



# **18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories**

## **Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning**

Report on the Progress Review of the  
Mandate of the Government of the  
Northwest Territories, 2016-2019

Chair: Mr. Tom Beaulieu

## MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIORITIES AND PLANNING

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Tom Beaulieu, Chair  
MLA Tu Nedhé-Willideh

Kieron Testart, Deputy  
Chair  
MLA Kam Lake

Frederick Blake Jr.  
MLA Mackenzie Delta

Julie Green  
MLA Yellowknife Centre

Daniel McNeely  
MLA Sahtu

Michael M. Nadli  
MLA Deh Cho

Herbert Nakimayak  
MLA Nunakput

Kevin O'Reilly  
MLA Frame Lake

R. J. Simpson  
MLA Hay River North

Shane Thompson  
MLA Nahendeh

Cory Vanthuynne  
MLA Yellowknife North

### COMMITTEE STAFF

Doug Schauerte  
Committee Clerk

Lee Selleck  
Committee Advisor



**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PRIORITIES AND PLANNING**

**REPORT ON THE PROGRESS REVIEW OF THE  
MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, 2016-2019**

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIORITIES AND PLANNING**

### **REPORT ON THE PROGRESS REVIEW OF THE MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, 2016-2019**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE MANDATE**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's decision to set out a four-year mandate for its term represents an important evolution of consensus government. For the first time, all 19 Members agreed on defined actions to advance the priorities they set. These were set out in the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 and approved unanimously in the Assembly. More importantly, the mandate is the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly's promise of action and performance to residents of the Northwest Territories (NWT).

It is appropriate at the half-way mark of our term that this Assembly takes stock of progress on the work we set out to do. Members of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning – that is, all Regular Members – offer this report as our contribution to the process of taking stock. We want to make sure that we are doing our best and correct our course if we are not. We have made every effort to be fair in our evaluation of the work done to date. We are fully prepared to be accountable to the public in doing so.

No government's performance is perfect and we are no exception. Our review of progress in delivering on our mandate is an opportunity to learn from our mistakes as well as our successes. This review is also the first, evidence-based step in the Mid-Term Review process our Assembly adopted in its initial year of work. It is significant that the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly is the first in the NWT's history to provide such a detailed public accounting of its goals and progress.

The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning acknowledges the hard work done by Cabinet, Regular Members, and the public service to realize our aspirations for the NWT. We stress that effective consensus government is the art of finding common ground, listening carefully to each other, and compromising when it is in the best interest of our territory.

## **EVALUATING OUR PROGRESS**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly set many diverse goals to achieve by 2019. It is the job of four standing committees to closely monitor the government's progress, providing input to Ministers and holding them accountable to the Assembly. The four committees are the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning; the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment; the Standing Committee on Government Operations; and the Standing Committee on Social Development. Each has either five or six members.

To begin this progress review, each committee reviewed each mandate item for which it is responsible in its oversight of the work of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). Each committee revisited its correspondence with Ministers and briefing materials, referred to the government's "Status of Mandate Commitments" website, and reviewed the government's Annual Report on Implementation of the Mandate, 2016-17, tabled on March 6, 2017. In addition, Members provided observations on the effectiveness of work done from their own experience and the perspective of their communities and regions. On the basis of this information, each committee rated progress to date and commented on each mandate item for which it has oversight. These assessments were further reviewed by the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning. The final results can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Each standing committee also considered general progress on the key themes of our mandate: Economy, Environment, and Climate Change; Education, Training, and Youth Development; Cost of Living; Community Wellness and Safety; and Governance. The views of all standing committees are taken into account in this report, which represents the consensus of all Regular Members.

## **OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRESS**

### **Fiscal Strategy**

In 2017-2018, the Government plans to spend \$1.7 billion to deliver programs and services, plus \$266 million for infrastructure and capital projects. Skilled financial management is essential and must be rooted in a fiscal policy that ensures the government can meet its on-going obligations. Reliable projections of revenue and expenditures over extended periods are crucial elements of effective fiscal policy.

Cabinet properly takes these duties very seriously, and this is reflected in the high-quality updates and forecasts provided by Finance to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning. Management of public finances is good, and an excellent job has been done to minimize the cost of the government's borrowing. Members recognize that diligence in this area brings stability and ultimately, the ability to reach the goals we have set in our mandate. For this, the Government is to be commended.

While we agree on the need for fiscal responsibility, there are deep differences of opinion in what this entails.

Ensuring the ability to address mandate priorities does not mean this ability was exercised. Many priorities are not being met. In drafting the mandate, Cabinet proposed a reduction target of \$150 million for operating expenses. This provision was deleted by majority vote in the Legislative Assembly. Regular Members do not support such deep cuts given prevailing economic and social conditions.

Despite the Assembly's rejection of the \$150 million reduction target, it persisted as Government policy through the 2016-2017 fiscal year and into 2017-2018, driving a major reorganization of Government, large program and service cuts, and diverting Government's energy and resources from the mandate. This caused a four-month wrangle before the Committee and Cabinet reached a compromise on the 2017-2018 budget to fulfill some of the most important measures to improve the lives of residents and nudge the economy in the right direction. It is the Committee's view that a consensus of the Assembly was dismissed by Cabinet for far too long, deflecting time and effort from advancing our collective priorities. This must not be repeated. The Committee strongly recommends a more collaborative process in the future if we are to live up to the promise of our mandate while also reducing our debt. The Committee has suggested moving quickly on the mandate items to boost employment and health outcomes, for example, and lower demand for costly government services. We repeat that advice today while the next budget is in its drafting stages.

Regular Members remain concerned that action on the compromises reached for the 2017-2018 fiscal year will be slow to roll out, and that lingering support for a more extreme reduction target will influence Cabinet's willingness to deliver on these aspects of the mandate. The Committee is confident that the Government will invest strategically in people and infrastructure as it has promised. Doubt is sown among Regular Members when funding is regularly found for initiatives supported by Cabinet, but not mandate items strongly supported by Regular Members. Consensus government cannot prosper without good faith between Regular Members and Cabinet.

The Committee shares the Government's concern over the slow growth of federal transfers expected in the next few years. These funds account for approximately seventy per cent of the Government's revenue. Members advise that Cabinet focus even more energy on the Federal Engagement Strategy to secure funding to safeguard the environment and adapt to climate change, build key infrastructure, diversify the economy, and to support and invest in our people. The recent addition to federal support for Aboriginal languages is a good example of what is required. Social development and immigration are important to our future, as well as physical infrastructure.

## Common Issues

Action plans, strategies, and frameworks now cover many priority areas, and describe many positive measures to be taken to benefit the NWT for decades to come. However, action plans are not outcomes. Only two years remain in our term to advance badly-needed actions and produce meaningful results for the people, communities, and economy. Some action plans lack evaluation tools. These should be developed up front as part of every action plan so that results can be measured. Care should also be taken to ensure that activities identified to support mandate commitments are directly related to the spirit and intent of that commitment. Activities not directly related to a particular mandate objective should not be considered as progress in that area.

The Committee also notes an imbalance in the planning taking place for some projects as compared with others. While action plans were written to guide critical spending on mandate priorities, “monster projects” such as mergers of Departments and staff layoffs were quickly given the green light. Junior Kindergarten’s implementation, started in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, grew into a monster project in our term and was seriously mishandled.

Several such problems could have been avoided had Committee input been heeded by Cabinet. It is also common for an action plan, framework, strategy, or terms of reference for a project to be provided to a standing committee for comment with a deadline of two weeks or less, sometimes with the warning that any delay will interfere with timely implementation. Such short deadlines for input are sometimes impossible to meet, prevent meaningful consultation, and show a lack of desire to receive considered advice from Regular Members, eroding the relationship between Committees and Cabinet.

These instances undermine Regular Members’ confidence in crucial communications from their executive branch. In some unfortunate cases, Regular Members have learned of large investments and controversial policies in the media or from reporters seeking comment. These cases inevitably distract from the issues at hand, and undermine the Government’s reputation inside and outside the Assembly.

Poor communication has also affected the legislative agenda, a key area of work for both the Government and standing committees. Amendments to the *Education Act* and the creation of the revolving fund for the Yellowknife Airport are cases in point, yet neither were mandate priorities. The Committee is concerned about the slow pace of legislative change generally, and particularly with respect to responsibilities for lands and resources gained through devolution from Canada. In addition, the legislative agenda is not well connected to the mandate.



## **Results of Our Evaluation of Progress on Mandate Priorities**

With a few exceptions that demanded it, the Committee has rated progress on individual mandate items as Good, Acceptable, or Poor. In several instances, a Fail rating was issued. The full results are set out in Appendix A, with our comments on each item.

The breadth of the Assembly's collective goals is impressive; our mandate is very ambitious. The bar by which we now measure ourselves is high.

In that light, the list of Good and Acceptable results is heartening. The Committee congratulates our Cabinet colleagues, their departments, and the public service in every area where progress has been considerable. This progress is built on a tremendous amount of work.

