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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, February 14, 2023****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Colleagues, before we begin, I'd like to recognize Senator Dennis Patterson, former government leader, Minister, and Member of the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Assembly from Frobisher Bay, or Iqaluit. Welcome.

Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 305-19(2):
FEDERALLY FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS**

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Mr. Speaker, through strategic infrastructure investments, this government is committed to supporting the expansion and diversification of our economy, improving the quality of life for residents, and lowering the cost of living in the territory.

We have secured about \$1.5 billion dollars in funding under various cost-sharing agreements with the Government of Canada. This funding will advance transformative strategic initiatives like the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Slave Geological Province Corridor, and the Taltson Hydro Expansion projects, and will also support over a hundred other public infrastructure projects that is intended to help close the infrastructure gap between the North and southern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, through the Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program, up to \$590 million in federal funding will be provided for Indigenous, community, and territorial government projects across the Northwest Territories. More than \$340 million of this funding has already been allocated and the rest has been earmarked for future projects. Our agreement for this program goes until 2033. Over \$180 million is

cost-shared under Transport Canada's National Trade Corridors Fund for the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the Slave Geological Province Corridor. There is also more than \$240 million under Infrastructure's Canada's Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund and the Small Communities Fund, for which our agreements currently end in 2028.

Mr. Speaker, these are just the highlights of the federal programs and critical projects the department is advancing for the benefit of Northwest Territories residents, with the continued support from the Government of Canada.

I am often asked why projects are not advancing faster, why construction does not start immediately after funding is announced, and why it appears that we are not spending the money we have for these projects. Mr. Speaker, there are many steps between filling out a funding application and getting shovels in the ground. These steps take time and are often completed behind the scenes, but they are essential to any successful project.

First, we conduct critical engagement and consultation and collect environmental, socio-economic, and technical research. This includes gathering input from those who may be impacted by these projects.

Then we begin the regulatory and permitting phase. This process is also dictated by law, often includes environmental assessments, followed by acquiring licenses, permits, and authorizations. This can take several years to complete.

Mr. Speaker, the regulatory and permitting phases inform project construction planning and final design. It is only after these pre-construction activities have been completed that a contractor can be procured and the project can advance to construction.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT's negotiated contracts policy, which supports added benefits for local and Indigenous businesses, rarely aligns with some of the federal procurement policy. Decisions to negotiate sole source contracts

with local or Indigenous businesses often add additional layers of federal approvals and further delays to a project's schedule. Overall, Mr. Speaker, for a project like a new road or a new transmission line, it could take several years to complete the necessary engagement, consultation, environmental and engineering work to apply for permits; several years to acquire the necessary permits; and then, several years to undertake construction. However, these are all necessary project steps that must be undertaken.

Typically, the bulk of a project's funding is provided for the construction phase. The front-end work takes substantial time to complete and uses less of the overall project budget. For projects that are fully funded, it can appear as though projects are progressing slowly and funds are not being spent. This is not the reality. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to putting necessary behind-the-scenes work to advance our projects for the benefit of the residents and communities. We will continue to work with our federal partners to bring economic opportunities to our people and reduce the cost of living to businesses and residents. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 306-19(2):
INTRODUCTION TO THE OFFICE OF
CLIENT EXPERIENCE AND UPDATE ON
THE INDIGENOUS PATIENT ADVOCATES

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce a new focus on patient experience in the health and social services system. The Office of Client Experience offers a centralized point of contact for individuals to provide feedback, make a complaint, or ask any questions they have regarding the health and social services system. Staff are in the gallery and I will introduce them at the appropriate time.

The Office of Client Experience will provide support for all residents and their families when accessing health and social services, including system's navigation, client and family advocacy, and connecting clients with additional supports and resources. The office also supports system improvement and responsiveness, using client experience and feedback to inform changes needed to meet the goal of providing equitable and culturally-safe care and services.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the Office of Client Experience, I am pleased to announce the launch of the Indigenous Patient Advocate Program. Following direction from Regular Members, the Department of Health and Social Services collaborated with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the Indigenous Advisory Body to develop these positions as part of a new initiative and comprehensive approach to improving client experience. The Indigenous patient advocates will help Indigenous residents, their families and guests by providing advocacy and access to cultural, spiritual, emotional, and language supports. The advocates are located in NWT's acute care facilities which are Stanton Territorial Hospital, Inuvik Regional Hospital, the Hay River Health Centre, and the Fort Smith Health Centre.

To access services, individuals can call the Office of Client Experience toll free or email them. The details are available online or from your health centre. They can also ask to speak with an Indigenous patient advocate at any of the acute care facilities where they have been admitted.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure the Indigenous patient advocates are successful in supporting and advocating for Indigenous residents, they have been given a mandate for change. This is an essential element of the program to ensure the advocates can address and resolve systemic barriers or challenges. The Indigenous patient advocates are members of their regional senior management teams, ensuring Indigenous representation and participation at those decision-making tables.

The advocates make up a territorial team that reports to an Indigenous director, with a shared reporting relationship with the chief operating officer, or COO, for their region. This approach will provide support and guidance to the advocates, as well as a peer network to help counteract systemic racism experienced by Indigenous employees as they work to break down barriers and support residents to navigate the complex health and social services system.

Mr. Speaker, system change takes time but the implementation of the Office of Client Experience and the Indigenous Patient Advocate Program adds direct supports now that contribute to our goal of providing the best care possible for patients and clients, while also informing longer term system-level changes for a better future for all residents. I look forward to reporting progress on this new and exciting initiative again in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for MACA.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 307-19(2):
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES AND CANADA
WINTER GAMES 2023

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the athletes, coaches, managers, mission staff who represented Team Northwest Territories, better known as Team NT, at the 2023 Arctic Winter Games recently held in the Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta. I also want to acknowledge those who are representing Team NT at the upcoming 2023 Canada Winter Games in Prince Edward Island, scheduled from February 18th to March 5th.

It was exciting to finally see the return of the Arctic Winter Games after five years. Team NT had 347 participants strong, comprised of a diverse group of athletes who competed at 19 different sports. The Arctic Winter Games provide an opportunity for our coaches, officials, and athletes to engage with, and compete against, other circumpolar countries. Not only are the games an athletic competition, they are also the opportunity to promote social exchange and learn of cultural values from other countries and regions.

I would like to thank the Team NT's leaders: The chef de mission Mr. Bill Othmer and assistant chefs de mission Mr. Damon Crossman and Ms. Rita Mercredi, and the rest of the mission staff.

In addition to Team NT, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs was pleased to support the Northwest Territories Youth Ambassadors Program at the Arctic Winter Games. This program offers a wonderful volunteer experience for youth at major territorial, national, and international events. Participants work to develop life and job skills and to build the confidence necessary to deal with complex life challenges.

There were nine youth volunteering with the 2023 Arctic Winter Games host society who were between the ages of 16 to 19 in seven different communities across the Northwest Territories. Those youth are the role models and leaders of tomorrow, and I commend them for taking the opportunity to learn and grow by participating in this exciting volunteer experience.

In the coming days, Team NT will again be represented by 155 athletes and coaches competing in 11 sports at the 2023 Canada Winter Games. The Canada Games showcases the highest level of national

competition for Canadian athletes and provides our national high-performance athletes a venue to compete with hopes of earning a spot on Team Canada for the Olympics or other international events.

I would like to wish the very best to our leaders for the Canada Winter Games: The chef de mission Ms. Rita Mercredi and assistant chef de mission Mr. Damon Crossman, as they and Team NT make their way to the games. I also want to recognize the many volunteers who are responsible for supporting Team NT. This includes Sport North Federation and territorial sport organizations volunteers who were responsible for selecting and managing teams. Volunteers are a significant and an important part of sport and recreation programs that contribute to a healthier Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories is extremely proud to support our teams at both the Arctic and Canada Winter Games through financial assistance and a range of other programs that support development of coaches and athletes at the local, regional, territorial, and national levels.

For those of you still celebrating the success of the 2023 Arctic Winter Games, I sincerely hope you all enjoyed this truly wonderful experience. For those who are about to attend the Canada Winter Games, have fun, work hard, make us proud, as you always do. Go Team NT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1349-19(2):
REINDEER GRAZING LAND WITHDRAWAL
REDUCTION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. It's Valentine's Day and I want to send some love to our colleagues on the other side.

On September 2nd, 2022, Cabinet significantly reduced the size of the land withdrawal for the reindeer grazing reserve. It's hard to tell how big the reductions are as there are no publicly available maps or calculations. But it has to be at least 75 percent. The reindeer grazing reserve and land withdrawal were first established in 1933 and then significantly expanded in 1952. I acknowledge that GNWT did consult the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in while reviewing the land withdrawal. I'm not against reviewing all of this but there should be a fair and transparent process as well.

The map I have seen of this significant land withdrawal reduction also shows how the Inuvialuit land selections, and possibly Gwich'in land selections, were constrained by this reindeer land withdrawal that was in place. It appears they weren't allowed to make land selections in there. Presumably the land withdrawal served some useful purpose back then. I am still trying to figure out what the actual reasons were for this land withdrawal reduction. When I did an internet search, one of the first items to pop up was a 2014 Canadian Press story about how the Conservative federal government planned to reduce the land withdrawal to facilitate oil and gas development. That was according to documents obtained under access to information.

It looks like the Conservatives were not able to make these changes before they fell out of power in 2015 and devolution took place. It appears that GNWT has now finished that work begun by the Conservatives in reducing the size of the land withdrawal. Mr. Speaker, I will table that news story later today.

Perhaps the other reason for the reduction was the Inuvik Wind Turbine Project where GNWT did not want a little matter like a land withdrawal for conservation purposes to delay the project in any way. Rather than consult and make appropriate changes, GNWT continues to deny that that land withdrawal and designation actually means anything. Why should our government be constrained by plans or conservation areas anyway? I have lots of questions on why and how the land withdrawal for the reindeer grazing reserve was significantly reduced in size by this Cabinet. I am sure the Minister of Lands is looking forward to those questions later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Order. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1350-19(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES APPRENTICESHIPS AND
THE SCHOOLS NORTH APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAM

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a decade ago we knew the demand and competition for skilled workers would intensify with an aging workforce and people leaving the labour market in large numbers. Well, we're living in the future, Mr. Speaker, and it's safe to say our demand exceeds our expectation.

Labour shortage is something I hear about every month. Northerners and northern industries have big dreams and big opportunities but can't turn dreams into reality without skilled workers. Mr. Speaker, don't fall off your chair but I need to applaud Housing NWT as leaders in recognizing they have a role to play in workforce development.

Today, the GNWT is still the dominant northern employer in a Yellowknife-centric work environment and the dominant industry-driver outside of mining. This means that opportunities for developing skilled labour in many NWT communities rest squarely with opportunities afforded directly or indirectly through the GNWT. Housing NWT recognized this and built apprenticeship opportunities into their capital contracts requiring industry to offer local apprenticeship opportunities on each project. This practice needs to be adopted by all GNWT departments and this government needs to take youth development further.

ECE's SNAP, or the Schools North Apprenticeship Program, provides the perfect landscape for this. SNAP pairs high school students with employers so high school students can get valuable work skills and explore trades careers. Kids earn while they learn using GNWT wage subsidies and get a high school graduation credit for every 40 hours worked.

