would probably be imprudent not to worry. The question is what steps we will take to continue to mitigate. So, again, some years ago the situation was far worse. The carryovers were significant. There was -- so there's been increases in terms of the internal planning, with an ADM planning committee and a peer review committee, to ensure that projects are actually ready to proceed before we allocate government dollars and public funds to them. Then there is, of course, too, the capping so that there's not just -- you know, there is certainly a draw to putting all projects forward because people want to see projects move but if they're not ready to go, then there needs to be some often difficult decisions made and the cap on the total infrastructure department budget does require that.

With respect to what will be happening over on department of defence and the three major projects, the department of defence projects are not led by us; they are led by the department of defence who do have their own capital planning processes. We are trying to align with them to ensure that there's not an overtaxing of labour resources. That certainly is one that does give a fair bit of pause, I would suggest, and one where a lot of work could happen.

And, Mr. Chair, on the three major projects, each one is at a different stage and so, you know, again, between the expertise within the major projects and our own efforts, my hope is

that we will be in a position to ensure that we align the timing of those projects in a way that they are delivered appropriately. Thank you.

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

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I expect this will be an ongoing topic of conversation, but I will leave it there for now. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. Are there any further questions from Members? Okay, seeing no further questions. As this is a non-votable item, we will move on.

Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 521-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027? Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 521-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** I will go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION – Tabled  
DOCUMENT 521-20(1): SUPPLEMENTARY  
ESTIMATES (INFRASTRUCTURE  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 1, 2026-2027

**MR. RODGERS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that consideration of Tabled Document 521-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 521-20(1) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? Motion carried. Tabled Document 521-20(1) will be reported as ready for consideration in a formal session through the forms of an appropriation bill.

---Carried

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

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 522-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2026-2027. Does the Minister of Finance wish to bring witnesses into the House?

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chambers. Again, I will go to the Minister. For the record, please introduce your witnesses.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay. Does committee agree to proceed to the details contained in the tabled document? Committee?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Committee, we will begin on page 3 and 4 with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, early learning, not previously authorized, \$4,885,000. Are there any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, early learning, not previously authorized, \$4,885,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education, not previously authorized, \$26,901,000. Are there any questions? I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note under this activity that the funding to support activities under the national action plan to end gender-based violence agreement is moving. Can the Minister explain where the money is moving to. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, ECE has completed the tasks that they had under this particular funding and so the money that they had is just shifting to other departments who are still undertaking some work. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just for clarity's sake, I recognize that there are several departments that do action various initiatives under this funding. Has this been earmarked for a particular department? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, Mr. Chair, this is going to EIA. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And is all lapsed funding or funding that may not have been expended going to EIA under this agreement? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe it's only ECE that has a surplus amount. And so in order to not lose access to what is federal dollars, it's going over to EIA that administers funds that have application based and they are tend -- if I recall correctly of these funds, they are often oversubscribed so this gives a bit more allocation to them. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Great Slave.

**MS. REID:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to cede my time for now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Next, I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask about the inclusive education monies that are indicated here in the amount of \$24,110,000. The commitment in the last main estimates process was \$30 million or more to support inclusive education after the review was complete. So can the Minister explain the gap between -- or the variance between what was promised and what we're seeing on the page. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Happy to do so. Indeed the commitment was for at least that amount, and as the work was undertaken to determine what would be necessary to achieve the goals of the inclusive schooling review within that dollar bracket or dollar range, the amount actually, I think, works out to be slightly more; however, because of the school year it's prorated. This amount is the prorated amount that comes in for April -- from April 1st to the end of the school year, and then a new portion will come in for the new school year in September. The supplementary estimate only deals with an amount that is required right now, not for an amount that would be required for -- that we could deal with with respect to the budget for -- I am sorry, I think I said to the end of this year but it's to the end of our fiscal year. And then when the April 1st budget gets dealt with next winter, we would be dealing with a subsequent full year funding for the inclusive school program. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. So what is the -- Mr. Chair, what is the total amount, then, that is to be delivered to education bodies for inclusive education? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so education bodies, from now until end of March, they get, being on a prorated basis, \$22,110,000. There's additional funding that is included also with inclusive schooling to support students, support assistant training, as well as universal screening for elementary -- early elementary school years and that -- with those two other amounts, that makes up the \$35 for the current fiscal year. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Before I go back to the Member from Range Lake, we're just going to switch up the Chair for five minutes. I will ask the Member from the Deh Cho to fill in.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Member for Range Lake. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I just want to make sure I am getting this, that I've answered the question fully. So let me just, if I could.