Unfortunately, there is also a long list of priorities on which progress is poor or nonexistent. The Committee stresses that we did not expect completion of all these goals, some of which will continue for decades; we are only evaluating progress. Areas showing poor progress should serve as a strong message to Cabinet that improvement is required. It is also significant when the Committee deems progress acceptable but makes qualifying remarks.

The Committee hopes the public will find this report useful in holding Cabinet and Regular Members accountable for the mandate we have set out. We look forward to your constructive input and advice.

## **Economy, Environment, and Climate Change**

Many issues related to the economy, environment, and climate change are longstanding, namely the need for sustainable energy sources, diversifying our economy, and strengthening transportation corridors. Mandate commitments in these areas should be given high priority, and specific outcomes targeted for completion within the next two years.

Improvements are being made in the development of northern arts and tourism, but the closure of the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre – with its decades of experience and 4.5-star rating on TripAdvisor – is a grievous loss.

The NWT must move quickly to seize opportunities in fishery, forestry, and agriculture, improving the labour market, and enhance its readiness at all levels for mining, oil and gas, and major transportation projects. The long-awaited Agriculture Strategy has been released and the Government is clear in its support for community gardens. Funding needs to be specifically allocated for the implementation of this and other strategies. Actions to promote harvesting and distribution of country foods have yet to be implemented, and the development of strategies on the use of oil and gas resources

and northern manufactured products is lagging. Support for entrepreneurs and small business is essential to promoting economic growth and diversification. Frontline services must be streamlined and red-tape reduced.

The bold decision to purchase and operate the marine assets of the former Northern Transportation Company preserves a vital service for many communities from Hay River to the Beaufort Delta. Freight service on the Mackenzie River is important to many sectors of our economy and community well-being. Committees are closely scrutinizing the rebirth and on-going development of this business, under the GNWT flag as Marine Transportation Services.

The impacts of climate change have significant and noticeable effects in the NWT. Communities, wildlife co-management boards, industry, and government are all grappling with changes, and the NWT needs to respond proactively. Progress on both a new energy strategy and climate change strategic framework has been very slow, and the Government has been reluctant to adopt a carbon-pricing model. These are examples of overarching strategies targeted for completion within the mandate of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly that must speak to as many aspects of northern life as possible.

### **Education, Training, and Youth Development**

Lifelong learning, skills development, training, and employability are major priorities of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, but progress in these areas has been difficult and slow. Government initiatives on junior kindergarten and school instructional hours have demanded a significant proportion of the Department's and Committees' limited time. The Department's progress was continually challenged by funding shortfalls and poor, inconsistent communication.

The cost and availability of childcare is a growing concern, but the Department is not on track to fulfill its commitment to a universal daycare action plan within two years, nor does its planning distinguish between childcare programming and the education system.

Progress is being made to revitalize Aboriginal languages, yet funding for Inclusive Schooling and Aboriginal language and culture-based education has not been allocated for new junior kindergarten students.

The Committee has also repeatedly seen the divergence of the Government's and Regular Members' vision of post-secondary education in the territory. Members have called for legislation to enable the establishment of a northern university, for which we continue to await a legislative proposal, and for a broad range of local academic and technical programs responsive to educational and labour market needs. In seeking to eliminate the Teacher Education and Social Work programs at Aurora College, departmental initiatives have instead disregarded authoritative labour market forecasts

and sought to narrow local course options and to close some community learning centres. This programming was preserved only through advocacy by Regular Members and public pressure.

However, some successes have resulted from collaboration and compromise. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has lately been responsive to some, though not all, Committee recommendations on junior kindergarten and school instructional hours. Government advocacy secured much-needed federal funds for the support and preservation of the territory's Aboriginal languages. Advocacy from Regular Members enhanced the existing Small Community Employment Support Program and reversed reductions to school staffing and Aurora College programming. Members also productively engaged the Department on actions plans on Skills 4 Success, apprenticeships, and culture and heritage, and on the renewed Aboriginal languages framework, helping the Government to move these projects forward.

### **Cost of Living**

Housing is at the root of difficulties we face in addressing the cost of living. Without housing security, many Northerners face severe challenges in seeking and securing education or employment, in maintaining and fostering their health, and in raising happy, healthy families. We cannot expect prospective new residents to make their homes in communities where homes are not both available and affordable. Together we have made significant strides, and the NWT Housing Corporation has fulfilled its mandate commitments to date. Nevertheless, our territory's housing crisis has only deepened and we must revise our approach. The Housing Corporation's budget has been reduced over the last two years, while our constituents – our neighbours – are sometimes living in terrible conditions, overcrowded and lacking continuous heat and/or running water. This Legislative Assembly must take action and our mandate must reflect the urgent need to find a solution. We must add to public housing stock, complete "aging in place" renovations in seniors' and elders' homes, and ensure that local housing organizations are supported by functioning boards. With renewed federal interest in housing, this should be a priority of our engagement with Canada.

Increased support for the Nutrition North program and indexing of Northern Residents Deductions to inflation are also mandate items in need of attention.

Efforts to reduce the cost of living are closely tied to commitments related to the economy, environment, and climate change, and to education, training, and youth development. The current and previous Assemblies have identified areas where the cost of living could be reduced, with lower rates for electricity, improved community infrastructure and connectivity, increased food security, improved childcare cost and availability, access to sustainable, adequate and affordable housing, and reduced dependence on imported fossil fuels.

Overall, progress on mandate commitments has been limited. Although a difficult task, the NWT has the collective capacity to work toward solutions. Indeed, there is no other option but to do so. We risk further population decline (and the subsequent dwindling of the territory's revenue base and already limited economies of scale), driven by the high cost of living and compounded by changes in the climate and the economy.

If meaningful progress is made in these areas, the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly will have achieved critical objectives and set the stage to reduce the cost of living for the long term.

### **Community Wellness and Safety**

Housing, family violence, and services for seniors are among the most serious matters facing the NWT within the "social envelope." Work on these matters must focus on systemic improvement and grassroots action.

The Committee has seen significant work on mental health, particularly youth mental health, but Members remain concerned that the tendency toward frameworks and action plans will continue to unnecessarily delay critical action. All Members are committed to supporting Northerners to age in place in the comfort and security of their homes and communities. Similarly, we know that all Members understand the urgency of looming long-term care capital needs. The Committee commends the Department of Health and Social Services for its detailed analysis of these needs and its plan to prepare, including tackling chronic conditions to reduce future demand for long-term care. However, the plan for continuing care is long overdue and holding up urgent action and spending. In the here and now, the Government must ensure that all 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly funding allocated to aging in place is spent for that purpose, including both home renovation programs and homecare supports.

As we are all too aware, the territory has the second-highest rate of police-reported family violence in the country. Such violence bars women and children from their human right to safety, security, and free participation in public life. The evaluation and renewal of the A New Day healing program for men who use violence in intimate partner relationships has been a failure. Service continuity has been disrupted, stakeholders and clients alienated, and a largely successful program fundamentally altered. Regular Members have advocated strongly for this program and will continue to do so, and we must also concentrate on the roots of family violence – misogyny, colonization and the residential school experience, and economic inequality.

Northern youth are intelligent, resourceful, courageous, and resilient. Once again, the Committee cannot overstate our collective need to tackle systemic problems such as food security, the housing crisis, low employment, and poverty, not simply symptoms such as poor health or low educational achievement. Poverty cannot be escaped simply through changes in attitude; there must be investment to bring about change, especially for young people who are disproportionately affected. Northern youth and young families do not deserve the burden of making the best of a bad situation.

Instead, we must together improve their situation; greater collaboration between Departments is required.

Although the mandate did not include implementation of 9-1-1 emergency telephone service in the NWT, Members requested funding for it during the review of the 2017-2018 Business Plans. Members acknowledge the positive response by Cabinet, resulting in \$616,000 for 9-1-1 implementation in 2017-2018 and on-going operational funding.

## **Governance**

As noted earlier, the Government relies on the Government of Canada for about seventy per cent of its annual revenue. This amounted to \$1.447 billion in 2015-2016. The relationship between the GNWT and Canada is vitally important to the growth and prosperity of the NWT.

The GNWT's intergovernmental relations office in the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs is headed by the Premier. This office coordinates the GNWT's participation in a number of federal, provincial, and territorial intergovernmental meetings and forums, such as those of the First Ministers, Canada's Premiers (Council of the Federation), the Western Premiers' Conference, Northern Premiers' Forum, and Arctic Council, along with a great number of bilateral meetings with provincial and territorial Premiers. This work is guided by the GNWT's federal engagement strategy.

A number of mandate commitments are rooted in the federal engagement strategy; for example, the commitment to work with the Government of Canada to increase the federal Northern Residents Deduction and index it to inflation (Item 3.5.1), increase investment in Nutrition North (Item 3.5.6), and pursue more federal funding for the enhancement of community government infrastructure (Item 5.4.4). The full extent of the GNWT's engagement with the federal government would be more evident if progress was better reported publicly, as this work is often done "behind the scenes" with little engagement of Regular Members.