But Mr. Speaker, of 24 SNAP students, only two are located outside of Yellowknife and of 14 SNAP apprentices, again only two are located outside Yellowknife. Today, the South Slave, Deh Cho, and Sahtu have no SNAP students and the Deh Cho, Sahtu, and Beaufort Delta have no SNAP apprentices. The Beaufort Delta has 861 youth between 15 and 24, the Deh Cho there are 404, and in the Sahtu there are 371. Mr. Speaker, surely one from each of these regions is eager for the opportunities afforded by SNAP.

The GNWT needs to recognize itself as a northern employer and take its own place in youth skilled labour development. Local entrepreneurs aren't the only game in town, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately in many of our small remote communities, there are no other options for SNAP students wanting to learn a trade other than GNWT learning opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, every NWT community should employ a SNAP student, and I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1351-19(2):
REMEDICATION OF THE HAY RIVER
HARBOUR

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, spring breakup is just around the corner so let us talk harbour remediation. Mr. Speaker, once again, and in the off chance this government has forgotten, the community of Hay River has the largest inland port in western Canada. It is home to a Canadian coast guard base, a federal department of fisheries and oceans office; our own marine transportation service; and, what could be a viable commercial fishing industry.

The community of Hay River is a major and significant component of our northern transportation corridor as well. It is where truck and rail freight from the south converge to be loaded onto barge destined for isolated communities, 21 north warning radar sites, and mine sites.

Mr. Speaker, last spring the buildup of sediments at the mouth of the East Channel of the Hay River reached a critical level and most likely contributed some to the devastating flooding that occurred. Last spring, summer, and fall, we saw MTS, coast guard, and commercial fishing vessels grounded on sandbars which resulted in damaged equipment, community resupply interruptions, and added cost for community resupply by air.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that harbour remediation takes money and planning. This government has been waiting on the feds to pay and for the past 17 years it has not happened, so it is on us to fix it. Last fall, a bathymetric survey of the harbour was completed. That work was followed up with a visit to Ottawa by the Minister of Infrastructure and other Cabinet Members, who I understand discussed the issue of harbour remediation and the matter of some financial support for it.

Mr. Speaker, I was expecting the meeting would have resulted in the remediation of the channel prior to spring. Now my concern is that this government will do nothing but lay blame on the federal government, a story line that is becoming old. Mr. Speaker, this issue is critical, not only for the continued viability of Hay River but for our remote communities, our local and northern businesses, our fishing industry, the resource sector, and the livelihood of our residents and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I was hopeful that the Minister of Infrastructure would have fixed the problem with a winter dredging program. She still has time to make us proud and keep her name off the long list of prior Ministers who were

unsuccessful in addressing this issue. Thank You.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1352-19(2):
MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

MS. NOKLEBY: Mr. Speaker, communities in the NWT have been chronically underfunded for years. Every community in the Northwest Territories has been challenged to manage basic services like water, infrastructure, waste management, and community development while also providing critical services like emergency response, community recreation and sport and cultural activities.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT made a mandate commitment to reduce the funding gap by \$5 million, and I acknowledge that the GNWT is on track to achieve this. However, Mr. Speaker \$5 million does not go far enough. A 2019 report identified that Northwest Territories' community governments face a \$40 million shortfall in funding needs. The additional \$5 million in funding does not even make a dent in this shortfall. And as we all know, Mr. Speaker, the costs and expenses to run communities has only risen since 2019 following the pandemic. The price of fuel, transportation, power, food, materials, and supply chain costs have all gone up. Throw in aging, deteriorating infrastructure, and the increased carbon tax, and communities are stretched very thin trying to provide even basic services. Additionally, many communities face the challenge of preparing and responding to unprecedented climate change, including flooding. NWT communities are then further challenged to respond to homelessness, addictions, and lack of hope among youth and residents.

Increased funding directly to communities will build local economy and autonomy. Increased support direct to communities allows communities to focus on critical social, sport and recreation programs, and services for our children and youth, as well as pay a living wage to their workers. Why is the Minister of MACA not advocating for increased funding for NWT communities?

Communities have been forced to absorb bigger bills and respond to unprecedented issues yet the GNWT is not meeting communities where they need to be met. I hear from many communities that local jobs are being reduced, and programs and services minimized because communities must make cuts. Communities are the most efficient

frontline responders to address the needs of NWT residents so why are we not empowering them to do so?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1353-19(2):
INDIGENOUS PATIENT ADVOCATES

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my passion for helping people instilled in me growing up led me to a rewarding career of nursing for almost 20 years and to where I am today as an MLA to stand up for my constituents and all their concerns. But, Mr. Speaker, today I'm extremely excited for the Indigenous patient advocates that will be located in our four regional hospitals to begin their important work.

Mr. Speaker, as a first-time MLA in this Assembly, I heard concern after concern in regards to the healthcare of our constituents, communication barriers, travel mix-ups, escort concerns, feelings of lack of respect to my constituents as well as I heard from other constituents throughout the Northwest Territories about our healthcare system and how our Indigenous people were being treated in it. So when we began our 2021-2022 Budget deliberations, this was one ask I felt that was important to add to our list of asks as Regular MLAs, and with the support of my colleagues as they too have heard the same concerns, we were able to get these positions.

At first it was rejected in the deliberations. They felt that they did this in other areas, but we did not let this go as we knew how important this was to have a bridge from the healthcare system to the Indigenous residents of the Northwest Territories, someone who they could go to, someone who they could trust, someone that they know that will hear them and, like their title says, advocate for them. Mr. Speaker, I wish them all the best in their new positions, and I know our Indigenous residents will be served well by them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1354-19(2):
HOUSING RENEWAL INITIATIVES AND
SENIORS' HOUSING STRATEGY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in October 2021, Housing NWT released a document titled Strategy for Renewal outlining various actions that Housing NWT proposed to do with housing within the

19th Assembly. That document was light on details and includes no mention of seniors or assisting seniors with their housing needs, which is concerning given the rising number of seniors we have in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, according to the 2021 census data, there are currently 2,455 seniors above the age of 70 living in the NWT. Further, according to the data from the Department of Health and Social Services, the number of seniors aged 70 and older will more than double within ten years. Considering these statistics, I am finding it troubling that the Housing NWT does not seem to be taking this data into account and they're not appropriately planning on how to address this for the future. Despite much talk about helping seniors to age in place with dignity and some programs created specifically for seniors, there has never been a dedicated seniors housing strategy created and carried out by Housing NWT.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to addressing seniors housing, there are some essential aspects to consider. For example, the layout of the home must account for occupants with potential mobility issues or people dealing with various long-term illnesses. Another aspect that needs to be addressed are situations where a natural disaster either destroys or severely damages the existing home of a senior citizen, because right now the disaster assistance policy is only available to people when a natural disaster occurs where the damage is so widespread to a significant number of people or properties were affected.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I think there needs to be a new way to calculate the rent for seniors regardless of income level, race, or which part of the NWT they live in. I believe there should be a flat rate, single-fixed cost system that determines the rent for seniors. There needs to be a greater fairness in equity afforded to our senior population when it comes to rental charges. Enacting these changes would reduce the amount of rental arrears incurred by seniors and would provide them with less financial stress and worry. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I raised this idea with the housing Minister several times this term and while she has expressed some interest of it, she's been unable or perhaps unwilling to commit to putting any action toward it. I hope the Minister reconsiders because I think that a seniors housing strategy would properly address the needs of seniors and would close some of the gaps that our existing programs do not address for our senior population. I will have

questions for the housing Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1355-19(2):
ARCTIC COUNCIL

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the invasion of Ukraine, the Arctic Council has paused all meetings. The Arctic Council is a forum meant to promote cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic states and Arctic Indigenous peoples. The work of the Arctic Council supports the Inuvialuit people in the Nunakput riding. The council works collaboratively with circumpolar partners on many important projects facing the far North limited to climate change research, monitoring and adaptation, ocean management, Arctic shipping, waste management, and regional planning and development. Currently, Russia is the chair of the council and all the work is put to a standstill.

At the time when Canada and the NWT need to be focused on developing, securing the northern part of the NWT, we're not holding discussions with the circumpolar partners. The GNWT, what are we doing? What are we doing about this, Mr. Speaker? What is the messaging that the GNWT has provided the federal government to support its work on the council? When the Arctic Council is going to get back to business? I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1356-19(2):
SYSTEMIC RACISM IN SMALL HEALTH
CENTRES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I presented a motion in this House last June 2022 regarding improving healthcare in small communities. The motion was prompted by numerous complaints made verbally to me or was printed in the media in relation to the many cases of misdiagnosis of Indigenous patients in the small communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is where residents have been into the health centres numerous times for the same ailment, were not diagnosed, or were not diagnosed properly and sent home with Tylenol. And in most cases, it was the fourth or fifth time they were near, or they were in, their

death bed. From what I'm hearing, this is still going on in our small health centres.

In part of the motion, I spoke about systemic racism in our health centres as many nurses come in from the south and don't understand Indigenous history of injustices done to them. Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that not all the nurses are in this boat as there are many that truly like to work with Indigenous people, especially Indigenous patients.

We can have all the reconciliation and sacred ceremonies with the health department staff, with the doctors, with the nurses, but that does not address the root problem of providing improved healthcare services. Mr. Speaker, at the very least the Department of Health and Social Services should provide oversight of the small community health centres to ensure quality of care. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiiledeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1357-19(2):
HOUSING CRISIS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know how many times that I am going to bring up the Housing NWT crisis but until I see some real progress, it's going to continue to be my top priority as long as I am a Member of this House.

Mr. Speaker, housing corporation was born in 1972 and in the last 51 years since its foundation, the agency has failed to meet the housing demands of our residents apart from them rebranding and exercising, in 2022, that gave Housing NWT, not much has changed beyond a slick new logo and family-friendly name.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation has spent a great deal of time thumping her desk about how great of a job she has done on the housing crisis here in the Northwest Territories. But let's face it, the GNWT and housing have no vision, no plan for solving our housing crisis and a half of century of failure is proof all we need. I find this even more frustrating when the Minister has few portfolios to occupy her attention and the boss is the Premier -- is a former housing Minister as well and who has often spoken her passion for the housing policies.

Mr. Speaker, I expect better from this government. Housing NWT has been applying for CIRNAC dollars from housing grants to address their own housing needs. That means needs of the people we serve. This means

fixing up public housing units according to their schedule without any consultation or engagement with Indigenous governments, who gave Housing NWT the mandate to make these applications and spend the money on behalf of the Indigenous governments who are already struggling to meet their own housing crisis needs. It's unfair and out of touch to insist that these efforts are solving the housing crisis when they do little more than fix up the GNWT assets. Yes, it looks like a good photo opportunity to help the Minister's political fortunes, but it does not make a slick difference to our residents without adequate affordable housing.

As we need to do -- all we have to do is look to our sister territory Nunavut to see real progress on the housing file. Is it possible, Mr. Speaker, that without making real change, the NWT will continue to struggle in housing? Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of housing at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1358-19(2):
SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH BENEFITS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall, the Department of Health and Social Services went out to consult on their extended health benefits policy. And on first glance, it seemed that the plan was to expand coverage and means test it, something I had no opposition to. But upon a closer reading, it was clear that that plan was to do that at the expense of the specified disease conditions in the schedule to that policy, Mr. Speaker; something I do oppose.