So there's a base funding amount where, ultimately, it's expected that education bodies will be getting \$33 million plus another amount that goes for the screening program and to

support training for student support assistants. But then, as I said, that gets prorated and that's why the amount that you're seeing for the current fiscal year is a bit less than that. I hope that answers the question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Member for Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the \$33 million, so I am just looking for just the inclusive education money. I know that the early screening piece was a commitment as well and the educational assistant piece as well. But just for the money that was arising out of the inclusive education review, that's the \$33 million and that's -- is that ongoing, kind of the new base funding -- formula funding for inclusive education to all ED bodies that they can expect going forward year on year? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is the amount -- I mean, I would bundle in the screening and the training programs as being part of the review and therefore that's why they are part of the sup, this portion of the sup. And obviously would want to just denote, while obviously this came up in the course of budget negotiations and so, therefore, I would think it's probably safe to assume that I can expect that this will be positively received from -- in the Budget 2027. It is not in yet Budget 2027. We only have the sup at this point in time which gives -- that's -- again, this is where the -- the fact that the school year and our fiscal year don't align makes it a bit awkward. So there's a smaller amount that's prorated. The full amount would come on April 1st of next year and would then be part of the full budgeting process. I don't have the full budgeting process in front of me. But once we do, and again assuming the support of the House continues, as I expect that it likely will, that's where you'll see the full -- a full 35, with 33 going to the education bodies and the remainder for the screening which supports -- which students need supports, and then the training for those that are delivering those supports. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Member for Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. That is helpful to get clarity on that number. And now the next part of that work is to understand how far those dollars go in meeting the needs of inclusive education, and those are conversations we'll have at the standing committee level and no

doubt as individual MLAs for our respective communities.

Moving to the money for the North Slave Campus. I note that that's a holdover, but can we get an update on that project. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, so at this point in time the North Slave campus redevelopment, this is still at a planning stage. The amount that's seen here is to support planning, preliminary design, and some initial technical assessments, including the space planning, so that the GNWT and Aurora College have a better handle on the feasibility of using a different space and what the cost would be to get that space to a place that is usable. And then with that information, more final decisions could be brought forward to determine if, in fact, it's feasible for there to be a renovated alternative space as opposed to some other approach to how to deliver a new college campus. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you. Member for Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And when is this work expected to be completed? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I don't have a final date here. I will have to get back to the Member just to confirm what an expected date would be. Apologies for that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Yakeleya):** Member for Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Okay, turning to the bachelor of education and social work, I am particularly interested with the Bachelor of Social Work program considering the challenge we have with recruiting and retaining northern social workers who have knowledge of the cultural and community backgrounds which they serve in the Northwest Territories. So a program like this is, of course, very desirable. We hear that it's making good progress and we can expect to see it roll out. So let's get a status update on that considering -- yeah, considering this is fresh dollars to support that effort. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Yakeleya):** Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, yes, this program is on track. With this supplementary appropriation, it will be on track for a fall 2027 launch so that students can be accepted into the program in the fall of 2027. This current supplementary estimate is to develop the curriculum. So it does take some time to develop a curriculum that will be fully accredited, and that is what the purpose here is. And with that and with the funding coming at this stage and early on, that does keep us on track so that the intake, as I said, can start in time for a fall cohort of 2027. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Yakeleya):** Thank you, Minister. Before we go any further, I am going to switch chairs with Mr. Edjericon. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi. Sorry, I will go to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the only thing -- I mean, it would be great if the campus could be completed in the fall of 2027 for all those new enrolments. Has the Minister been able to find that information, or is she going to have to commit to get that to me at a later date? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are anticipating -- I can say there's an expectation that Aurora College will have a report back sometime in the next -- well, between now and -- I was going to say, I guess sometime in mid spring but spring is almost already partway over. So in the next couple of months. I don't have a final or specific date, so I will have to get back with a more specific date on when they have that analysis done. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go back to the Member from Range Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, I -- you know, I am always concerned about money we're providing to third parties when we don't have very clear deliverables attached to them, especially when it relates to this institution. So I do hope that they are able to complete this on time and we are able to understand if -- see this redevelopment go through. I hope that they can hit those targets on those two degree programs, and I hope that the inclusive education money is enough to meet the needs of our student bodies. So with that, I have nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to a Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask, for the anticipated new Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Social Work programs at Aurora College, is there an estimated timeline for when those programs will be up and running and accepting enrolment, or are we still too early in the process for that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair -- sorry, Mr. Chair. I just got used to the other one. Mr. Chair, yeah, we're expecting to have curriculum over the course of the coming year which will bring the college on track for a 2027 cohort to start. Thank you. Fall 2027. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Member from YK North.