With respect to the GNWT's relationship with Aboriginal governments in the NWT, the Committee is concerned that work is not proceeding quickly enough to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding with each Aboriginal government that wishes to be a party to one. The Committee also questions what real impact these intergovernmental agreements have at the ground level. We encourage Cabinet to seek input from Regular Members and consider ways to report on progress arising from these agreements, and incorporate that into its open government initiative.

The Committee also looks forward to progress arising from the reports of the Ministerial Special Representatives to Premier McLeod and federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett. The Committee notes that government negotiators

made revised offers to the Northwest Territory Métis Nation on May 24, 2017 and the Akaitcho Dene First Nations on May 25, 2017. The Committee respects the confidentiality of this process and, if and when the offers are made public, looks forward to assessing if Premier McLeod has met his commitment to “innovative, flexible approaches that will result in fair and equitable agreements” with Aboriginal governments.” However, while a working group of Cabinet and Regular Members was established, it has accomplished little. Members’ input was not sought prior to the recent offers to Aboriginal governments.

The relationship between Cabinet and Standing Committees could be improved with greater partnership and emphasis on implementing our goals. For example, the Committee is pleased with the recent legislative proposal for an NWT ombudsman, an initiative which Regular Members particularly wanted included in the mandate, and which builds on years of work.

Finally, the relationship between the GNWT and the municipal and designated-authority communities across the NWT should not be overlooked. The Committee echoes the Auditor General of Canada’s advice to improve the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs’ support for communities. The Department is also responsible for administering important statutes that impact municipal governance, such as the *Civil Emergency Measures Act*; the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*; and the *Fire Prevention Act*. The Committee urges attention to the Department’s legislative agenda to make much-needed improvements to this legislation within the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

The Government is to be congratulated for achieving gender parity in its appointments to boards and agencies, and for supporting workshops to help women get into politics. The same cannot be said for the promised communications campaign to increase women’s participation in politics. The Committee has seen no evidence of progress in this area.

## **CONCLUSION**

Considerable progress has been made toward realizing our mandate priorities, but there is much room for improvement. We have set out broad directions for more focused attention. Specific comments and targeted areas for improvement are outlined in Appendix A, which for convenience follows the format of our mandate. Performance on the individual items listed below is a detailed accounting of progress on our mandate and the state of our promises to the people. It bears repeating that we are fully accountable for this record as Regular Members and Cabinet. We must deliver on our promises or be accountable for not doing so.

The Committee looks forward to our next steps and to updating the mandate to guide our work over the next two years.

## Appendix A – Progress Review of Mandate Commitments

### ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Good 3      Acceptable 14      Poor 18      Fail 2

#### 1.1.1 – Department of Transportation – Good

*We will capture opportunities for investment in transportation infrastructure by working to secure funding to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway, make an all-weather road from Highway 3 to Whati, and improve access into the Slave Geologic Province.*

The Committee agrees that progress is being made toward fulfilling this commitment to the fullest extent possible during the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and suggests that Item 1.1.1 be updated to reflect specific objectives within the second half of the term.

#### 1.1.2 – Department of Infrastructure – Acceptable

*We will strengthen connections with private sector partners in transportation infrastructure, such as encouraging CN Rail to continue improving the rail line to Hay River to serve resupply needs and expand the system in accordance with demand.*

The Committee agrees that progress is being made in building a meaningful partnership with CN Rail and recommends that Item 1.1.2 focus on rail infrastructure and that the Yellowknife airport revolving fund be removed from the progress report as long as the airport is under full public administration.

#### 1.1.3 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor

*We will strengthen connections with public sector partners in transportation infrastructure, such as encouraging Fisheries and Oceans Canada to maintain federal community resupply port facilities and marine services in the NWT, to restore safe marine operating conditions in the Port of Hay River and at key sections of the Mackenzie River Corridor, and to improve charting and navigational aids*

The government relies heavily on Fisheries and Oceans Canada in work toward fulfilling this commitment and progress is slow. The condition of the Port of Hay River has been worsening for many years and should be a higher priority.

#### 1.1.4 – Department of Finance – Acceptable/Poor

*We will continue to implement the government's Hard-to-Recruit initiative to link regional job vacancies with potential employees and on-the-job training for residents.*

In looking to the online background note for information, the Committee hoped to learn what has been achieved since the start of the current Assembly, not just since the inception of the program in 2014. The Committee is concerned that not enough is being done to improve employment opportunities and create government jobs in the smaller communities. The Committee is disappointed that the decentralized jobs promised with devolution have not materialized.

### **1.1.5 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will get more 18-24-year-olds into the labour market by using a better mix of improved educational attainment and skill development, while matching skills with employer needs through improved career development supports.*

Members engaged productively with the department on the *Skills 4 Success Action Plan 2016-2020*, but are disappointed by the failure to incorporate labour market forecasts into departmental planning. To the larger commitment, it is not yet possible to measure any change in the number of working 18-24-year-olds. Future government reporting should include statistics on general labour force activity, as well as employment through the GNWT Summer Student Employment Program and the Small Community Employment Support Program. See also Item 2.5.1.

### **1.1.6 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will take steps to close the skills gap using the Skills 4 Success strategic framework, and by working with Aurora College on a renewed strategic plan, refocusing support for post-secondary institutions in NWT, improving outcomes from our Community Learning Centres, strengthening the apprenticeship program, and improving our career development services.*

The Committee is disappointed by the divergence of the department's and Regular Members' vision for post-secondary education. Members have called for the establishment of a northern university and for a broad range of local academic and technical programs responsive to holistic educational and labour market needs. In seeking to eliminate the Teacher Education Program and the Social Work Program, departmental initiatives have instead disregarded accepted labour market forecasts and sought to narrow local course options, proposing to close some community learning centres. This programming was preserved only through advocacy by Regular Members and public pressure.

### **1.1.7 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment / Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will increase the number of immigrants working in NWT and increase investment by immigrants, by implementing an immigration strategy that prioritizes streamlining application processes, increasing awareness of immigration programs, and consolidating our administrative supports.*

The Committee is pleased with the departments' progress in these matters and support planned initiatives. It further recommends that Item 1.1.7 be revised to include a government commitment to collaborate with the federal government to advance territorial immigration initiatives relating to family reunification.

### **1.1.8 – Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will support mineral exploration and the mining sector, by implementing the Mineral Development Strategy, capturing opportunities to build transportation infrastructure that enables resources to get to market, closing the skills gap in the mining sector, implementing the Mining*



*Incentive Program, developing and proposing a Mineral Resources Act, and supporting Aboriginal governments to build capacity in dealing with mining-related activities*

The government continues to support mining and mineral development, subject to global economic forces.

#### **1.1.9 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Fail**

*We will develop a long-term strategy to attract oil and gas development in the territory.*

The government has failed to deliver an oil and gas strategy within timeframes indicated to Members and the public or make meaningful progress toward this strategy so far. Revised timeframes have not been communicated. Funding has been reduced to public service capacity relating to petroleum resources, which limits the territory's ability to advance project readiness or to respond when oil prices recover.

#### **1.1.10 – Department of Lands – Poor**

*We will ensure that residents have meaningful opportunities to participate in the assessment of potential benefits and risks associated with resource development, including hydraulic fracturing.*

Resource co-management workshops in Norman Wells and Hay River were by invitation only. Regular members were not updated on the launch of the Resources and Energy Development Information program during the first half of the term. There has been no progress on improved communications and engagement on hydraulic fracturing.

#### **1.1.11 – Department of Finance – Poor**

*We will complete the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link in order to help modernize the economy and enable growth in all economic sectors.*

The government's failing grade in Item 1.1.11 stems from its poor management and failure to communicate adequately with Members about project progress and challenges. The Committee notes the many delays, environmental issues, and legal disputes between consortium member Leducor Developments Limited and its subcontractors that have dogged the project and been reported extensively in the media. Members are concerned about the potential for residual financial costs that might need to be covered by the GNWT in future as a result of these problems. The Committee seeks assurances that Cabinet intends to proceed with the second component of the project, which would see the connection of Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, Deline, Fort McPherson, and Colville Lake to the fibre link by microwave technology, and a timeline for this work. Cabinet has also delayed the Western Arctic Geomatics Centre that was to be done in conjunction with the Link to help diversify the regional economy.

#### **1.1.12 – Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs – Poor**

*We will support the growth of Aboriginal business development corporations and the capacity of Aboriginal governments, through the completion and implementation of memoranda of understanding that reflect the economic opportunity objectives found in modern land claims.*

The Committee is unimpressed by the government's lack of engagement of regular MLAs and public reporting of outcomes related to these memoranda of understanding (MOUs). The Committee is interested in learning the rationale for the 2019 target date for completion of the MOUs and asks that consideration be given to advancing this date. The Committee recommends public reporting on developments related to the MOUs, particularly as it relates to the growth of Aboriginal business development corporations, and tracking of compliance.