And, Mr. Speaker, so the department tabled their "what we heard" report and in that report, it was pretty clear that there was support for expanding coverage to provide all NWT residents with access to supplementary health and drug benefits but not by removing existing programs or reducing coverage for residents currently on the specified disease condition program.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard many stories from constituents who have these specific diseases who are worried about the increased cost this will place on them, who are worried about how it will affect coverage, who are worried about whether they will continue to be on the drugs. Mr. Speaker, this is not the stress we want to put on our residents. I support expanding, you know, drug coverage and if those liberals would get their act together, maybe we would see a

pharmacare program and that would be the proper step. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of health of whether we are actually going to listen to the feedback we got in the "what we heard" report or whether this is just going to be another what-we-didn't-listen-to report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1359-19(2):
EULOGY OF MILLIE KULIKTANA

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to celebrate the life of Ms. Millie Kuliktana. It has almost been a month since Millie passed away. For the people that got to know her, she was a wife, mother, grandmother, friend, mentor, teacher, super volunteer, and sister who had a heart of gold. She was about serving others throughout her life. She was well known and respected across Canada, especially in Nunavut, NWT, Yukon and Alaska.

I like to share the first time I met her. I was hired as the recreation coordinator trainee for the hamlet of Coppermine, now known as Kugluktuk. It was the first week of December 1987. I was given the task of finding billets for ten out-of-town volleyball teams. I remember thinking how I was going to do this? Millie's future husband, Simon Kuliktana, told me do not worry, Millie's coming home today, and she would get everyone looked after. True to his word, Millie came in and within an hour they were all looked after. This was Millie. Give her a task, regardless of the difficulty, and she had it solved. Later that day, she and Simon invited me into their home, and I have always been welcome since.

I watched their family grow and witnessed their children become what she was very proud of and the topic of conversation a lot. Quentin, Wynter, Shawn and Tundra are her and Simon's legacy. You could see her glow every time they were around, and her grandchildren became her special treasures.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to be with some of the family when she passed away. I would like to thank her children for allowing me to be there with them; four of sisters, Edna, Helen, April and Jeannie; and two lifelong friends, Susie Evyagotailak and Kathy Okpik, at the hospital. It was such an honour. There are so many things I want to say but I am just saying she was an amazing person. She was always about family, this included extended family, and

when we talked she always spoke so highly of them.

I was very fortunate to be added to the family in 1990. Her mom and father adopted me, and I was now her brother. It was like her sister Jeannie said, Millie watched you or welcomed you with open arms, making sure you knew you were part of her family and truly loved.

Throughout the years, I have had so many amazing conversations with her. It was always refreshing as she spoke her mind and with so much honesty but, most importantly, it was done with love. She cared and that was why she did what she did for others.

Mr. Speaker, at her celebration of life, her daughter Wynter did an amazing job with her eulogy and I would like it to be deemed as read here today.

To Simon, the children and grandchildren, may God bless you during this difficult time and may you share loving stories about her. She will be sadly missed, Mr. Speaker.

Welcome everyone, quana for coming. I know that Mom is so honoured to see you all here with our family today. We would especially like to thank Reverend Dixon and his wife Rosalind for coming to Kugluktuk. It was Mom's wish to have her service be provided in both English and Inuinnaqtun and our family made sure that her wish would be met. Quana Reverend Collis for welcoming them.

Another request of Mom was that she didn't want pressure put on me to do her eulogy, I looked at her sternly and said, "Do you really think I would let anyone else do it?" We laughed and she had no choice but to agree that I would provide her eulogy. All of you here have given both our Mom and our family support, prayers and hope all these years. In addition to your presence here, we have received so many expressions of condolence from the many people that our Mom has touched over the years. Their words and yours match those that echo in our hearts.

"Our Mom. Emotional, yet the rock. Tired, but keeps going. Worried, but full of hope. Impatient, yet patient. Overwhelmed, but never quits. Amazing, even when doubted. Wonderful, even in chaos. Life Changer, every single day" Rachel Martin

Millie Rose Qitupana, born on February 7, 1964 here in Coppermine, as the fifth child and fourth Daughter to Elva Wenek and Tommy Norberg. A day before her birthday, at the age of 17, Mom would have her first son, Quentin. Although young, Mom knew that if she was to

provide for her children, she would have to further her education. She gave Quentin to Nanny and Grandpa to raise him for the earlier part of his years when she would begin her lifelong career in education.

In 1978, both Mom and Dad would become best friends while pursuing their education in Fort Smith. They remained best friends until Dad says, in 1986, Mom would be the first girl he ever kissed sober, he knew then that she was to be his wife. Mom and Dad were married on December 26, 1987, by Reverend Dixon. I was born just shy of a month before their wedding and was given to them as a wedding gift. Dad welcomed Quentin as his own and together Mom and Dad later birthed our younger siblings, Shawn and Tundra. Mom and Dad's pursuit to both advancing their careers and providing for their children was always a journey for our family. Mom and Dad uprooted us from Kugluktuk numerous times, living in Taloyoak, Iqaluit and Igloolik.

Mom and Dad showed us the true meaning of commitment through a marriage. Mom and Dad were never afraid to show us that sometimes, marriage could be difficult, but they always found a way to maintain their commitment. Mom was asked recently by a nurse what was their secret was to a marriage of thirty plus years, she says, "There is no secret. Even if it means we choose not to live together, we committed to being best friends first."

Mom and Dad lived true to that commitment, especially demonstrating that in sickness and in health, Dad stood by our Mom to the end. Mom and Dad taught us that wherever we were, we were a team that lead with support, commitment, trust, and love.

Mom was diagnosed with pulmonary arterial hypertension in 2010. I recall my siblings and I being called to a family meeting with our Aunt Edna, to which we were told that Mom would only have three months of life left to give. I recall that moment so vividly, because I knew in my heart that this was not it for our Mom, and that the support, commitment, trust, and love that our parents instilled in us would be the guiding force that would make sure of this. Mom's illness, although physically hers to bare, emotionally, it was just as much ours too. She was never doing this alone.

Our life as we knew it changed forever, each of us making countless sacrifices, enduring countless hospitalizations, and uncharted emotions. Throughout years of uncertainty, what became certain was our Mother's will to live. Mom taught us faith, hope, strength, and patience, and most importantly, gratitude. Mom could be in the most challenging situations, yet

she could find reason to be thankful. Through the challenges and despite her ailments, she had a will to live and that's exactly what she would do. We camped, we hunted, we fished, we travelled, we gave her grandbabies, we never stopped. The power of grandchildren would be proven time and time again, often surprising Mom's Doctors and Nursing staff as our babies guided Mom through miracles in hospital.

Countless times I would recite the following quote to Mom on some of her toughest days, "Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, I will try again tomorrow." The most rewarding tomorrow that Mom would receive was on Thanksgiving weekend, October 14, 2019. At 9:37 in the morning, Mom would get the call to accept her new lungs and undergo the double lung transplant."

"The idea is not to live forever. But maybe to help another live a little longer. Without the organ donor, there is no story, no transplant. But when there is an organ donor, life sprints from death, sorrow turns to hope, and a loss becomes a gift." To Mom's donor, thank you.

The transplant experience encompassed so many emotions dating back to her public health diagnosis, this time though, was the highest level of hope that our family could be gifted. I have only shared the intimate details of this experience with a few, witnessing firsthand a rush of so many doctors to pull our Mom out of near-death encounters. It was moments such as these that would add to my trust in Mom's doctors. Mom's recovery wasn't without company, her dearest friends and family would join Shawn in her journey to recovery and on July 10, 2020 Mom would finally return home to the rest of our family. We made sure we celebrated that day so perfectly, setting up Christmas in July, singing happy birthday to everyone, and filling her home with people, music, and dance.

Mom had this really beautiful ability to bring people together and make some really incredible things happen. Among many of Mom's passions, one of her most powerful was the passion for this community. She loved the people of Kugluktuk with deepest sincerity, and she never lost sight of her vision for building healthy families that would contribute to the overall well-being of this place we all call home. I couldn't even begin to list the contributions that she has made to our home, but what I know for certain is that with every initiative that she provided, she had this ability to fill hearts with love, and comfort people with a sense of hope, regardless of what people were going through.

I ask that you all can carry those beautiful moments and memories in your hearts, especially when times seem challenging. Sometimes we need a little help to maintain that hope, but know that the hope is within you, always.

With an aching heart, moments of reflection gave me comfort. What was once three months, turned thirteen years. I truly believe the demonstration of our parent's marriage, instilled within us the courage to be a team and lead our Mom through a life that she deserved. Although living through an illness wasn't ideal, it gave our family the gift to live through the beauty of vulnerability, appreciating and finding gratitude in all that we did together. Again, with an aching heart, we remain grateful. Mom's will carried her through to watching her baby Tundra and her first grandgirl Saveah, becoming Mother's. Our Mom as Grandma was the most beautiful type of love that our family could feel.

From our Kugluktuk Health Centre, to the Yellowknife Stanton Hospital and the University of Alberta Hospital, a thank you will never be enough. Our gratitude especially to Mom's team of Doctors in Edmonton was a constant amongst uncertainty and the nursing staff in ward 5E3 were truly angels among us. They never failed our Mom, giving us thirteen more years with her, we consider their commitment a success and they should be so proud of themselves, because their work was reflected in our family.

I want you all to take comfort in knowing that Mom's medical team made sure that Mom's final days were free of pain. Quentin, Shawn, Tundra and I were comforted with the presence of our Aunt's Edna, Helen, Jeannie and April, Uncle Shane Thompson, and Mom's best friends, Kathy Okpik and Susie Evyagotailak. Their comfort, guidance and counsel will carry a special place in our hearts forever. We also took comfort knowing that Dad was home with Laila, Nick, Evan, Billy and Saveah and the grandbabies.

My siblings and I met to prepare ourselves for the removal of Mom's breathing machine. Together we chose not to cry as Mom's soul made its journey, we had to send our Mom off in honour, courage and grace. I am so proud of you guys. Your bravery made this moment so beautiful and I know that Mom was so proud of us for sending her off the way that we did.

To my family, the toughest days are yet to come, especially for our children. Our children were Mom's purpose and Mom was ours, and it's going to be a challenge to find our purpose through the grief. In those moments, make time

for moments of reflection, what was instilled within us carried our family forward and we will continue, "we've got each other". May all that are gathered today be inspired by our Mother's will to live, we all have it, it's up to us to use it to live the best version of ourselves, for ourselves, our children, our families and our community.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community.

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nunakput.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to welcome Mr. Senator Dennis Patterson into the House. I remember him visiting my father Jimmy Jacobson when I was a young boy in Tuk. Welcome to the House, Dennis. It's always good seeing you.

And I'd also like to welcome Denise Voudrach, patient advocate for the Beaufort Delta. Welcome, and I'm looking forward to letting you do all the good work that you're going to do for the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize two pages that are here representing Inuvik Twin Lakes, Kalena Weinman and Brianna Dillon. And I'd also like to recognize a constituent Denise Voudrach who is our Indigenous patient advocate that will be in Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to recognize the staff of the newly created Office of Client Experience that will provide support services to NWT residents navigating the health and social services system. With us today is

- Fraser Lennie. Fraser is the director and program supervisor for the new office. He is a Metis Sahtu beneficiary and lives in Yellowknife. Welcome.
- Glenna Simon. Glenna is the senior Indigenous patient advocate for Fort Smith. Glenna is First Nations and Cree, and she works out of the health centre in Fort Smith.

- Denise Ritias is the senior Indigenous patient advocate for the Inuvik Regional Hospital. She is a Dene of K'ahsho Got'ine and was born and raised in Inuvik.
- Anastassia Judas. Anastasia is the senior Indigenous patient advocate for Stanton Territorial Hospital. Anastasia is Yellowknives Dene First Nation member and lives in Yellowknife.
- Sharon Sunrise. Sharon is a system navigator. She is a member of and resides on the K'atlodeeche First Nation.
- Faith Woodruff. Faith is a system navigator. She is a Woodland Cree member of the Bigstone Cree Nation in northern Alberta. She lives in Yellowknife.
- And finally, Marie Douglas, client experience liaison. Marie is Gwich'in, North Slavey and Tlicho, and lives in Yellowknife.

