

GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE REPORT CR16-17(5) ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2013-2014 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Background

The Comptroller General and his staff were pleased to have the opportunity to review the Government's 2013-2014 Public Accounts with the Standing Committee on Government Operations and looks forward in the near future to the opportunity to review the 2014-2015 Public Accounts with Committee.

In response to the Report on the Review of the 2013-2014 Public Accounts that was tabled on June 2, 2015, I provide the following responses to the Committee's recommendations contained within:

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations again recommends that the Minister of Finance provide the Committee with the interim public accounts by August 31, in time for Committee review of the Government's business plans.

GNWT Response

The 2014-2015 Interim Public Accounts will be shared with the Standing Committee on Government Operations by August 31, 2015.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations again recommends that the Department of Finance continue to work with the Auditor General of Canada and GNWT departments, boards, and agencies to complete the interim and final public accounts at the earliest possible date each year and in time for their respective statutory reporting deadlines.

GNWT Response

The Department of Finance is working closely with the Auditor General of Canada and GNWT departments, boards and agencies to ensure that the audited Public Accounts are prepared as soon as possible and within statutory requirements.

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Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations again recommends that, as part of the standard reporting process, the Comptroller General include a list of public agencies in the consolidated public accounts that did not meet the deadline for completion of their audits.

GNWT Response

The Comptroller General will again provide Committee with a list of the public agencies that did not meet their reporting deadlines.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Government Operations again recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories continue to provide updated timetables or schedules for the environmental assessment of all known potentially contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible, to be included annually in the public accounts.

GNWT Response

The GNWT will continue to track and disclose its known and suspected contaminated sites within the Public Accounts in a manner that is compliant with Public Sector reporting standards.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that, to enhance transparency, the Government of the Northwest Territories improve the quality-of-reporting in the public accounts, including providing a detailed explanation of how the government met the requirements of its Fiscal Responsibility Policy for the year in question.

GNWT Response

The Department of Finance will enhance its disclosure related to the Fiscal Responsibility Policy within the Financial Indicators section of the Public Accounts.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that, in the interests of transparency and accountability, the Department of Finance share the findings and recommendations of the Internal Audit Bureau with the Committee in confidence, particularly where the Government of the Northwest Territories relies on those findings and recommendations as substantiation for actions taken.

GNWT Response

Internal Audit Bureau provides independent assurance and advice to senior officials within the GNWT, whereas the OAG performs the same role for GNWT elected representatives to the Legislative Assembly. Therefore, disclosure to the Committee of

IAB findings and recommendations related to a particular audit would only be appropriate if it formed an integral part of a Department's response on a particular question that Committee had related to the Public Accounts.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Finance require all public agencies to include a management discussion analysis in their year-end reports.

GNWT Response

The Department of Finance has requested that, effective April 1, 2015, all boards and agencies that do not produce an annual report include a management discussion and analysis section within their financial statements.