#### **1.1.13 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will develop and implement a strategy to increase employment in small communities.*

The success of this project is of great interest to Regular Members, whose advocacy obtained a \$3-million enhancement to the Small Community Employment Support Program in 2017-18. The Committee supports planned community consultation, but emphasizes that program funds must be used and that the program must transition from wage subsidy to job creation. It also recommends that Item 1.1.13 be revised to reflect a government commitment to develop and implement a plan for delivery of program funds and for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability.

#### **1.1.14 – Department of Finance – Fail**

*We will reduce taxes on small businesses.*

Regular Members are extremely disappointed that no progress has been made on this initiative. The Department of Finance claims to be working on research for a paper referred to as the Small Business Tax Filer Program, yet the online mandate tracker does not indicate any progress and the department has not indicated any direction or timeline for completion. The analysis should be done and provided to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review before tax reduction is implemented. The Committee wants to learn how the reduction of small business corporate tax would impact the GNWT's tax effort as it relates to territorial formula financing.

#### **1.2.1 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will expand the agricultural sector by developing and implementing an Agriculture Strategy.*

The Committee is pleased with the framework developed to date. Funding and timelines should be clearly identified to bring about the transformative change set out in the Agriculture Strategy. The Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Lands must collaborate to resolve land access and tenure issues so that all regions of the NWT have the opportunity to participate in agriculture development and focus on building food security in each of our communities.

### **1.2.2 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Good**

*We will invest in artist-to-market and product-to-market opportunity chains, with a particular emphasis on making investments that enable the showcasing of art and increase sales at the regional level.*

Efforts are ongoing to raise the profile of northern artists and ensure local craftspeople understand the marketing opportunities and other resources available to them. Committee notes that there has been little to no increase in funding support for arts and culture programs, but this sector offers tremendous opportunities for growth and diversification.

### **1.2.3. – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will support the film industry to further develop the skills and competencies of NWT film producers, build infrastructure, assist below-the-line crew and support services, and help develop marketing and communications plans for films made in the NWT.*

Adequate support is available to filmmakers, but resources must continue to be made available along with targeted investments based on consultation with northern film industry stakeholders to enhance northern productions and expand opportunities for the film industry in the NWT.

### **1.2.4 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Poor**

*We will finalize and implement the Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Strategy to increase fish production, encourage and mentor new entrants to the Great Slave Lake fishery, negotiate an agreement with the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation to access markets outside of NWT, seek federal funding to build a new fish processing plant in Hay River, and work with the Tu Cho Co-operative to promote and market fish caught in Great Slave Lake.*

The revitalization of the Great Slave Lake fishery is a high-priority initiative. The NWT must move quickly and strategically to seize available opportunities and remove barriers to full implementation of the Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Strategy, outgrow reliance on the failing Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation, and improve access to domestic and export markets for fish.

### **1.2.5 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Acceptable**

*Through agreements with communities, we will help to establish and/or expand self-sufficient businesses that sell products from renewable resource harvesting.*

The wood pellet plant in the South Slave is receiving support and new forest management legislation is being developed.

### **1.2.6 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Poor**

*We will develop a northern manufacturing strategy in collaboration with industry and the NWT's Manufacturers' Association to expand the manufacturing sector, identify potential areas of growth, promote and market products manufactured in the NWT and aid in the professional and technological advancement of the industry.*

The Committee expected to see a draft strategy based on consultation with northern manufacturers and for northern manufactured products to be marketed and promoted beyond government procurement.

**1.2.7 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will provide high quality public tourism facilities by modernizing our parks infrastructure and signage, erecting emergency shelters along remote highways, and expand tourism options by building new parks such as Doi'Toh Territorial Park in the Sahtu Region.*

Noting varied levels of progress on fulfilling this commitment, the Committee recommends that Item 1.2.7 be separated into its multiple components to measure progress for the remainder of the term.

**1.2.8 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will increase exports by working with the tourism, diamonds, and traditional economy sectors to promote NWT products to international markets.*

Progress is being made, but marketing opportunities for products such as fish remain under-developed.

**1.2.9 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Good**

*We will attract foreign direct investment, and cross-promote minerals, furs, fish, forest products, and tourism to investors and markets.*

Efforts toward settling land claim agreements will provide certainty to prospective investors and further enhance progress in this area.

**1.2.10 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will build partnerships to expand resources available for community-based traditional economy programs, which could be used to support, amongst other things, local operators, culturally-based tourism, and the conservation economy.*

Progress is being made and partnerships must continue to be identified and maintained.

**1.3.1 – Department of Lands / Department of Environment and Natural Resources/Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs – Poor**

*We will use the Land Use and Sustainability Framework to be clear and transparent.*

Some progress has been made in individual subject areas, but regions vary widely in terms of outcomes so far. The Committee is critical of progress made toward the completion of land use planning work, as well as progress made on fully assuming post-devolution responsibilities. The Committee largely feels that the government's efforts in this area post-devolution demonstrate its lack of priority.

No demonstrated progress indicates that the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs is fulfilling its responsibility for overall collaboration with other governments. The

Committee also questions the extent of the Department of Finance's involvement in this initiative, given the requirement for development of a "sound financial security system to prevent public liabilities."

### **1.3.2 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Acceptable/Poor**

*In order to advance the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, we will evolve our legislative, regulatory, and policy systems.*

General progress is being made in this area and Members support the advancement of air quality regulations and legislative initiatives identified within this mandate commitment, but are critical of the lack of progress made on oil and gas legislation.

However, work on the Heritage Fund has not advanced. The government's annual contribution to the fund (25 per cent of the net fiscal benefit from devolution) was determined following a motion during the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Committee seeks the legislation of this commitment, to ensure that the government invests in the fund at the current rate and lets it grow. Members are disappointed that there appears to be no progress on this work to date. We seek a firm timeline for completion and improved public reporting on the status of legislative initiatives generally.

### **1.3.3 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will develop a strategy to manage the resources and potential economic and environmental benefits derived from household, commercial and industrial garbage from private sector sources and in our municipalities.*

Significant progress toward fulfilling this commitment is not evident, nor have updates been communicated to Regular Members and the public.

### **1.3.4 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Acceptable**

*We will continue to implement the Traditional Knowledge Policy and Framework across the GNWT, while working with Aboriginal governments to develop an action plan to improve the inclusion of traditional knowledge in program development, implementation and decision making.*

Noting how the Traditional Knowledge Policy and Framework predates the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, the use of traditional knowledge should already be well-established and incorporated meaningfully and consistently into government initiatives.

### **1.3.5 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will support the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program (CIMP) and respond to recommendations in the Northwest Territories Environmental Audit for improved environmental management.*

There appears to be little understanding or recognition of the primary role that the NWT Environmental Audit should play in terms of improving resource management. Item

1.3.5 should be revised to identify objectives for how improvements in environmental monitoring during the second half of the term and for implementation of environmental audit recommendations.

**1.3.6. – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Acceptable**

*We will negotiate with Yukon, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan towards the completion of transboundary water agreements.*

The NWT will benefit from the finalization of these agreements and Members strongly support progress being made in this area.

**1.4.1 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will develop a territorial climate change strategy that takes into account northern energy demands and the cost of living, while reflecting international and national commitments to lower greenhouse gas emissions, exploring options for carbon pricing systems, and capturing local alternatives such as hydro, biomass, wind, geothermal and solar.*

Regular members are unclear on the direction of the proposed Climate Change Strategic Framework. Given the global focus on environmental issues and the impacts of climate change on the northern environment, the NWT is in many ways a laggard in implementing a progressive and meaningful government-wide climate change strategy. It is not clear whether carbon pricing will be part of this work or how revenues might be used to further invest into renewable energy.

**1.4.2 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor**

*We will work with our partners in the territory and in the federation to implement a Canadian Energy Strategy, by participating in intergovernmental working groups on energy efficiency, energy delivery, technology and innovation, and transitioning our country towards a lower-carbon economy.*

The existing NWT Energy Strategy has lapsed in many areas and the Committee is unclear on meaningful progress and the direction of work toward this commitment.

**1.4.3 – Department of Infrastructure – Acceptable**

*We will participate in the pan-Canadian Task Force on Reducing Diesel in Off-Grid Communities.*

Participation on the taskforce is worthwhile and targets to get communities off diesel should be among the outcomes of the territory's involvement. It appears this initiative is drawing to a close so this Mandate item should be adjusted to create more meaningful targets and a schedule.

**1.4.4. – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Poor**

*We commit to assisting community governments as they innovate to address climate change by supporting the development of community government capital plans and asset planning, and ensuring that training recognizes the challenges of climate change.*

The action items in department's response to this mandate commitment are only tangentially related to the spirit and intent of the commitment. The Committee challenges the department to find more ways to encourage municipal climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as the use of pellet boilers, and encourages linking this initiative to the government's carbon pricing initiative. Electronic asset management will not be completed until some indeterminate date and according to the mandate tracker, a new climate change curriculum through the School of Community Government will not be introduced until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The department has not otherwise proposed any way to measure and ensure climate change adaptation by community governments. We echo the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General, in its 2017 audit of the department's support to community governments, which stressed that the department should not focus on achieving its planned activities, but upon measuring how these actions achieve positive and meaningful change in the lives of residents.