I'd like to welcome them all and thank them for the work they've undertaken.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As it is Indigenous languages month, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the Dene Got'ie translators. Mary Jane Cazon from Fort Simpson and Samuel Gargan from Fort Providence. Mahsi for all the translating that you do for the elders out there. Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm also pleased to recognize a couple of visitors joining us in the gallery today. The honourable Senator from Nunavut and former government leader and chairman of the Executive Council, Mr. Dennis Patterson. And the director of parliamentary affairs for Senator Patterson's office, Claudine Santos. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to recognize all of the patient advocates, but Faith Woodruff I'd like to recognize as a former colleague in the NGO world and a personal friend of my own. Really glad to see you in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Dennis Patterson who I also know from the 1970s and consider a

friend. Dennis. And I'd also like to recognize Glenna Simon, the new patient advocate for the Fort Smith Health Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have had the assistance of a couple of pages from Yellowknife South this week. Mr. Jude Brothers was here earlier this week. He's not technically in the House anymore, I didn't realize it was his last day, but I am grateful for his assistance. Today, however, we have Larah Peters, and she is also joined by her parents Michele and Ryan Peters. They are up in the gallery and are residents of Yellowknife South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize the patient advocates as well too and just recognizing the Indigenous hire, and it's a much-needed service that is required here in the Northwest Territories. Also to recognize Fraser Lennie and Denise Riddous Voudrach who do have grassroots to the Sahtu. And also respectfully Dennis Patterson. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we have missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber, and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to have people in the gallery. Mahsi.

Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 57:
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2022

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report on its consideration of Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022.

Bill 57 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on October 20th, 2022 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development for review. On February 13th, 2023, the standing committee held a

public hearing and clause-by-clause review of the bill with the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Member for Thebacha.

BILL 61:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE OMBUD ACT,
RECEIVED AND MOVED TO COMMITTEE
OF THE WHOLE

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee would like to report its consideration of Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act.

Bill 61 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly on November the 2nd, 2022, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review. On January the 25th, 2023, the standing committee held a public hearing and a clause-by-clause review of the bill with the sponsor of the bill, the Member for Yellowknife North.

Mr. Speaker, the committee reports that Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Thebacha.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 40-19(2):
REPORT ON BILL 61, AN ACT TO AMEND
THE OMBUD ACT,
CARRIED

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its report on Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, and commends it to the House.

Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, (Bill 61) received second reading on November 2, 2022 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

Bill 61 is a private Member's bill, sponsored by the Member for Yellowknife North, to amend the Ombud Act. Many of the proposed changes derive from recommendations in the Ombud's 2019-2020 Annual Report and in committee's review of that annual report. Specifically, Bill 61:

- Allow residents to make complaints about a wider range of public bodies;
- Allows the Ombudsman to investigate complaints going back further in time, to 1999;
- Allows the Ombud to provide more notice of investigations to Indigenous organizations; and
- Clarifies the Ombud's mandate.

This report outlines key events leading up to the introduction of Bill 61, describes committee's engagement with stakeholders, and summarizes stakeholders' positions and committee's decisions on key issues.

I will now turn the report over to the MLA for Kam Lake, MLA Cleveland.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Welcomes Improvements to Ombud Act During 19th Assembly

In October 2020, the Speaker tabled the Ombud's first-ever annual report for 2019-2020. The Ombud's report made 14 recommendations for legislative changes to the Act. The recommendations were informed by:

- The Ombud's review of legislation in other jurisdictions;
- The advice she received from other Ombuds and legal professionals; and
- The issues that arose when responding to individual complaints in her first year in the role.

The Ombud made her recommendations "with the intent of ensuring that my office is fully enabled to fulfill the purpose and vision with which the Legislative Assembly created it."

Committee endorsed many of the Ombud's recommendations in our subsequent review report. That report was tabled in May 2021 and discussed in Committee of the Whole. The Legislative Assembly ultimately adopted seven motions that recommended changes to the Act.

At the time, Members hoped the Government of the Northwest Territories would put forward amending legislation in the remaining two years of the 19th Assembly. In this regard, the GNWT's November 2021 response was disappointing. The GNWT declined to pursue any legislative changes in the life of the 19th Assembly, agreeing only to consider committee's recommendations in the context of a "future review."

In June 2022, committee followed-up on the GNWT's response in a meeting with the government House leader. Committee wanted to learn more about the GNWT's position and, more importantly, make one more appeal for changes to the Act in the 19th Assembly. Shortly before, the government House leader and committee had collaborated successfully to incorporate recommendations from the Languages Commissioner, another statutory officer, into legislation in the life of the 19th Assembly. Committee had hoped for a similar process and outcome for the Ombud. Ultimately, the Government maintained its position and declined to make changes.

Committee is dissatisfied that efforts to craft recommendations that would improve government operations – which were endorsed as motions in the Legislative Assembly – are disregarded without meaningful and timely action. Our disappointment grows greater when our recommendations build on recommendations from our statutory officers. The statutory officers provide great expertise and effort in their work yet, in some instances, their recommendations have gone unmet with legislative changes for up to 20 years.

Committee therefore welcomes Bill 61. In particular, committee commends the Member for Yellowknife North for bringing forward these changes on his own initiative. The changes will improve the ability of the Ombud to carry out her mandate for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Committee Considered Input from Private Member, Ombud, Minister, Statutory Officers, And the Public.

Committee sought public feedback on Bill 61 with a public notice and targeted engagement letters to key stakeholders. Committee received written submissions from:

- The Member for Yellowknife North
- The Ombud
- The Minister of Justice
- The NWT Human Rights Commission.

- The Human Rights Adjudication Panel
- The Equal Pay Commissioner
- The Languages Commissioner - The Integrity Commissioner
- And one member of the public.

All written submissions are included in an appendix to this report.

Committee also held a public review of Bill 61 on December 9, 2022. At that meeting, committee received oral comments from the Member for Yellowknife North and the Ombud. Committee also met with the NWT Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Adjudication Panel to hear their concerns on January 16, 2023.

Committee extends our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed their thoughts, concerns, and advocacy for the review of Bill 61. The engagement in the review process demonstrated a strong commitment to protecting and reinforcing our territory's institutions and governance. The input helped us to understand the benefits of the proposed changes and put forward amendments to further strengthen the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the reading of this report on to the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you.

Committee Agreed to Most Changes as Drafted

Allowing complaints about more public offices.

Bill 61 would mean residents could make complaints to the Ombud about a wider range of public bodies, including housing associations and the Human Rights Commission. In verbal testimony, the Ombud indicated that she has had to turn down complaints because certain public offices are outside her mandate. For example: While the Ombud can investigate a public housing complaint from a tenant in Inuvik, where the local housing organization is defined as an "authority", she cannot investigate the same complaint if it came from Fort McPherson (Teetl'it Zheh), where the LHO is defined as an "association."

The legislative changes would add other public organizations to the mandate of the Ombud that are currently excluded, such as:

- the chief rental officer;
- the Assessment Appeals Tribunal;
- the Social Assistance Appeal Board; and
- staffing appeal officers.

According to the Ombud, other Canadian legislation does not typically exclude these types of offices from an Ombud's mandate. Committee requested a jurisdictional scan from the sponsoring Member, who provided one. The scan confirms the Ombud's assertion.

Committee previously recommended this change in 2021. Committee continues to support this change and hopes that the Northerners' complaints are treated the same way in each community and as they would be in other provinces and territories.

Investigating matters as early as 1999

Bill 61 would allow the Ombud to investigate complaints into matters that have come up since April 1, 1999. Right now, the Ombud can only investigate complaints into matters that have come up since January 1, 2016. The Ombud has reported that the temporal restriction of her authority has prevented her from looking into a small number of cases. She has conveyed that complainants have found the cut-off "arbitrary and unfair" and "hard to accept." The committee has agreed that the Ombud should not have to refuse complaints from 2015 while being able to investigate complaints from 2016.

The Minister of Justice expressed concern at the potential for an "overwhelming number of requests." The Ombud, by contrast, does not share this concern, saying that the legislation gives her many ways to turn down complaints. Committee is satisfied with the Ombud's explanation and believes any increase in complaints will be manageable. One member of the public also expressed support for the change. They noted that the Ombud's current restriction to reference information predating 2016 may distort the outcome of an investigation. Committee believes this change will help the Ombud make better, more informed recommendations.

Committee previously recommended this change in 2021 and continues to support this change. Committee finds the April 1, 1999, date appropriate as it is the date on which the modern Northwest Territories came into being. Committee further notes that this new date more closely aligns with the standard in Yukon. Yukon's Ombudsman Act links the temporal change restriction with the law's coming into force date, which was July 1, 1996.

Committee is pleased that the Ombud will be able to investigate complaints that pre-date 2016, and that she can consider all relevant information going further back in time.

Providing more notice requirements

Bill 61 would allow the Ombud to provide more notice of investigations, including Indigenous organizations, where the public body being investigated is created from an agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and an Indigenous government.

These changes are consistent with two previous committee recommendations. Committee believes these changes will better serve complainants and the authorities subject to a complaint.

Committee Amended Two Clauses

Clarifying the Ombud's mandate

Clause 3 of Bill 61 updates section 15(1) of the Act, which defines the Ombud's mandate. The goal of the clause is to provide clearer wording. The existing wording for the mandate is awkward and was the subject of considerable debate when the Act was first debated in the Legislative Assembly. The new, proposed wording is similar to that of a previous committee recommendation, which itself was based on a motion from the then Committee Chair in the 18th Assembly.

Originally, clause 3 of Bill 61 read:

3. Subsection 15(1) is repealed, and the following is substituted:

15.(1) The mandate of the Ombud is to investigate any decision or recommendation made, or any act done or omitted to be done by an authority or by officers, employees or members of an authority in the exercise of their powers or duties, that

(a) relates to a matter of administration or the implementation of a policy; and

(b) aggrieves or may aggrieve any person or body of persons in their personal capacity.

However, the Ombud was concerned with the phrase "or the implementation of a policy." She cautioned that specifically identifying one category type of matter of administration could lead to a narrower reading of the Ombud's mandate in the future.

The Minister of Justice was concerned with the same phrase, for a different reason. The Minister thought the wording could be interpreted as expanding the Ombud's

mandate beyond matters of administration, to the potential impact on public policy decision-making.

Committee therefore agreed to and passed a motion to amend clause 3. The amendment effectively dropped the problematic phrase from the clause. The Member for Yellowknife North concurred. Committee believes that this deletion addresses the risk for confusion and ensures that the Ombud's mandate to investigate "a matter of administration" remains intentionally broad.

I'd like to turn it over to the MLA for Thebacha. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS:

Investigating matters within mandates of other statutory officers

Section 23 of the current Act prevents the Ombud from investigating complaints that are within the mandate of certain statutory officers, unless that officer agrees. The current Act applies this restriction to six (6) offices:

- The Languages Commissioner;
- The Information and Privacy Commissioner;
- The Integrity Commissioner;
- The chief electoral officer;
- The director of Human Rights; and
- The Equal Pay Commissioner

Clause 6 of Bill 61, as originally drafted, would have continued to exclude these three statutory officers of the Ombud's jurisdiction: The Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Integrity Commissioner, and the chief electoral officer. But the bill would have added the three other officers to the Ombud's jurisdiction: The Languages Commissioner, the Human Rights Commission, and the Equal Pay Commissioner.