**MS. MORGAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is encouraging, as those two programs, I believe, are going to be essential and certainly already desperately needed as we have shortages of teachers and social workers and desperately need people from our own communities to be taking up those professions. I will leave it there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to a Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. I just want to ask the Minister because it says here, you know, to provide funding planning and design work to advance the redevelopment of a Yellowknife campus or North Slave campus. So going forward, what is the plan for this government or the GNWT regarding the Thebacha campus in Fort Smith? Because they have a beautiful campus and they have a lot of student housing. In Yellowknife, there is a limited student housing. Not only that but a lot of those places where -- like, some of the apartment is infested with drugs activities, crimes. I am just worried. Like, what is the plan for the Thebacha campus going forward? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. While I don't have details about any ongoing planning that may or may not be happening to support or change Thebacha, there is no change in the supplementary appropriations here relevant to that. There is no expectation of change at this point or removal

of the Thebacha campus at all. It will continue. It is a beautiful campus. So, again, no changes contemplated at this time, and no changes contemplated in the sup.

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

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Well, with less students attending the program, I know eventually if it's not being used, eventually it's going to shut down and I don't think I would like to see that happen, you know, because there's a lot of -- like I said with housing, a lot of -- because of the shortage of housing in small communities, many of our members they move the Yellowknife with their families and same thing. So what's going to happen, is there a plan here if they're going to be -- to advance the work on redevelopment of Aurora campus or Yellowknife -- Aurora College? Are they going to be creating more student housing? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, again, Mr. Chair, there is no intention of taking away campuses but of ensuring that each one is meeting the needs that they each have within their areas of expertise. The Yellowknife campuses at this point in time don't have a facility that meets the needs of the students that are attending the programs that are housed or stationed here in Yellowknife, so that's where this supplementary appropriation is intended to find an opportunity that will hopefully provide a campus more quickly than something that is purpose-built and perhaps -- and I would say hopefully -- something that is more cost effective than having to be building something brand new. But, again, that's the investigation that's taking place right now, and that's the purpose of the supplementary estimate. But I -- it's not my understanding that there's any intention of removing any one of the three primary campuses at this point in time. Again, I -- you know, I am tempering that with just saying I don't -- I don't have any information outside of what's in the sups but there's -- certainly, my understanding is there's no intention to do so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Another one too is that I know that trades is a major issue for -- I mean, you know, where there's a lot of shortage of trades, especially in small communities. So I don't see it here but, I mean, like, later on in the future, like, is the

education going to be supporting community-based training for students that do not want to leave their communities, especially when there's a shortage of housing in small communities and especially in -- and in Yellowknife? So the only place that they can be provided with guaranteed housing is in -- through the Thebacha campus. So I just wanted to know if there's any plan to develop community-based training in small communities. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so again, there's no request for funding outside of the budgetary cycle that would bring it to the supplementary estimates process. In that purpose aside, however, I would point to there is funding that is being sought here under the workforce tariff response. So that is an opportunity to extend some of the workforce development programs that do exist, and there's an opportunity to take advantage of some federal funding in this regard and this helps provide support for individuals to participate in training workshops, both to upgrade their skills or to develop specific trade skills, as well as some opportunity for folks who may be in a self-employment position. So not necessarily specific to trades but who may be wanting to use their trade or their skills in a self-employment capacity.

So with respect to supplementary appropriations, that's -- there is some extra money being sought for that purpose. But as far as a wider or different change, there's nothing additional right now at the supplementary appropriations stage for additional trades.

I guess one last note on that space, Mr. Chair, I will -- there is ongoing work happening at the SNAP program to ensure it's accepting students into the fall more seamlessly. So there is a lot happening in this space. It's just not necessarily being reflected in a budgetary change in the sup. It may be already in existing appropriations that we all voted on back in the fall -- or in the winter with the budget. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go back to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. You know, a lot of our people, especially from small communities, that really benefited from attending the Thebacha campus -- or well, at first it was ABTC and then later on they said it was a -- or Thebacha campus. We had a lot of teachers, social workers, renewable resources officers, business education, and all other

trades program graduated from Thebacha campus. I mean, now that a lot of them are retired. When our people attended that, there was a lot of housing and they built more houses afterwards to accommodate the northern students. And that was prior to Nunavut too. So I just -- you know, I know there's problems everywhere, especially with social issues, but the housing is the one that I am kind of really worried about. I would like to see more -- if community based is not going to be happening with some programs, like teacher education program be extended to small communities, I would like to see more going back to Fort Smith due to housing. So I guess that's something that the government has to work on. It's just that it's really greatly needed. And so with that -- with that in mind, it says here -- that's more of a comment.