#### **1.4.5 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor**

*We will expand and improve access to incentives for residents to invest in energy-efficient products, help businesses, condominiums, and cooperatives invest in energy conservation and efficiency, support residents and communities so that they can make investments into renewable energies, such as solar, and improve the energy efficiency of public housing.*

Funding has not been increased in this area in recent years despite program uptake, the role of the Arctic Energy Alliance in improving energy efficiency across the NWT, and strong public support for this program area. Potential linkages to carbon pricing have not been articulated.

#### **1.4.6 – Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs – Poor**

*We will support Net Metering through clear policy direction to the Public Utilities Board (PUB), to provide certainty to allow customers to recover their investments in renewable energy.*

The Committee is not satisfied that this commitment goes far enough to ensure that customers can recover their investments in renewable energy. Direction to the PUB should not be based on existing policy, but upon a revised and improved policy. The Committee recommends that Item 1.4.6 be revised to incorporate a commitment that the policy will be reviewed and amended to allow people to rollover unused credits. The policy should be shared in draft form for input from the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

### **EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

**Good 1      Acceptable 9      Poor 4**

#### **2.1.1 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment / Department of Health and Social Services – Acceptable**

*We will implement the Right from the Start framework to invest in early childhood development.*

Overall, the departments' work on this broad and significant commitment has been acceptable. However, although the government has performed well in its work to revise the funding model and improve resource materials for licensed early childhood programs, the development of publicly-funded, play-based care for four-year-olds has been dogged by inadequate communications, limited collaboration, and procedural missteps, and Members assess the department's performance in this area as poor. Work toward the territory-wide implementation of midwifery services is acceptable, but progress must continue. Health services relating to early childhood development have not progressed sufficiently to enable proper assessment, but Members urge the departments to work closely together to assess and support three- and four-year-olds entering school in 2017-18. See also Item 3.6.1 and Item 4.3.4.

### **2.2.1 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will implement the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework.*

Departmental performance on inclusive schooling has been poor: full, JK-12 funding has not been made available to schools and the reported increase to program support teachers is just 0.75 of a full-time-equivalent position. Although the department cited the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework (ERI) in its proposal of Bill 16, *An Act to Amend the Education Act*, the Committee sees no meaningful connection between the ERI and the bill. Remaining commitments under Item 2.2.1 are underway and cannot yet be usefully assessed, but Members will continue to closely monitor the department's progress on much-needed work toward a renewed Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education Directive and a K-12 accountability framework. Members will also continue to monitor the department's work to propose shared services administration across territorial school boards.

### **2.3.1 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will take steps to close the skills gap using the Skills4Success strategic framework, by working with Aurora College on a renewed strategic plan, refocusing support for post-secondary institutions in NWT, improving outcomes from our Community Learning Centres, strengthening the apprenticeship program, and improving our career development services.*

See Item 1.1.6.

### **2.3.2 – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Acceptable**

*We will offer online delivery of community government training curriculum to build capacity for careers that focus on community governance.*

In the absence of measurable commitments, Committee felt there was not enough information provided to assess performance as "good." The Committee recommends that mandate item 2.3.2 be revised to include measureable indicators of success, for example, rates of enrollment, completion, or community participation.

### **2.4.1 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Acceptable**



*We will strengthen culture and heritage in the NWT by implementing a renewed Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education Directive in order to strengthen the role of schools in supporting Aboriginal language development and incorporate culture in programming, work with the Government of Canada towards a strengthened multi-year Canada-Northwest Territories Co-operation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages, develop an action plan for the Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework, and work with stakeholders to update the 2010 NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan: A Shared Responsibility.*

Members have participated in the development of the culture and heritage framework and the renewed Aboriginal languages framework, and are pleased with the new Canada-Northwest Territories agreement, but must also express their reservations. With the current pressures on Aboriginal languages, revitalization is a job that seems only to increase in difficulty. Members are wary of assigning communities the substantial task of pulling Aboriginal languages back from the brink without adequate and clearly defined support, and anticipate the application of new federal funds to this work.

#### **2.4.2 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will finalize, in conjunction with Aboriginal governments, co-management partners and traditional user groups, a culturally appropriate, made in the north, hunter education program for delivery in all communities of the NWT.*

More information and public communication is needed to promote this initiative, particularly given its importance and the involvement of Regular Members in shaping related legislation during previous Assemblies.

#### **2.4.3 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Acceptable**

*We will build partnerships to expand resources available for community-based traditional economy programs.*

Continued effort is required to promote the traditional economy through existing programs and investment based on stakeholder input.

#### **2.4.4 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Acceptable**

*We will continue to implement the Traditional Knowledge Policy and Framework across the GNWT while working with Aboriginal governments to develop an action plan to improve inclusion of traditional knowledge in program development, and in implementation and decision making.*

See Item 1.3.4.

#### **2.4.5 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Acceptable**

*We will work collaboratively with the NWT's francophone community to support French language education.*

Significant progress has been made to improve relations between the GNWT and the francophone community, and Members commend both parties. However, government

collaboration and communications must continue to improve. The Committee recommends that Item 2.4.5 be revised to specify concrete, measurable commitments.

#### **2.5.1 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will get more 18-24 year olds into the labour market by using a better mix of improved educational attainment and skill development, while matching skills with employer needs through improved career development supports.*

See Item 1.1.5.

#### **2.5.2 – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Good**

*We will implement the Youth Resiliency program in schools and during after school programs to help improve student outcomes and increase graduation rates.*

The Committee is satisfied with the GNWT's implementation of the Youth Resiliency Program. The Committee notes that while this may help improve student outcomes and increase graduation rates, it is difficult to identify the extent to which these changes are attributable to the success of youth resiliency programs versus other factors. Nonetheless, the Committee encourages the department to try to find measures that determine how the program contributes to improved outcomes.

#### **2.5.3 – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Acceptable**

*We will support opportunities for youth by ensuring effective youth programming such as the Youth Corps, Youth Contributors, Youth Ambassador Programs, Youth Centres, and Youth Tours.*

The Committee feels that youth programming should be occurring in the context of an overall plan. Program evaluations should be expedited and include criteria that can be used to measure effectiveness.

#### **2.5.4 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Acceptable**

*We will promote and improve student financial assistance to support NWT youth in developing the skills and abilities to meet their potential as well as territorial labour demand.*

The Committee is pleased with the department's performance in administering a program that is essential to territorial post-secondary participation and achievement. The Student Financial Assistance program requires continued government support.

#### **2.5.5 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will implement programs that support youth in their communities and in their schools to encourage local food production and consumption*

Progress in this area is tied to the implementation of the NWT Agriculture Strategy and success relies on the availability of appropriate human and financial resources.

## **COST OF LIVING**

**Good 4      Acceptable 11      Poor 13**

### **3.1.1 – Northwest Territories Housing Corporation – Acceptable**

*We will continue to implement northern solutions for northern housing.*

Together, all Members have made significant strides in our shared housing goals, and the Housing Corporation has delivered on the mandate commitments agreed upon at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. However, the territorial housing crisis has since worsened. Item 3.1.1 must be revised to reflect the growing urgency of addressing core housing need and the fundamental necessity for all local housing organizations to operate with functioning boards in place. This need is further detailed in Motion 19-18(2), which was unanimously supported by all Members.

### **3.1.2 – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Good**

*We will support community-based planning to help make land available for the construction of affordable housing and to support community governments in dealing with derelict properties in their community.*

The Committee acknowledges the importance of assisting communities with this work.

### **3.2.1 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Good**

*We will develop and implement a multi-year management strategy for barren-ground caribou in the Northwest Territories.*

The Committee recognizes work being done in the regions and the government's ongoing efforts in this area. However, some herds remain in a very precarious state. Most management efforts have been directed at harvest restrictions without any corresponding measure at habitat protection.

### **3.2.2 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Good**

*We will develop a range plan for boreal caribou in the Northwest Territories.*

Similar to Item 3.2.1, the Committee recognizes work being done in the regions and the government's ongoing efforts in this area. Greater effort at habitat protection is needed.

### **3.2.3 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will develop species-specific wildlife management strategies for wood bison, muskox, and moose.*

Limited progress appears to have been made or communicated to date. Item 3.2.3 should be revised to separate goals for each species-specific management strategy for the remainder of the term.

### **3.2.4 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will develop country food programming to promote opportunities for the consumption of foods such as fish, wildlife, berries, and mushrooms.*

Limited progress in this area has been communicated to date.

### **3.2.5 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Poor**

*We will finalize and implement the Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Strategy to increase fish production, encourage and mentor new entrants to the Great Slave Lake fishery, negotiate an agreement with the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation to access markets outside of NWT, seek federal funding to build a new fish processing plant in Hay River, and work with the Tu Cho Co-operative to promote and market fish caught in Great Slave Lake*

See Item 1.2.4.

### **3.2.6 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment – Acceptable**

*We will develop and implement an Agriculture Strategy to increase domestic food production, improve distribution networks for NWT-produced foods, and to increase producer and supplier opportunities.*

Concrete, measurable implementation actions with associated funding are needed to achieve Item 3.2.6. See also Item 1.2.1.