All three statutory officers affected by the potential change expressed concern about overlapping jurisdiction with undesirable implications. The Minister of Justice voiced similar concerns and recommended more consultation with all three affected statutory officers.

Committee reviewed and sought to resolve these concerns. Committee wanted to ensure guardrails to ensure that the Ombud cannot

override decisions of the Human Rights Commission or the Adjudication Panel.

Committee consulted the Law Clerk on a couple of approaches to amend clause 6. Committee ultimately settled on the cautious approach that would maintain the exclusion of all six statutory officers covered in the existing Act. Committee also decided to expressly exclude the Human Rights Commission and the Adjudication Panel from the Ombud's jurisdiction.

Committee agreed to and passed a motion with such an amendment at the clause-by-clause review. The Member for Yellowknife North concurred.

Committee Considered Three Recommendations From The Ombud

In a written submission, the Ombud offered three suggestions to further amend Bill 61:

1. Clarify and make more inclusive the definition of "administrative head";
2. Remove the phrase "the implementation of a policy" from the Ombud's mandate; and
3. Remove the phrase "and any administrative policies of the Clerk" from subsection 42(2).

Committee agreed to and passed an amendment that addresses the Ombud's second suggestion. Committee did not consider the Ombud's first and third suggestions, as these were out of scope for Bill 61. Committee believes there's merit to reviewing both outstanding suggestions in the context of a fuller review of the Ombud Act. Committee has previously recommended that the Government of the Northwest Territories conduct a holistic review of the Ombud Act within the first two years of the 20th Assembly.

Committee Recommends Broader Review Of The Statutory Bodies' Jurisdiction

Committee believes the issue whether, how, and to what extent the Ombud can investigate other statutory officers of the Assembly merits further study, as part of a broader review. Committee notes that inconsistencies may exist between these statutory officers' jurisdiction – for example, while the Languages Commissioner may investigate a complaint against the Ombud, the converse is not allowed, at least not without the agreement of the Languages Commissioner.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Board of Management, lead a holistic review to examine and clarify the jurisdiction of each statutory officer of the Assembly to investigate:

- a) Other statutory officers of the Assembly;
- b) Public bodies that exercise statutory authority on behalf of the Executive; and
- c) Public bodies that provide statutory advisory services to the Executive.

The review should identify areas of over- and under-lapping jurisdiction and make recommendations to address discrepancies based on best practices.

Recommendation 2

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

Conclusion

On January 25, 2023, committee held a clause-by-clause review. Committee passed a motion to report Bill 61, as amended, to the Legislative Assembly as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations' review of Bill 61.

Mr. Speaker, I move, second by the Member for Kam Lake, that Committee Report 40-19(2) Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act, be received by the Assembly and referred to the Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried. Bill 61 will be deferred into Committee of the Whole.

---Carried

Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Returns to Oral Questions

RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 1326-19(2): NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS COVERED AREAS

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Monfwi on February 8, 2023, regarding non-insured health benefits covered areas.

Indigenous Services Canada has advised the Government of the Northwest Territories that non-insured health benefits do not cover stays at in-patient treatment facilities for residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Returns to oral questions. Replies to budget address. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1363-19(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SENIORS' HOUSING STRATEGY

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the housing Minister tell us if she or Housing NWT has ever considered a seniors housing strategy for the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The strategy that we had completed is for all the people throughout the Northwest Territories recognizing areas of improvement that we need to increase our services, increase our communication, and be really working with our partners throughout the territory. But we did make some changes to our seniors programming as well too where we do have the seniors aging in place program that was increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000. And we have also eliminated the co-pay for emergency repair for seniors. But we continue having the discussions throughout the Northwest Territories with the seniors societies and nonprofit organizations that do represent seniors, but I look forward to further collaboration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if a single flat-rate rent system for seniors would work in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do agree with the Member, that we need to start looking at rental rates separately calculated for seniors throughout the Northwest Territories. Right now we are looking at our policy changes but this is not an ongoing, but I would like to take a look at our rental rate plan for 2023-2024 for that review, specifically concentrated on seniors, and also recognizing mobility issues and disabilities and just complicated issues that arise at that age that I want to consider that into the calculation of rent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister consider doing a pilot project of a flat rental system for seniors to test its usage in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And before any pilot project, I would like to conduct an analysis throughout the Northwest Territories and specifically on seniors as well. And I do also appreciate the Member that providing, I think she gave me the number to this House, there's 2600 I want to say, approximately, seniors throughout the Northwest Territories, and the number is increasing after the age of 70. So I would like to look at the possibilities of a pilot and how we would further be looking at services and improving services for seniors throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister believe that a new or modified disaster assistance policy tailored specifically to seniors would benefit the people of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The disaster assistance policy is linked to federal programming and financial funding through the federal government. We don't necessarily have that policy within housing. And I don't know what the impacts would be -- I would have to work with my colleagues on this side and looking at what we can further provide when these disasters actually do happen. I do recognize there was a tornado that had happened in Fort Smith. It did affect one of the units. We do have the flood that had happened as well too. But working with my colleagues on this side, we could work together for a more collaborative approach recognizing what can we do differently within the disaster policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1364-19(2):
REINDEER GRAZING LAND WITHDRAWAL
REDUCTION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Lands. I outlined some concerns with the process of significantly reducing the size of the land withdrawal for the reindeer grazing reserve. I fully understand that there was a consultation with Inuvialuit and Gwich'in, but there doesn't seem to have been any opportunity for the general public to comment.

So can the Minister explain why that land withdrawal reduction took place and tell us what public engagement also happened? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the land withdrawal order for the reindeer grazing reserve was originally established by the federal government in 1936, as the Member has said here in his Member's statement. The reindeer herd has never used the full area of the original land withdrawal. The very large withdrawal area resulted in local requests for leases being refused, including interest in cultural healing camps, personal cabins, and tourism lodging opportunities. Starting in 2021, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Lands engaged with the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit land claim organizations and wildlife management boards to consider a size reduction to the reserve. The land withdrawal change was completed in September of 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course, he managed to forget that there was no public engagement. But presumably the land withdrawal for reindeer grazing offered some conservation value to other species in the area, including migratory waterfowl, bears, and perhaps others.

Can the Minister tell us whether his department researched the conservation value of the land withdrawal for other species before deciding to drastically reduce its size and can he share any such assessment with the public? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reindeer grazing herd was established under a land withdrawal order and never intended to be a protected area or a tool to manage and protect wildlife in the area. The GNWT's approach to reduce the size of the

reserve to the area of existing herd activity was discussed with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to ensure the needs of the reindeer herd were met. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Of course it's question period; we don't actually expect to get answers here but, you know, I asked whether there had been any assessment of other conservation values. The Minister didn't respond. There are authorities and plans in the reindeer reserve area, including the Gwich'in land use plan and Inuvialuit community conservation plans.

Can the Minister tell us whether the reductions in the land withdrawal are in compliance and consistent with these plans and whether the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board and the Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat were consulted? Merci, Mr. Speaker. And I did give the Minister the questions ahead of time. Merci, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Member for giving the questions ahead of time. Sometimes he doesn't like our answers, but we are giving him the answers, so.

The GNWT recognized the land withdrawal order overlapped with some Inuvialuit community conservation plans and some special management zones in the Gwich'in land use plan. As mentioned, ENR worked with lands to engage with the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit land claims organizations and the wildlife co-management boards to consider a size reduction to the reserve. This engagement included Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Inuvialuit Joint Secretariat, Inuvialuit Game Council, YMAC, Gwich'in Tribal Council, and the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course they didn't talk to the Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board, but that's okay.

Now that the land withdrawal has been significantly reduced, our government appears to have completed the work of the Conservatives in 2014 to open up this area for oil and gas. So can the Minister tell us when these areas slashed from the land withdrawal will be made available for oil and gas development and calls for expression of interest? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't our intention. I don't know if oil and gas wants it there. He has an article from 2014. The Liberal government is in power right now in Ottawa so I don't know what's going on there. So, Mr. Speaker, the land withdrawal change was completed in September of 2022. This means previous withdrawal land was returned available public lands. So it's public land. If people wish to use it for healing camps, cabins, tourism opportunities, that is available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 1365-19(2):
REMEDICATION OF THE HAY RIVER
HARBOUR

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the need to maintain safe passage for marine vessels is not limited to Hay River but along the Mackenzie River as well, and it's all the more need to address this issue as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Infrastructure confirm the status of the bathymetrics survey completed last fall on the channel and harbour in Hay River? And I do appreciate the fact that she actually had her department do that which is a lot more, I think, than past Ministers have done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'll take that compliment when and where I can. We didn't forget. You know, we have bathymetric survey data from the coast guard in the fall for the navigable water of the channel. We also implemented this with our own data, as the Member is aware that we had some work done in Hay River. As well, Infrastructure has worked with many departments such as ENR, Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, MTS, and other people. So we are doing this engagement so that we can better understand the potential implications to the navigation.

I want to say that as a result of this, we have established volumes and locations of the sediment that is required removal. So there is approximately 200,000 cubic metres in total that needs to be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate that answer. Can the Minister tell me what the status is on the

development of a business case to access federal dollars for harbour remediation? Has that business case been completed and submitted to the federal government and, if not, why not? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lots of questions in there but I'm happy to say that we have developed an application for multiyear federal funding to restore the harbour under the Federal Oceans Protection Plan. Harbour restoration will cost millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to implement and then ongoing funding to be able -- that is required to maintain the channel and the harbour into the future. This application to Transport Canada is at the end of this -- we're submitting by the end of this week. Meanwhile, there is work done to continue some of the regulatory and permitting requirements.

And I do want to note, Mr. Speaker, we had good uptake from a variety of communities up the valley, those that are impacted, to be able to support our application. I want to say thank you very much for those that were able to support this very important application funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to hear that there is support from, you know, people along the Mackenzie River. And, you know, when we see oil and gas return, it'll be great.

Can the Minister tell me who in Ottawa she met with to discuss harbour remediation for Hay River and what was the outcome? Were any commitments received from the federal government? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I most recently met with the Honourable Omar Alghabra who is the Minister of Transport Canada while I was in Ottawa early December. I also plan to have further discussions with him while I'm in Ottawa next week for a federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of transportation meeting. These discussions will not stop. My department's analysis is being used to inform ongoing discussions with federal counterparts as well as funding proposals. We continue, and we will continue, to lobby the federal government to stress the importance, Mr. Speaker, of this marine supply chain hub, including the need to avoid any interruption of essential resupply and to maintain safe, secure, commercial marine shipping operations here in the Northwest Territories. While, Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that our federal partners will recognize this as a critical need for the work and to be able to help us address this issue here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're closing in on spring. We're closing in on flood season. So let us hope that if no dredging takes place this year, let us hope that the ice, as it moves through the channel, scours the bottom of the river, gives it the six feet that we need to get the marine vessels safely through that channel. So that's what I'm hoping for. But failing that, can the Minister provide me with a realistic timeline as to when harbour remediation will take place on the Hay River? Thank you.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Minister's statement today I talked about how there's a lot of regulatory process that needs to take place, permitting requirements to be able to remove large amounts of sediment. These approvals cannot be avoided and will take months, Mr. Speaker. If we can obtain the required permits anticipated, we can get on that water and dredge as early as July 15th, which would result in a small channel by September.