But here it says to provide funding to develop the curriculum and do delivery of the bachelor of education and social work program. Those programs were there already. Why are we spending \$1.7 million to redevelop? I mean, it's there. Why are we spending more money to that when -- and then we have to wait a whole year, one year. So what is the reason -- what is the reason behind this that we have to -- like, we need teachers and we need more social workers too. Why do we have to wait one year? Why not just, you know, go back to what we had before? Yes, there's some changes that we can do but we're spending a lot of money to just redevelop, and we've been without this program since 2017. So I just want to ask the Minister why are we spending all this money to redevelop when that program already existed before. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, indeed, that is -- I think the Member mentioned it was back to 2017. There have been no admissions and no program in either education or social work since that time. So this fall is just shy of 10 years and with that, Mr. Chair, I know that the college does take its accreditation very seriously. With the transition that it's trying to make to being a polytechnic institute, it has recently gone through an accreditation process. So with that, they'll want to -- they'll need to ensure that any degree programs that they offer meet that accreditation standard, which for the college was certainly not in place or expected back in 2017 at which point they would have been sharing the -- any degree programs with southern institutions. So trying to move to a position where they can offer those degree programs and have that capacity as they transition to a polytechnic and as they gain that accreditation. It does take some time.

So at this point in time, though, it's only a year. And there certainly is a time crunch. There certainly is a need for both teachers and social workers. And so the faster the better. But that's why it's coming as a sup and not waiting for the budgetary process. If it was -- if we waited until the winter, then we'd be several months out and much more difficult, if not impossible, to get to the 2027 fall. By recognizing the opportunity and bringing it as a sup, that is a case where -- where despite being outside of the usual budgetary process, it does try to move this as fast as possible. Because I totally agree with the Member's point, that this is -- both of these are areas of high need. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. Is there another Member -- or question from the Member from Monfwi?

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, so these two programs are very important for many of our people. So where is this program going to be delivered, in Fort Smith and/or in Yellowknife? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe, Mr. Chair, that at least at this point the staffing and program design is taking place here in Yellowknife. The Fort Smith does traditionally offer sort of the trades programs and that will continue. I believe these two programs were traditionally -- previously were in Yellowknife, and I -- as I said, my information at this point in time is that the development is taking place here. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Member from Monfwi.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** No, no, it's a shame because we do have a beautiful facility, like I said, in Fort Smith and that not to offer these programs over there, it's not helping many of our community members that want to leave to take teacher education program and/or social work program due to no housing, due to lack of housing here in Yellowknife and in Fort Smith. At least they will have a place to go to. They will have a place to stay. So it's -- I do feel -- I feel like, you know, due to -- with a lot of our programs and services or programs delivery, moving to Yellowknife, that community like Fort Smith where we -- a lot of our -- a lot of the achievement came out of there, even from, you know -- it's just that it's going to go to a waste. It's going to be a waste. You know, like we -- they spend millions and millions of dollars upgrading the college and for the housing as well, and go to Yellowknife where there's limited housing. For me, I strongly feel that this

program should be delivered out of Fort Smith. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Member from Monfwi. Question.

**MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** So ten years ago, the program was cancelled because it was not working. I know there was a lot of issues that, you know, previous government mentioned.

So accreditation, so it took ten years to accredit. Why did it take that long for this program to be accredited? Like, I mean, it's just -- like, what's the reason behind it? Why it took ten years when we know that this program is greatly needed and especially for many of our Northerners? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. I will go to the Minister.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so the previous nursing and social work programs were cancelled in 2017. The work towards turning Aurora College into a polytechnic began after that and obviously is continuing now, and the accreditation process that they are -- that they underwent started only, I believe, this year or just shortly before the start of 2026. So the accreditation process has just taken a few months, but new degree programs that we are undertaking will want to fall within that accreditation. So it has only taken a few months to get to this point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon):** Okay, thank you. We're going to stop there. I am going to excuse the witnesses. Oh sorry, I am going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

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

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

---Carried

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the chambers. And thank you to the Minister and thank you to my colleagues. I will now rise to report progress. Thank you.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, Bill 41, and Bill 48, Tabled Document 45-20(1), Tabled Document 483-20(1), Tabled Document 521-20(1), Tabled Document 522-20(1), and would like to report progress with one motion carried. Bill 41 is ready for third reading, that consideration of Tabled Document 521-20(1) is concluded, and the House concurs in those estimates and that an appropriation bill is to be based thereon and be introduced without delay. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. May I have a seconder? The man from -- person from Sahtu. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion carried.

---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. Glen Rutland):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Social Development will meet at the rise of House today.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 2nd, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
6. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
7. Returns to Oral Questions
  - Oral Question 1249-20(1), Regulation of Prediction Markets
8. Acknowledgements
9. Oral Questions
10. Written Questions
11. Returns to Written Questions
12. Replies to the Commissioner's Address
13. Petitions

14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 50, Marine Transportation Corporation Act
  - Bill 51, An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Election Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 49, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, No. 2
  - Bill 48, An Act to Amend to Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2
  - Tabled Document 445-20(1), 2025 Review of Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Compensation and Benefits Report
  - Tabled Document 483-20(1), 2025-2026 Electoral Boundaries Commission Final Report
  - Tabled Document 522-20(1), Supplementary Estimates (Operations), No. 1, 2026-2027
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
  - Bill 41-20(1), An Act to Amend the Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 2nd, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:48 p.m.