### **3.3.1 – Department of Infrastructure / Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will expand and improve access to incentives for residents to invest in energy-efficient products, help businesses, condominiums, and cooperatives invest in energy conservation and efficiency, support residents and communities so that they can make investments into renewable energies, such as solar, and improve the energy efficiency of public housing.*

See Item 1.4.5.

### **3.3.2 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor**

*We will create a new three-year energy action plan, building on previous investments made over the past three years and the outcomes of the energy plan review.*

See Item 1.4.2.

### **3.3.3 – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Poor**

*We will assist community governments to improve energy efficiency and conservation, to reduce the impact of climate change by supporting development of community governments' capital and asset plans, to ensure training includes challenges related to climate change, and enable community governments to set up revolving funds for energy efficiency measures.*

The department's asset management work is good, but the relationship of that work to climate change impact reduction is tenuous. Not enough work is being done to assist communities with energy retrofits, nor progress made on the feasibility of revolving funds for communities.

#### **3.4.1 – Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Poor**

*We will develop a territorial climate change strategy that takes into account northern energy demands and the cost of living, while reflecting international and national commitments to lower greenhouse gas emissions, exploring options for carbon pricing systems, and capturing local alternatives such as hydro, biomass, wind, geothermal and solar.*

See Item 1.4.1.

#### **3.4.2 – Department of Infrastructure – Acceptable**

*We will continue to investigate and implement renewable and alternative energy solutions to replace the use of imported diesel fuel for power generation in the Thermal Zone and reduce the use of diesel fuel for heating in all regions, including looking at the feasibility of wind energy, solar generation, geothermal and biomass energy initiatives.*

Item 3.4.2 should be revised to set specific targets for projects to be completed within the remainder of the term. Potential linkages to revenues from carbon pricing have not yet been articulated.

#### **3.4.3 – Department of Infrastructure – Acceptable**

*We will continue to explore the potential for the development of hydroelectric power and transmission lines, as well as the development of wind and solar energies to displace diesel generation while diversifying the NWT economy.*

In light of progress in this area, Item 3.4.3 should be revised to create a separate commitment for the Taltson expansion and the development of wind and solar energy sources.

#### **3.4.4 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor**

*We will better use our existing hydroelectric resources by exploring options to respond to low water in the North Slave hydroelectric power system, improve hydro system water monitoring and reservoir management, and find ways to make use of surplus Taltson hydroelectric power in the South Slave region and beyond.*

Little progress has been made in this area and no funding is identified for projects. The North Slave Resiliency Study did not suggest ways to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.

#### **3.4.5 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor**

*We will work with our partners in the federation and in the territory to implement a Canadian Energy Strategy, by participating in intergovernmental working groups on energy efficiency, energy delivery, technology and innovation, and transitioning our country towards a lower-carbon economy.*

See Item 1.4.2.

#### **3.4.6 – Department of Infrastructure – Acceptable**

*We will participate in the pan-Canadian Task Force on Reducing Diesel in Off-Grid Communities.*

See Item 1.4.3.

### **3.5.1 – Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs / Department of Finance – Poor**

*In collaboration with our partners in Yukon and Nunavut, we will work with the Government of Canada to increase the federal Northern Resident's Tax Deduction by at least 33 per cent, indexed to inflation.*

There is no apparent progress with respect to the work of the GNWT and its Yukon and Nunavut counterparts on the issue of indexing. The Committee would like to know what work is being done with territorial counterparts on this issue.

### **3.5.2 – Department of Infrastructure – Good**

*We will capture opportunities for investment in transportation infrastructure by working to secure funding to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway, make an all-weather road from Highway 3 to Whati, and improve access into the Slave Geologic Province.*

See Item 1.1.1.

### **3.5.3 – Department of Infrastructure – Acceptable**

*We will strengthen connections with private sector partners in transportation infrastructure, such as encouraging CN Rail to continue improving the rail line to Hay River to serve resupply needs and expand the system in accordance with demand.*

See Item 1.1.2.

### **3.5.4 – Department of Infrastructure – Poor**

*We will strengthen connections with public sector partners in transportation infrastructure, such as encouraging the Fisheries and Oceans Canada to maintain federal community resupply port facilities and marine services in the NWT, to restore safe marine operating conditions in the Port of Hay River and at key sections of the Mackenzie River Corridor, and to improve charting and navigational aids.*

See Item 1.1.3.

### **3.5.5 – Department of Municipal and Community Affairs – Acceptable**

*We will leverage available funding through the New Building Canada Plan to invest in community public infrastructure.*

Use of the word "leverage" suggests that the GNWT is matching federal funding with its own. The Committee recommends that Item 3.5.5 be revised to more accurately reflect that the government is assisting communities to apply for federal funding.

### **3.5.6 – Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs – Acceptable/Poor**

*In collaboration with our partners in Yukon and Nunavut, we will work with the Government of Canada to increase federal investment in Nutrition North by at least \$40 million over four years and seek improvements to the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the overall federal program.*

As with Item 3.5.1, the Committee questions the value of including federal initiatives in the territorial government's mandate. Members have no sense of the GNWT's position on this initiative and no indication of what the GNWT is doing to achieve the identified financial goal and seek program improvements.

### **3.5.7 – DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE – Acceptable**

*We will participate in all Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) proceedings that effect the north to ensure competitive and affordable broadband and telecommunication services for NWT residents.*

The Committee acknowledges the importance of monitoring CRTC proceedings and ensuring that the GNWT has input into decisions affecting the NWT.

### **3.6.1 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Acceptable**

*We will implement the Right from the Start framework to invest in early childhood development.*

See Item 2.1.1.

### **3.6.2 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Poor**

*We will develop an action plan for universal daycare within the next two years, including a timeline for implementation.*

This commitment will not be met, as the department proposes to produce a draft action plan for universal daycare by March 2018. The Committee also disagrees that the Junior Kindergarten Program (JK) meets the government's commitment to universal childcare. Education and childcare remain separate matters, and as not all four-year-olds will participate in JK, daycare will be required regardless. The Committee recommends that the department proactively engage with the federal government in its work on universal daycare.

### **3.6.3 – Department of Education, Culture and Employment – Acceptable**

*We will improve affordability of daycare, ensuring sustainability for operators of early childhood programs and expanding access to early childhood programs across the territory.*

While progress has been made through the fulfillment of mandate commitments, daycare costs remain exorbitant in many communities, with licensed care still unavailable in others.

## **COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND SAFETY**

**Good 4      Acceptable 17      Poor 4      Fail 1**

**4.1.1 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*To enhance access to culturally-appropriate programs and services, we will develop a comprehensive mental health and addictions framework.*

The Committee is pleased that the department continues work on these initiatives, particularly in the critical area of youth mental health, but is concerned that the department's focus on frameworks and action plans unnecessarily delays critical action. Members will continue to monitor youth mental health initiatives.

**4.1.2 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Good**

*Taking into account mental health and addictions, we will look at innovative ways to prevent and reduce crime such as integrated case management, wellness courts, domestic violence treatment options courts, and culturally appropriate correctional programs.*

The Committee supports the principles of integrated case management and urges the department to ensure service continuity during evaluation of the recent pilot project to prevent such problems as arose in the administration of the New Day program.

**4.2.1 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES / NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION – Poor**

*We will support elders to live in their own homes for as long as possible and ensure adequate supports are available for those who can no longer do so.*

The Committee is pleased with the completion of the review of territorial long-term care and look forward to the subsequent homecare review. The government has also performed well in its delivery of elders' complexes in several communities and its development of updated capital projects for long-term care. However, housing needs remain seriously under-served. Homecare is under-resourced, aging-in-place renovations are not being made in seniors' and elders' homes, and new complexes host empty rooms as people want to live in their own homes.

**4.3.1 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will continue implementing the Building Stronger Families action plan to transform child and family services.*

Members worked closely with the department to address shortcomings in compliance auditing. The Committee reiterates that the government must not lose sight of outcomes in measuring performance, but are pleased that long-awaited projects, such as the implementation of a new Child and Family Services Information System, are moving forward.

**4.3.2 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Acceptable**



*We will explore options for expanding beyond Yellowknife, the Mediation and Parenting after Separation and Divorce Program.*

The Committee is pleased that important family programming is expanding beyond the capital. Members have not had the opportunity to review new program materials.

#### **4.3.3 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will continue to support at-risk children and families through preventative and collaborative approaches.*

See Item 4.3.1.

#### **4.3.4 – DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT / DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will continue implementing Right from the Start to improve early childhood development.*

See Item 2.1.1.

#### **4.3.5 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Good**

*We will reduce the burden of chronic disease by promoting healthy lifestyles and improving screening and management.*

The Committee supports the continuation of successful healthy living programs, including Healthy Family Collective Kitchens, Drop the Pop, and smoking cessation programming. Members currently await a legislative proposal respecting tobacco control.

#### **4.3.5 – DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT – Acceptable**

*Expanding the production and availability of local foods such as fish, country food and garden produce.*

Efforts are being made to expand community gardens, promote local food, and leverage funds in support of this initiative.