Mr. Speaker, we do not control the federal and territorial regulatory processes, and this also assumes we secure funding as the cost to dredge this harbour is in the millions. This is a significant project, Mr. Speaker. Once we have a response from the federal government on our oceans protection plan application for funding, we can better determine next steps. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1366-19(2):
SCHOOLS NORTH APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAM

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, as I was explaining in my Member's statement, of the 38 current SNAP students in the Northwest Territories, many of those students are located here in Yellowknife, or what is referred to as the North Slave, and only four are located outside of the Yellowknife region. And so I'm wondering what has been the barrier to ensuring that there is a SNAP student in every NWT community or at least regional centre, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just to correct the record, there are 24 SNAP students in the territory and 14 SNAP apprentices. After a student graduates from being a SNAP student, they can become an actual apprentice in the SNAP program. So some of the barriers are the fact that we only have so many employers and so many students in the territory. It is not always easy for employers and especially small employers to take on apprentices, although the government does provide funding for that. There are issues around -- and I'll say that we've had trouble attracting people in the trades for a while. And so that's part of the issue as well. You know, there's been a big push over the past few years to get more students in trades. And ECE has been doing their part. The SNAP program recently got a revamp. There's been new guidelines and handbooks. There's been additional outreach. So we are trying to -- there are barriers and we are doing our best to break them down, and we've seen those numbers increase due to those efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I absolutely hear the Minister that there are only so many employers in the Northwest Territories willing or able to take on this work and that it is a significant investment to be able to take on a high school student in this kind of capacity. One of the things that the Minister has at his disposal is an entire government, which is one of the largest employers in the territory and actually employs red seal apprentices and skilled trades people in multiple regions across the territory; in fact, Mr. Speaker, in all the regions across the Northwest Territories. And so what I'm asking is for the GNWT to actually recognize itself as one of the employers that can take on SNAP students and apprentices -- thank you, Minister, for correcting my terminology there. So is ECE willing to commit to ensuring that a youth from every NWT community, or at least region, is enrolled in the SNAP program before the end of the 19th Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of assumptions in that statement there. One of the first assumptions was that I have the whole government at my disposal. And I wish that was the case but that is not the case. And the other assumption is that I can make something like this happen. The fact is that we need students and we need employers to get together and work on this. And we are making efforts. There have been advances in the past few years; we've seen the numbers increase. And we are now working as a government to explore how we can get SNAP students into employment with the Government of the

Northwest Territories and working with my colleague from the Department of Infrastructure. The Department of Finance is involved because, you know, hiring, it needs to conform to the collective agreement. So we are taking an all-of-government approach to this and I'm happy to see it's invigorating. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we were taking an all-of-government approach to this, we would see summer students in every region outside of -- including outside of Yellowknife. We would see SNAP students and SNAP apprentices in every region. But the fact of the matter is that a lot of those opportunities are often seen being taken advantage of solely or predominantly by students in Yellowknife. And I get that there's more population here. I absolutely get that. I get that there's more -- that there are more students here, that there are more employers here; I absolutely understand that. And I get that the Minister also can't force the government to do anything. But an example as housing, who is willing to put an apprentice in their contracts, there are departments out there willing to partake in these opportunities. And so I'm asking the Minister if he will especially work with Ministers of Infrastructure and Housing to tell them about the SNAP program because yesterday I heard in housing, in an exchange between a Member and the Minister, that they wished there was an opportunity before the apprenticeship program. This is it, Mr. Speaker. So I'm asking if the GNWT will be one of its own clients and partake in the SNAP program? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that work is underway. As I stated, the Department of Infrastructure is actually looking at a couple students in different regions to take them on as SNAP students. So that work is happening. And, again, I'll say that when I came into this role I really did start pushing apprenticeships. Not that the department wasn't pushing them before but it really was one of my focuses. And, you know, we've seen more efforts gone into this area and we're continuing to see that. You can see it through the collaboration between ECE, the Department of Infrastructure, and other government bodies as we try to get more SNAP students. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final short supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that commitment from the Minister. I think this is an

excellent program and a really big opportunity for northern students.

One of the things that I also mentioned today in my questions was summer students. Summer is coming. Now is the time where summer students are hired. And I would also like to see an effort on the part of the GNWT to also make sure that summer students are being hired across the Northwest Territories. And so will the Minister of education also commit to talking to his colleagues about ways to make that happen? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Summer students falls under the -- I guess the purview of the Department of Finance. That's generally where those types of questions go. Nonetheless, I'm happy to promote the idea of hiring students to my Cabinet colleagues, and I'll do that wholeheartedly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1367-19(2):
IMPROVING HEALTHCARE IN SMALL
COMMUNITIES

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in June 2022, I tabled Motion 54-19(2), improving healthcare in small communities, calling for the Government of the Northwest Territories to conduct an external audit of client treatment records and client satisfaction. The response to the motion stated: Regular audits are undertaken at each health centre to ensure health services are delivered according to clinical practice standards and guidelines.

Can the Minister of health explain what a clinical audit in the small community health centre includes? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have only high-level information in this area. I can't answer that question. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to prioritizing client satisfaction of Indigenous persons in the audit? And I'll still keep speaking to the audited. Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the response to the Member's motion, there was quite an extensive section on cultural safety and how it was being pursued through initiatives such as the

Indigenous patient advocates who were introduced today, as well as through cultural safety training, the living well together curriculum, which all civil servants are required to complete, and through to the office of client experience. Pardon me, the Office of Cultural Safety which provides inhouse training on cultural safety to increase confidence of Indigenous patients using the healthcare system. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a preventative maintenance program, you fix the small problems before they become too major and costly. And in this situation, you know, it can cost people their lives. And that's why I've been after getting an audit almost like -- I don't know what you would call it. It's an internal audit, like of the services within the health centre what the person -- the ailment going into the health centre, how it was diagnosed, what was the outcome of the diagnosis, and what was the remedy for it. Those are becoming very important as we're hearing more and more all the time about misdiagnosis.

So I'm wondering if the Minister can commit to prioritizing the standards for diagnosis, rates of correct diagnosis, and the rates of misdiagnosis in the audit? Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't make that commitment to go over each patient's file and determine whether they were appropriately diagnosed. Audits generally are samples. They don't look at every single file. If somebody has a specific complaint about the way they were treated, concerns about the way they were treated, that they feel they were misdiagnosed, this is what the office of client experience is for as well as our other quality assurance processes. It's there to make sure that patients have a venue in which to make their concerns known and, more importantly in some ways, have them resolved. And so if the Member knows of people who are suggesting that they haven't been treated appropriately, then I encourage him to provide them with the information for the office of the client experience to resolve their issues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the response to the motion, and it's written, is regular audits are undertaken at each health centre. Now, we don't know what the audits include because our concern, as residents, is they're not addressing the root issue of the problems. People are going in there multiple times with the same ailment and

they're not being diagnosed properly at the outset. And I've always said if they don't know what is wrong with the patient and he's severely looking like he's in distress, they should be sent to a specialist ASAP. But as, you know, we're Indigenous so they won't spend that money on us. I'm really hoping that the Minister would explain to us what they mean by regular audits are undertaken. What audits are undertaken compared to the ones that I'm requesting? Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll just start by saying that we run a public health system. It's for all residents of the NWT. It is funded to provide care by doctors and nurses in acute care settings and health centres and to provide for medical travel to people who have to travel. So to make an outrageous statement like nothing's going to happen because they're Indigenous is offensive to the people who work in our system every day to provide the best quality care to residents.

In terms of what's included specifically in an audit, I will ask the department to provide more information on that point and send that response to the Member when it's available. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 1368-19(2):
MUNICIPAL FUNDING GAP

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of MACA. Has the Department of MACA submitted, within the life of this Assembly, any forced growth submissions to increase the funding for our communities and, if so, were they successful? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for MACA.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will be putting \$5 million into this. We do work with the communities of NWTAC through that process, so we do have a process that we do submit stuff to Cabinet. Decisions are made by Cabinet and to this House and that's how we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Minister reiterated my Member's statement, but I've asked the question whether or not the department has submitted any forced growth submissions and, if so, were they successful? Thank you.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, yes, there has been stuff and water and sewer is one of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'll have to follow up later on to find out what "stuff" is.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is predicting a \$178 million operating surplus for 2023-2024. Can the Minister commit to allocating some of these federal resources to address the NWT community funding needs? We don't even have to go outside of our door very far to see people and the impacts of the underfunding of our communities. This morning I dropped off coats to people at the solid waste facility who are striking because their community can't afford to pay them properly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member helping out people. That's greatly -- I think that's awesome.

In regards to the budgeting process, committee has the opportunity to bring forward requests for increases. We're more than willing to do that, but they need to work with the Finance Minister on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was thrown off by having to repeat myself for question number two. You know, I really find it quite disturbing that the Minister of MACA is passing off the responsibility to advocate for funding for communities, to not only us on this side but to his colleague the Finance Minister. Can this Minister commit to finding money to address the funding gap of \$40 million? If that has to be a supplementary appropriation, I'm sure that Members on this side would be in support of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate the Member's love. I mean, I've received it in this House numerous times from this Member and I greatly appreciate it; thank you very much for that. Mr. Speaker --

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The Member for Great Slave is rising on a Point of Order. What is your Point of Order?

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find that the Minister's comments to me are derogatory and offensive. It is not said with any sort of actual respect towards me on this side. I would ask that the Minister withdraw his remarks and apologize. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Just to be sure, we'll check Hansard and we'll take it on notice and deal with this another day. Thank you.

Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 1369-19(2):
FEDERAL HOUSING FUNDING

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April the 14th, 2022, there was an article on the CBC website where it says NWT to see \$60 million federal housing dollars, allocation to be determined. The Northwest Territories will receive \$60 million over two years to tackle the territory's housing crisis from a federal budget directing \$10.1 billion to housing. But now that funding will be allocated isn't clear yet.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my constituency and throughout the Northwest Territories were very happy to see that there was money to be allocated for it to deal with the housing crisis here in the Northwest Territories. In this document that was tabled on October 18th, 2022, it clearly shows that the housing corporation used that money to fix up public housing. And I'm not really sure how that is dealing with the housing crisis here in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. But in the budget this year as well, it shows that the money was put aside of \$25 million and another 30 this year. My question is as well where did the \$5 million go?

So my question to, Mr. Speaker, to the housing minister is can the Minister responsible for Housing NWT let me know how much money and her agencies have received from CIRNAC to address housing crisis here in the Northwest Territories to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister responsible for Housing NWT.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question as well too, because our federal engagement has been quite successful. In the first year of this government, we were able to access the \$60 million co-investment fund. Out of that, we were able to access \$25 million. The remaining had went out to stakeholders and Indigenous governments and nonprofit organizations throughout the Northwest Territories. And also, we did receive the \$60 million over the two years as well too. But as the territory knows, and the Members on the other side, is that our public housing units are in very, very poor condition and it's very challenging for us to keep up with those renovations that need

to be conducted. So that money is going to be set aside and be committed to be repairing those public housing units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister. Can the Minister comment on if she talked to the Indigenous leaders here in the Northwest Territories when the application was made so that they understand that this application was made from CIRNAC to put into housing to deal with the housing crisis here in the Northwest Territories; did she consult with the Indigenous governments on this application process? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely. Consulting with Indigenous groups is a priority of this portfolio and it is something that has -- we have made significant progress in the Northwest Territories and is set aside from the CIRNAC funding that we did have to the Members that we've also been very successful with distinction-based funding that was set aside for Indigenous governments, that we had worked with the federal government to try to simplify that application process. We had a number of announcements where Indigenous governments were directly funded. And what I can think of on top of my head is that with the GNWT and Indigenous governments working in partnership, the Tlicho was able to receive \$42 million and the Sahtu was able to receive \$25 million. The Gwich'in also received \$25 million. And this is not funding that is directly or involved -- or we're not even involved as a government as to what their plans possibly can be like and how they're going to be spending their funding. This is not territorial funding that has been brought into the territorial government. This is direct funding from the federal government to the Indigenous groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister also elaborate on how much money have Housing NWT received to date from CIRNAC so that the people here in the Northwest Territories knows that the application that was made for money for housing repairs -- right now as it is, I go into my riding, my chiefs tell me -- or my leaders tell me we don't know anything about this money and they want to know where the money is. But she still hasn't answered -- like, I'd like to ask that question. Where did the other \$5 million go? Right now in the budget here we've got 25 and 30; where did the other \$5 million go? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Member for his question as well too. And looking at the funding that we have received as Housing NWT, right to my knowledge -- I'm just thinking just at the top of my head is that we received \$25 million in the last government. We received an additional \$25 million through the co-investment. And then also \$30 million over two years. So he can do the math there. And also I just want to speak about the participation we've had also with YKDFN who we work very closely with as well too, and we're going to be looking at working together in having a housing forum this summer. And they are actually going to be co-chairing that housing forum. We've also worked with them directly as well too, and they have been quite successful in their co-investment applications as well too where Lutselk'e had received five units, \$2 million through the co-investment. YKDFN has received \$19 million for 19 units. And also a Habitat for Humanity unit was constructed in the Member's riding. This year, out of the housing rollout, Fort Resolution will be receiving six units, Lutselk'e will be receiving four, N'dilo two, and Dettah two as well.

Also I'd just like to include that over the past ten years, we've invested \$18.5 million into the Member's riding. The current year delivery, we will be investing \$12.1 million. And our proposed for 2023-2024 will be \$4.1 million invested in Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, it's nice to see that they're spending money in my riding. The thing is that I don't think the people understand that the units that's going into the community, who's paying for the operation and maintenance on those things.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about \$30 million here for this fiscal year and, you know, I disagree with the Minister in regards to her consultation with Indigenous governments. I don't think that happened because I could tell you this, I could go through my communities and they don't say anything about consultation.

Anyways, my question to the Minister, can the Minister -- would the Minister entertain taking that \$30 million and do a contribution agreement with Indigenous governments here in the Northwest Territories to address their own housing needs and housing repairs in the communities? Thank you.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to comment on the

consultation that housing has provided. They have been very diligent, I want to say, with the consultation throughout the Northwest Territories. And like I have said, YKDFN has been a very active participant on our Council of Leaders, and we have a very respectful relationship working with YKDFN. And also right now in Fort Resolution, they will be receiving one of our duplexes that we will be constructing for seniors throughout the Northwest Territories, and there is a consultation going on right now. I also want to include that our engagement for seniors housing is actually happening. Letters have also gone out to every Indigenous group recognizing that we do have a rollout of these units.

They were given prior notice to these units coming into their communities. And also we meet regularly with the Council of Leaders that have had a lot of engagement with our changes for our policy changes going forward. And for the Member asking for the \$30 million, I've already said we are going to be investing \$4.1 million into the Member's riding. This current year we've invested \$12.1 million. The \$30 million that we do have is to repair our public housing units and throughout this government. And the comments that have been made, our units are in very poor condition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 1370-19(2):
ARCTIC COUNCIL

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I brought up the Member's statement for the Arctic Council. Can the Premier tell this House where does the Arctic Council stand right now and have they met, or is there any dialogue going back and forth since the Russian attack on Ukraine, because the Russians are the chair of the committee. So is the federal government engaged with the territorial government in regards to for the committee to move forward and where it's at? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So Canada, the federal government at this point is the representative on the Arctic Circle -- or the Arctic Council, sorry. The Northwest Territories does go as part of the Canadian delegation, and we do sit on working groups as appropriate for the Northwest Territories. But the Arctic Council

has not met for the last two years. Russia was the chair from May 2021 to May 2023, which is coming up. My understanding is that Norway will be the next chair and hopefully there will be some movements once Norway takes over the chair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Arctic Council resumes meetings, when will that be on a timeline on a go forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Northwest Territories doesn't actually have a seat at that table. It's the federal government that does. We sit on working groups. We go as part of the Canadian delegation but we're not actually the direct member for that. I am assuming that once Norway takes over the chair that meetings will start again. However, I'm kind of wondering where the Member is going with this and I think it is around geopolitical things that are happening. And so I do want to stress that the Ottawa declaration explicitly excludes discussions of military security at the Arctic Council. So if that's where the Member's going, then this is not the right forum for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is involved in any work associated with the Arctic Council as they were just delegates, I guess. But it's not in regards to military or anything like that. It's climate change research, ocean management, Arctic shipping, waste management, regional planning. Can the Premier just explain to us where they're sitting and if they're just delegates sitting behind the table in regards to for Canadian -- what are they doing? What are they saying? Are they representing us? Are they -- because if they haven't been sitting for the last two years, has the Premier's office got in touch with them and on a go forward, what's happening? That's all I'm trying to ask, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So thank you for the clarification. I was kind of wondering what the line of questioning was going to be. So no, the Arctic Council has not met in the last two years because of Russia being the chair and the geopolitical issues that are going on right now around that. But the Member is correct, it's important that things are happening in the Arctic, and so it's important that we do take as many opportunities as possible to be able to discuss issues that affect the Arctic. So I know that Ministers have gone and officials have gone to COP. I also know that in the last short time over the last year, I've attended the Arctic Circle, both in Greenland and in Iceland. I've

gone to the Arctic encounters in Alaska. I've also met with the northern Premiers. We've talked to Ministers together, all three northern Premiers. So any opportunity that we can to speak about the issues in the Arctic, whether it's climate change -- and even if it is geopolitical issues, we take those opportunities, Mr. Speaker. I think this is really important for us all to pay attention to what's going on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, madam Premier. Final supplementary. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank that. I just want to really emphasize that any meetings like that that are being attended, you know, just to let this side of the House know, and please let us know on this side of the House in regards to any meetings like that where it's happening in our back door where we live and where we're born and raised. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually we do try to -- I'm not sure if all the time but try to get better at it. But I do know that at the Arctic Council actually that we just attended, we did let the Members know on the other side. They sent a Member to attend with us. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Premier. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1371-19(2):
EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some significant concerns with the current proposal to change extended healthcare benefits. So my first question to the Minister of health is we've gone out, we've engaged; can the Minister just update this House what the next steps are on this plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by thanking the 729 people who provided input into the public engagement process on the supplementary health benefits. That feedback was aggregated into themes and released as a report on January the 23rd. Using the information gathered, the departmental staff are writing a new policy. In fact, we didn't consult on a policy. We consulted on an issue. So they are writing a new policy, and it will go through the standard process of being presented to Cabinet and to the Regular Members, the Standing Committee

on Social Development. So that will happen in this -- not in this sitting but through the spring. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it was quite clear in that public engagement that lots of people were very concerned about the proposal to remove the specified conditions. Can the Minister confirm whether the plan is to draft that new policy that will, in fact, remove those specified conditions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the point of revising this policy was to make it more equitable and to bring people into coverage who currently don't have any third-party insurance. That's approximately 2,200 people. And so we can't have an equitable benefits program if you have to have a specific disease in order to qualify for that program. There are 34 conditions on that list. So, for example, if you have ALS, you're not covered, and that puts the people who don't have coverage in a very awkward position to buy the medication and, especially for ALS, the medical equipment and appliances that they require to live their lives. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then I think the answer there is to add ALS to the list. I don't understand why this is being posed as a binary that we on one hand want to have a means-tested program for low income people who are -- you know, inherently don't have these conditions because they would be covered so are likely healthy people, and on the other hand people who are existing with a specified disease condition and putting their current treatment at risk. Is it not possible for the Minister to put forward a new policy that keeps the current approach and as a means-tested approach? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people who are currently receiving support for their specified conditions will continue to receive that support. The change here is that the program proposal that was in the discussion paper is to have income testing in order to figure out what level of support the person themselves might be able to afford towards the total cost. We use income testing for everything. You need income testing for income assistance. You need income testing for housing. You need income testing for the seniors fuel subsidy. We're looking at income testing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we don't use income testing for anything in public healthcare. And if you show up to the doctor, it doesn't matter how much money you make; you get services provided if you are sick. And that is exactly what we were trying to do with people who had these specified disease conditions. And my concern, Mr. Speaker, is we're now asking people to go out and try and find third-party insurance when they have diseases which makes it very difficult to get third-party insurance. We're asking people to put their coverage at risk, and it is causing them a lot of stress and, in fact, not helping the health of our residents. My preference here is that we don't do this at all. But I'm wondering if one option is that we could grandfather people who are currently under this program so that their coverage is not at risk. I'll note it's much easier to ask a person who doesn't have one of these diseases to go out and get insurance -- health insurance than it is to ask one of these people who currently do. Is it possible to grandfather these people into their medication programs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I fear that the Member is muddying the waters here, and that's a cause of anxiety. The principles of the Canadian health system is that everybody receives hospital and doctor care in a single-payer system. We are committed to that system. The whole country is committed to that system. Nothing about that is going to change. There are, however, related services like pharmaceuticals that are subject to different programs. So we're not asking anyone to be income tested to show up at the ER. But we are looking at income testing in order to make access to drugs equitable. And I think the Member is making a huge mistake in assuming that the people who are not covered now by any form of insurance are healthy and they don't need it. That's not my experience of low-income people. They usually have worse than average health outcomes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1372-19(2):
CAMERON HILLS GAS FIELD
ENVIROMENTAL LIABILITIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Lands, again on the preventable public liabilities at the Cameron Hills sour gas field.

Can the Minister tell us whether there's anyone from the Northwest Territories working at the

site for Environmental Liabilities Management Incorporated or any of its subcontractors? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for Lands.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NWT receiver sought bids through the procure process from all parties, including Northern Indigenous governments and Northern businesses. The NWT receiver did not receive any bids from Northern businesses or Indigenous governments. To the Department of Lands' knowledge, there currently is no one from the NWT working at the site but that there may be opportunities for subcontractors to conduct some of the upcoming work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. That doesn't really surprise me. It appears the entire operation is being handled out of Alberta. No jobs, no contracting. The government that actually said no to an Indigenous government that wanted to do the work? That's pretty bad for a government that says it wants to support a remediation economy and then the work goes elsewhere. So can the Minister tell us how the work at Cameron Hills is supporting the remediation economy of the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, access to the site, with the exception of one well, has always been through winter road constructed through Alberta. The receiver is responsible for the procurement process and the management of the contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. So from the questions I asked yesterday, it seems that the sumps and contaminated soils are not covered in the current land use permit or the abandonment agreement that's been negotiated with ELM. It's not clear whether all the closure and reclamation work is -- sorry, can the Minister tell us whether the current contract with ELM and the land use permit cover all the work that's going to be required at Cameron Hills? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current contract covers the work required to carry out the order issued by the regulator of the oil and gas regulations to comply with any directions from the GNWT inspectors. The regulator is inspected and certified the work being done. As mentioned, the receiver is working to submit a revised closure and reclamation plan by June of 2024. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. By June 2024, a lot of the work is already going to be done and then the plan will actually kind of be almost meaningless. But, you know, I've raised the repeated failure of our government to prevent public liabilities and I'm not aware of any new legislative regulatory policy work to prevent this from happening again and again. I called on the Auditor General of Canada to examine these devolution failures.