#### **4.3.6 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will continue integration of the health and social services system to improve care for our people, by clarifying timelines, appointing people to Regional Wellness Councils and the NWT Health and Social Services Leadership Council, finalizing roles and responsibilities, and ensure seamless service delivery for all residents during the transition.*

Health system transformation predates the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. However, Members find that work has proceeded well and that the department has been responsive to committee engagement.

However, the fact that the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) remains outside of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NWTSSA) means that the health system transformation is far from complete.

#### **4.3.7 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will continue to work collaboratively to eliminate poverty in the NWT by funding community-based partners, convening meetings of stakeholders, finalizing indicators that allow performance to be assessed, and developing additional options for action.*

The Committee is pleased that the Anti-Poverty Fund has been increased and that annual roundtables continue. Members recommend that future roundtables reflect recent feedback, that the department draw on work at the national level to develop a definition of poverty, and that indicators for tracking and reporting be finalized.

#### **4.3.8 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will ensure effective supports and programs are in place for persons with disabilities by preparing an accessible inventory of the GNWT supports systems that already exist, and then by responding to previous evaluations of government supports.*

Members anticipate the release of an action plan by the end of June 2017.

#### **4.3.9 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will develop and implement a Northwest Territories physical activity strategy for all residents to improve health and fitness.*

The Committee acknowledges the department's work in this area, but feels that the project's objectives and timelines need clarification. The Committee is unclear as to the status of the *GNWT Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Review* and how it relates to the strategy that forms the basis for this commitment. It is also unclear how the proposed NWT Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Policy relates to a similar initiative underway sector-wide. An overarching strategy usually drives policy decisions, and the Committee is unclear why policy development precedes the strategy development in this instance.

#### **4.3.10 – DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Acceptable**

*We will finalize a strategic plan to enhance existing programming and build new partnership initiatives to support healthy and sustainable traditional lifestyles.*

The Committee recommends that Item 4.3.10 be revised to include target outcomes for the remainder of the term.

#### **4.3.11 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will promote volunteerism by ensuring effective programming such as the Volunteer Development Fund, Outstanding Volunteer Awards, NGO Stabilization Fund, and the Community Volunteer Recognition Program.*

The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Stabilization Fund is meant to stabilize and assist NGOs to deliver programs or services the GNWT funds and considers critical and which the GNWT would either deliver directly or engage another third party to deliver if the NGO were not able to do so. The Committee's understanding is the purpose of this fund is to assist critical service delivery, not to promote volunteerism per se and that it is misleading of the department to characterize it in this light. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has written to the Minister and the Premier requesting that fund administration be returned to the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and that the annual amount of the fund be increased from \$350,000 to \$500,000. Members have also requested that the review the funding policy and note that the department intends to review the Outstanding Volunteer Awards, despite the Committee's wishes. The department's entrenched position and lack of responsiveness to the Committee's concerns lowers the grade on this item.

#### **4.3.12 – Department of Health and Social Services – Acceptable**

*We will reduce poverty in the NWT by implementing the GNWT commitments in the Territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan, continuing to work with our partners to advance the plan and supporting communities' priorities for wellness*

See Item 4.3.7.

#### **4.4.1 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE / DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable / Fail**

*We will strengthen initiatives and partnerships to prevent and reduce family violence.*

Generally, the government's work has been acceptable. The Committee seeks departmental leadership in confronting the systemic causes of family violence to take preventative action, not simply respond after the fact. The "What Will It Take?" social media campaign, targeted at bystanders, is limited in scope. It is available only in two community cinemas and online, and its efficacy in either prevention or intervention cannot be usefully measured.

The Minister indicated that he would work with the shelters to develop a funding formula which would better address the needs of each shelter. Work has been done by the department, but this work has largely excluded the shelter network and individual shelters.

In its handling of the conclusion, evaluation, and renewal of the New Day men's healing program, the government has failed to be transparent in its communications with program administrators and other stakeholders. The Committee is not convinced there will be a smooth transition between the previous program and its new incarnation, or that the commitment will be met to deliver an effective healing program for men who use violence in intimate partner relationships.

#### **4.4.2 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Good**

*We will support the RCMP and communities in their efforts to strengthen partnerships to prevent and respond to violence by supporting the development of policing action plans in each community in accordance with each community's priorities.*

The Committee is pleased with the government's performance.

#### **4.4.3 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Poor**

*We will seek to improve access to justice in the NWT, by expanding community legal outreach programs, making family law duty counsel services available to assist self-represented family members on first appearance in family court, and expanding public education on programs and services so that people know what help is out there and how to access it.*

Recent initiatives have greatly improved services available in Yellowknife and the Committee commends these developments. However, services in regional centres and small communities have not seen similar improvements, but instead reductions, such as the elimination of court registries and legal aid in Inuvik. Following closure of the court library, there has been no evidence of a transition to a public resource centre. Members also highlight that a CBC investigation recently determined that one in three territorial sexual assault cases were dismissed as “unfounded,” while residents also encounter various obstacles in securing enforcement of emergency protection orders, thereby blocking victims’ access to justice. The department recently attributed the territory’s “unfounded” rates to an issue of data entry. While these findings change our “unfounded rates,” it remains that an issue of data entry still indicates a lack of police responsiveness to serious criminal activity. Members look to the Minister for leadership in correcting these imbalances.

#### **4.4.4 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Acceptable**

*We will improve our social response to crime reduction by examining and analyzing social indicators, conducting research on what works to reduce crime, and identifying any gaps in territorial programming.*

The Committee has no comments. Insufficient progress has been made to enable useful assessment.

#### **4.4.5 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will implement the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that fall within the jurisdiction of the territorial government, especially related to violence against indigenous women and girls.*

The Committee has no comments.

#### **4.4.6 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will support and participate in a National Round Table and National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women in collaboration with families, Aboriginal governments, the federal government, and other organizations.*

The Committee has no comments.

#### **4.5.1 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Good**

*We will support the RCMP and communities in their efforts to develop policing action plans in each community that reflect local priorities, including issues relating to youth.*

See Item 4.4.2.

#### **4.5.2 – DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT / DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will implement the Youth Resiliency program in schools and during after school programs to improve student outcomes and lower overall dropout rates.*

See Item 2.5.2. The Committee recommends that these items be reworded to distinguish between them, or combined to eliminate duplication.

#### **4.5.3 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will support opportunities for youth by ensuring effective programming such as the Youth Corps, Youth Contributors, Youth Ambassador Programs, Youth Centres, Youth Tours, and Children and Youth Resiliency Program.*

See Item 2.5.3. The Committee recommends that these items be reworded to distinguish between them, or combined to eliminate duplication.

## **GOVERNANCE**

**Good 9      Acceptable 16      Poor 10**

#### **5.1.1 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*Consistent with the policy of Respect, Recognition & Responsibility, we will invite any regional or community Aboriginal governments that are not yet a party to one, to strengthen their intergovernmental relations with the GNWT through the negotiation of an intergovernmental memorandum-of-understanding.*

The Committee acknowledges the work done by the GNWT to enter into these MOUs but questions their effectiveness in terms of making practical improvements, especially in the lives of those living in smaller communities.

#### **5.1.2 – DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Good**

*We will consult with Aboriginal governments to complete the next phase of regulation making under the Wildlife Act.*

Progress is being made in this area. An update should be provided to the appropriate standing committee on the second phase of regulations under the *Wildlife Act* and the implementation of hunter education.

### **5.1.3 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will work in partnership with Aboriginal governments to explore the design and launch of a training program for First Nations governments with municipal-like responsibilities in order to help improve the governance and management capacity of those governments.*

The Auditor General's 2017 report on the department's support for community governments in the NWT was critical of how the department is supporting designated-authority communities.

### **5.1.4 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will work to resolve outstanding land, resource and self-government agreements with the Akaitcho, Dehcho, NWT Metis Nation, Acho Dene Koe and the Government of Canada during the term of our government, and advocate that particular focus in our negotiations be placed on land quantum.*

The Committee acknowledges the Premier's letter of May 19, 2017, offering to provide a briefing on the reports of the Ministerial Special Representatives (MSRs), and the recent offers to the Akaitcho Dene First Nation and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation. However, there was no engagement with regular MLAs on the development of these offers. The Committee seeks to better understand how the government intends to use the reports of the MSRs and notes that there was much disappointment with the Doyle report in the Deh Cho region.

### **5.1.5 – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – Acceptable**

*We will provide funding to Aboriginal community governments and work with communities to develop wellness plans that meet local needs and priorities.*

The Committee assesses the government's performance as acceptable, and recommends that that Item 5.5.1 be revised to incorporate commitments to enhance public reporting and to develop a wellness plan for Yellowknife.

### **5.1.6 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will implement the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that fall within the jurisdiction of the territorial government.*

See Item 4.4.5.

### **5.1.7 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will continue to support the Intergovernmental Council towards implementation of the vision of cooperative and collaborative management of lands and resources, as set out in the Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement.*

It is not clear to what extent Cabinet has engaged the Intergovernmental Council and what role there will be for Standing Committees in the early review and development of resource management legislation.

### **5.2.1 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will seek to establish a joint committee between Cabinet Ministers and Regular Members to share information and discuss approaches on the advancement of land, resource, and self-government agreements as well as initiatives to enhance relationships with Aboriginal governments.*

The Committee strongly disagrees with characterizing this commitment as fulfilled. The Terms of Reference, as amended by Cabinet, do not live up to the mandate commitment to establish a *joint committee*, not a working group. The entity has no formal standing either as a Committee of Cabinet or a Committee of the House. This working group has met once in two years, where it received a briefing similar to any provided at a standing committee meeting. This working group is not serving as a venue to discuss approaches, enhance understanding, or build relationships.

### **5.2.2 – DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Acceptable**

*We will negotiate with Yukon, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan towards the completion of transboundary water agreements.*

See Item 1.3.6.

### **5.2.3 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will work with Aboriginal governments to jointly develop their human resource capacity, for example by finalizing and evaluating the existing pilot project with the Gwich'in Tribal Council.*

The Committee would like to see more progress on this commitment and underscores the difficulty of judging the GNWT's performance in this area, given the lack of public reporting, particularly as it relates to the work arising from implementation negotiations.

### **5.2.4 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS / DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT – Acceptable**

*We will pursue an agreement with the federal government on the management of offshore resources.*

With reservation, the Committee assesses the government's performance as adequate. The Government of Canada, with the United States government, has imposed an offshore oil ban on all three territories, which is an extenuating circumstance outside the control of the GNWT. The Committee is disappointed that Canada would in good faith negotiate section 3.20 of the *Devolution Agreement*, and then impose conditions that undermine implementation of the agreed-to action.

### **5.2.5 – DEPARTMENT OF LANDS – Poor**

*We will work to improve the NWT integrated resource management regime to ensure the regime reflects NWT interests and priorities.*

Insufficient progress has been made in this area. It is not clear what Cabinet has identified as guiding principles.

### **5.3.1 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE / DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE – Acceptable**

*We will improve access to information and the protection of privacy.*

The Committee is pleased with the government's progress on these items and looks forward to further developments in the near future.

### **5.3.2 – DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE – Good**

*We will implement the government's new Financial Administration Act in order to improve government-wide planning and accountability, and overall fiscal responsibility.*

Committee has observed some improvement in the Public Accounts and reporting on the Financial Responsibility Policy.

### **5.3.3 – DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE – Acceptable / Good**

*We will improve collaboration for easier access to government programs and services online.*

The Committee recognizes the challenges associated with the e-governance initiative, and recommends consideration of the role that single-window service centres might play in helping residents in small communities access e-governance.

### **5.3.4 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Good**

*We will maximize citizens' ability to access government by using consistent approaches to social media, visual identity, and overall communications.*

The Committee is satisfied with the work that has been done on the GNWT's visual identity. However, while the Committee sees a unified corporate identity as being important, Members are not convinced that it "maximizes" citizens' ability to access government.

### **5.3.5 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Good**

*We will establish an Open Government Policy to enhance civic participation, increase the availability and accessibility of information about government activities, and explore new technologies for openness and accountability.*

The Committee's continued satisfaction with this initiative is dependent upon the timely receipt of the draft policy.

### **5.3.6 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Good**

*We will improve public visibility and accessibility of Cabinet by organizing Cabinet meetings in each region of the NWT, holding selected Committee-of-Cabinet meetings in public, and meeting with standing committees in public more frequently.*



Regional Cabinet meetings are positive insofar as they serve as “meet and greet” opportunities for community residents. However, these should not be characterized as “Cabinet meetings,” since no decisions are being discussed or made in public.

#### **5.3.7 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will improve opportunities for meaningful public input into government decision making by improving access to government public engagement initiatives and reporting on how public views have shaped government decisions.*

The Committee is aware of the technical problems causing delays and would like to see work done thoroughly to resolve and avoid these issues. However, the Committee believes that progress to date is inadequate and urges the government to give this commitment its full attention.

#### **5.3.8 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS Affairs – Poor**

*We will enhance collaboration between Cabinet and Regular Members by exploring more options to formally work together, and strengthening processes for consistently sharing and tracking information provided to standing committees.*

The Committee has no access to the information prepared in support of this commitment and suggests that the tracking information be shared with standing committees. The Committee notes that the one request they made for a formal opportunity to work together, through the joint committee on Aboriginal rights under Item 5.2.1, was downgraded by Cabinet to an informal working group. In light of this, the Committee questions the GNWT’s commitment to fulfilling Item 5.3.8.

#### **5.3.9 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will develop and implement an effective communications plan to make residents aware of the mechanisms available to appeal government decisions.*

The Committee notes that the online mandate tracker indicates that the launch of the online directory of appeals processes is scheduled for the third quarter of 2017. To date the Committee has seen no evidence of progress on this initiative.

#### **5.3.10 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Good**

*We will do a better job of making our residents, particularly those in smaller communities, aware of available government programs and services, and how to access them, through Single Window Service Centres and our Government Service Officers (GSO).*

The Committee acknowledges the good work in this area, but is disappointed that as yet there is no plan to roll out Single Window Service Centres with GSOs in all communities.

#### **5.3.11 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Good**

*We will develop legislation within two years to establish an independent parliamentary office of the ombudsman*

The Committee has reviewed the legislative proposal for this initiative and looks forward to introduction of the bill in the Fall 2017 sitting.

#### **5.4.1 – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – Good**

*We will support the RCMP and communities in their efforts to strengthen partnerships to prevent and respond to violence by supporting the development of policing action plans in each community in according with each community's priorities.*

See Item 4.4.2.

#### **5.4.2 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will take further action to monitor drinking water quality as well as support community-based water monitoring programs.*

The Committee notes that in its recent audit of the department's support to municipal governments, the Office of the Auditor General found that the department is providing adequate support in the area of drinking water quality.

#### **5.4.3 – DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Acceptable**

*We will finalize community wildland fire protection plans, and develop and propose amendments to modernize forest protection legislation.*

Progress is being made and efforts should be encouraged to fulfill this commitment by the end of the term.

#### **5.4.4 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will continue to pursue new federal funding for the enhancement of community government infrastructure, and implement the asset management framework through the Gas Tax Agreement to ensure that all community infrastructure lifespan is extended and new infrastructure is delivered in a manner that takes into account new building technologies that assist in climate change adaptation and energy efficiencies.*

The Committee recommends that wording of Item 5.4.4 be clarified.

#### **5.4.5 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will develop a strategy to close the gap in funding levels to meet municipal core needs.*

The Committee perceives much activity on this item, but little real progress. Real and meaningful progress on this initiative is vitally important to the communities and needs concrete, measurable, and long-term improvements. The Committee urges the Minister and department to give this initiative their full attention.

#### **5.4.6 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will install remote water monitoring stations in five additional communities and build three additional water treatment plants.*

The Committee notes the department's intention to continue, through 2019, with the installation of technology to allow the department to remotely monitor water treatment plant data from communities. The department also proposes to build three additional water treatment plants in Gamètì, Wekweètì, and Paulatuk. The Committee looks forward to continued updates as this work progresses.

#### **5.4.7 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY Affairs – Poor**

*We will work with stakeholders to develop and propose amendments to modernize the Civil Emergency Measures Act and to revitalize the Territorial Emergency Response Plan.*

The Committee remains concerned that the department lacks the capacity to make appreciable progress in its legislative agenda.

#### **5.4.8 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY Affairs – Poor**

*We will develop and propose amendments to the Fire Prevention Act, and work with stakeholders to identify priorities for Community Fire Protection Plans.*

As above, the Committee remains concerned that the department lacks capacity to deliver on its legislative agenda. The Committee notes the extensive consultation process the department is undertaking in advance of submitting a legislative proposal. We applaud the collaborative approach, but caution the department against unnecessarily time-consuming consultation that produces little meaningful input. The Committee urges the department to strike a balance that allows for progress on updating the Acts it administers.

#### **5.4.9 – DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will assist community governments with technical assistance in identifying energy efficiency improvements for community government buildings and taking action to improve energy efficiency.*

See Items 1.4.4 and 3.3.3.

#### **5.5.1 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Acceptable**

*We will support the delivery of workshops that help to get women into politics.*

The workshops were well-received but the timing of the 2016 workshop is questionable. The Committee suggests that these workshops would be timelier if offered during the run-up to an upcoming election, not right afterwards.

#### **5.5.2 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Poor**

*We will support a communications campaign to increase the participation of women in politics.*

The Committee has seen no evidence of progress on this initiative.

**5.5.3 – DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS – Good**

*We will improve gender equity in appointments to territorial boards and agencies.*

The Committee notes the information provided on the online mandate tracker indicating that between February 1, 2016 and January 31, 2017, the percentage of women serving on territorial boards increased from 43 per cent to 50 per cent. The Committee applauds the increase, but encourages greater focus on addressing root causes that negatively affect women's participation.