Can the Minister tell us whether there will be any new legislative regulatory or policy work to prevent public liabilities before the end of this Assembly? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the Member for the question. This site did go through a modern regulatory process, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, the funds held transferred to the GNWT and OROGO at devolution were insufficient to cover the liabilities. The GNWT is currently carrying out the regulatory and policy work set out in the work plan to implement the GNWT's approach to contaminated sites and management. Some of this work has been completed and the remaining work is ongoing. So, Mr. Speaker, we're going through a process. We're trying to get it done. And, again, we don't know what the true costs are going to be until all the work is done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Member for Monfwi.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 58-19(2):
FRANK CHANNEL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Frank Channel Bridge Replacement. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Infrastructure. The Frank Channel Bridge is a critical piece of infrastructure for the Northwest Territories, providing access to the Tlicho communities, Yellowknife, and the mines in the Slave Geological Province region.

I have four questions:

1. Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of the additional costs identified for the Frank Channel Bridge Replacement Project?

2. Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of funding already committed or budgeted by the Government of the Northwest Territories, and/or committed budgeted by the federal government?
3. Can the Minister provide a copy of the last structural assessment completed on the Frank Channel Bridge?
4. Can the Minister provide a detailed contingency plan for continued operation and maintenance of the Frank Channel Bridge if construction of the replacement is delayed?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 830-19(2):
REPORT ON THE STAFF RETENTION
POLICY FOR 2019-2020, 2020-2021 AND
2021-2022

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Report on the Staff Retention Policy for 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 831-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL
QUESTION 1274-19(2): AURORA COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ACCESSIBILITY

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Follow-up letter for Oral Question 1274-19(2): Aurora College University Campus Accessibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 832-19(2):
CANADIAN PRESS ARTICLE TITLED
"CONSERVATIVES EYE ARCTIC REINDEER
RESERVE FOR OIL AND GAS" DATED
FEBRUARY 20, 2014

TABLED DOCUMENT 833-19(2):
YUKON GOVERNMENT CARBON PRICE
REBATE ACT SCHEDULE 1 OF SY 2019, C.8

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following two documents: One, "Conservatives eye Arctic Reindeer Reserve for Oil and Gas" by the Canadian Press posted February 20th, 2014; and number two, Mr. Speaker, Yukon Government Carbon Rebate Act. Merci, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Kam Lake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 72-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, February 16th, 2023, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Legislative Assembly recommends the appointment of Mr. Glen Rutland as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly;

And further, that this appointment take effect on April 1st, 2023.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Notices of motion. Member for Thebacha.

MOTION 73-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE
HOUSE TO FEBRUARY 27, 2023

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, February the 16th, 2023, I will move the following motion:

I move, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 16th, 2023, it shall be adjourned until Monday, February 27th, 2023;

And furthermore, that at any time prior to February 27th, 2023, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House

should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at that time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Notices of motion. Motions. Member for Kam Lake.

Motions

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with a motion put forward today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may continue. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION 72-19(2):
APPOINTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY,
CARRIED

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Appointment of the Clerk of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

WHEREAS the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, after 20 years of dedicated service to the last six Legislative Assemblies, has indicated his intention to retire on March 31st, 2023;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable to recommend the appointment of an individual as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS Section 54(1) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act provides that the clerk shall be appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories on the recommendation of the Board of Management approved by motion of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Management has recommended the appointment of Mr. Glen Rutland of Yellowknife as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Legislative Assembly recommend the appointment of Mr. Glen Rutland as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by

the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER, that this appointment take effect on April 1st, 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23 and 29, Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), Tabled Document 813-19(2), with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON: I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates, Housing Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with NWT Housing.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Minister, do you wish bring witnesses into the Chamber?

Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Chinna, could you please introduce your witnesses again.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me Ms. Eleanor Young, president of Housing NWT and CEO. And Jim Martin, vice-president. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Members, we are continuing on with Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates. And we are considering the estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. And we are on the page 379 to 381, and it's the NWT Housing Corporation executive. Is there any questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, earlier last week, I had the opportunity to speak on the floor of the House with the Minister of housing in regards to strategic data collection and analysis by the department of housing. And both in terms of their clientele but also in terms of homelessness in conjunction with the homelessness prevention strategy and being able to use data collection as a means for further prevention. And so I'm wondering if that work would come out of the executive or where the funding for the hardware and software to be able to do this would come from? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Housing NWT participates in the annual capital -- IT capital process each year. And we have identified a number of areas for system enhancements and system replacements. So as part of the work that we're doing there, we'll be sure to consider this enhanced data collection opportunities going forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much. So that process is something that we just went through in the October/November sitting doing the capital acquisition plan. So would this then not happen until the next capital acquisition plan, or would this happen in the form of a supplemental appropriation from housing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin speak -- or respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. What I spoke to was probably more of some larger investment opportunities that we're considering, but certainly doesn't prevent Housing NWT continuing to invest through our contract service dollars that we do have available in this budget to advance system improvement initiatives for the coming year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So just to confirm, this is work that will begin right away on the part of the housing corporation and not wait for another fiscal year to begin? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that's correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, looking at the 2022-2023 Main Estimates on page 380 compared to the 2022-2023 revised main estimates under policy and planning, there's a significant budgetary increase there, and I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what propelled that budget, which grew quite a bit.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. So in the expenditure area for compensation and benefits, we had internally funded some positions out of our internal resources in previous years and we've now put those in to reinstate them out of the main estimates budget here. And so, specifically, I'm speaking to our community housing planner positions. There's two of those. Our homelessness specialist. When we spoke yesterday to sunseting a support worker position, we're funding that one through grant funding now. And then the final position I'll reference is our associate deputy minister. So it's just getting those positions

reflected properly in our main estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So in the 2023-2024 Main Estimates, which one of those positions are no longer reflected in the 2023-2024 Main Estimates, because I see that there is about a \$2 million difference between the revised estimates and then this year's main estimates. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will be -- it looks like we're going to be sunseting one of our positions here, the Behchoko housing support worker. But that will be funded through the community initiative project and working with the Tlicho housing working group. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So a Behchoko housing support worker gets \$2 million a year? I'm just wondering where else the difference comes from. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's a number of positions that will be sunseting here. I'll have President Young respond -- or Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So looking at the 2022-2023 Revised Estimates compared to the 2023-2024 Main Estimates, there's a delta there, as was mentioned, approximately \$2 million. And the reason for that is currently Housing NWT is supporting the delivery of the Inuvik shelter operations. And that work is involving an additional short-term staff hires. And in that situation, like for this year, that's translating into approximately a \$2 million investment. And for the coming year, we're anticipating returning that work to a third-party provider, and it would no longer show up in the main estimates of our executive section here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, can the Minister comment on whether or not they have been successful at securing the third-party provider for the Inuvik shelter? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. There was some challenges within the Beaufort Delta. I'll have President Young elaborate on those challenges. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe the Minister has spoken in the House about a lack of success or expression of interest that housing did hold. But we have since been approached by two potential providers that we're currently working to get proposals from them to pursue this further. So the expression of interest didn't lead us there but now we're having conversations with folks again. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, if from that \$2 million was the cost of operating roughly the Inuvik shelter, where will that \$2 million then be housed within the housing corporation budget to properly fund a third-party provider to provide that service? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the budget associated with the delivery of the Inuvik shelter operations through a third party is set out in the finance and infrastructure activity under grants and contributions under emergency shelters. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, then I will come back to that or one of my colleagues I'm sure will.

My last question is in regards to the homelessness prevention strategy. So I'm sure it's no secret to anybody who listens to session that this side of the House is very excited to get to read this and share in the excitement of that final draft with the other side of the House. And I am wondering if there is any dollars associated with this strategy within this budget and is it found here in executive, or would that too also be found in finance and infrastructure? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have President Young respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. And as referenced by vice-president Martin, most of the dollars associated with our programs is under grants and contributions currently. So most of it will be in the finance and infrastructure area of our main estimates currently. There are a few positions, for example our homelessness specialist, which is under policy and planning, but the bulk of the budget is in grants and contributions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the last question for this section is the Minister did reference, as well as the deputy minister, the homelessness specialist position. And I'm wondering if given the release of the homelessness prevention strategy during this fiscal year, but hopefully for implementation soon after, if there will be a need for additional resources in order to implement that strategy and if one homelessness specialist is enough for the department? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working with the homelessness strategy, but it's an all-of-a-government approach with the department of executive as well too. And I'll just have President Young elaborate on the response as well because it is -- I find it quite complicated on how we're going to be seeing this going forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. So when the draft strategy is provided, we'll talk in there about some priorities and some of the things that need to be done immediately and then some longer-term visions. Each department that's been working on this has identified what resources, you know, that it currently puts towards homelessness that can support the overall initiative and then we have to finish the work in terms of what the additional costs might be for some of the other activities, and that work is still underway at the moment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right, are there any further questions from Members under NWT Housing Corporation executive? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. And I'm just not sure where these two topics fit in because the descriptions of the activities are sometimes not very helpful, at least for me, in understanding what is happening. But community housing plans, where are we at with community housing plans? Were there any completed in the last year; how many are done; how many more to go; and what does the -- let's start with that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I actually had this in front of me while we were sitting on the floor of the House here. We have a number of them that are in the draft plan stages. And I'm just looking for the ones -- we have some that are in progress where there's just the communication that is happening right now at the community level. We've got completed Enterprise, K'atloodèche, Fort Good Hope. Just a second.

Okay, there's six of them that have been completed: Ford Liard, Kakisa, Lutselk'e, Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Hay River, Sambaa K'e, Jean Marie, Tulita, Yellowknife, Dene First Nation is developing their strategy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I guess I have a habit of trying to ask too many questions at the same time. Can the Minister tell us how many were completed in the last financial year and how many are anticipated to be completed in 2023-2024? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now the community housing plans have taken a different approach with the allocation of the distinction-based funding that was allocated to the Indigenous governments. And they are now using these plans to identify their needs, and now they've received the funding. It hasn't stopped the work that we are currently doing. We're still working in collaboration with them, but some of the communities have just put a hold on some of these plans being developed. But we do have six of them that have been completed and nine that are being developed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, all right. So thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister and the staff. So what is NWT Housing going to use these plans for when -- are they used in developing the capital plan for the housing corp, or what specifically are these plans used for now? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. These plans are really -- I just kind of want to go back a little bit. In the last government, this was really emphasized by the former president at that time to get these community housing plans finalized. These were to be advocating documents that identified every single housing need because Housing did understand that every housing need throughout the Northwest Territories is different. It's not a blanket one response solution. And looking at these documents to be guided by the Indigenous governments and at the community level but also having our conversations with the federal government on how to better fund the Northwest Territories, also recognizing we do have 17 Indigenous governments as well too and settled land claim areas. It was quite diverse. But the point of these housing plans was to identify the significant need at the ground level from the communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess I would hope that the housing corp uses these plans as well in developing its own capital requirements. But I want to move on to apprenticeships.

And I just would like to get some assurance that the housing corp actually builds in apprenticeship requirements in any contracts

that it issues. So if the Minister can tell me that that is the case in their practice, I'd be a lot happier. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I'm happy to say that is absolutely correct. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Wow, that's great. I got a happy Minister and a happy MLA. Okay, so can you tell me how many apprenticeship positions are created and how successful you folks are in actually getting those positions filled? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The last number I had to date that I could remember at the top of my head was 33. We've had projects throughout the -- oh sorry, 35 not 33. And these requirements are built into the contracts that are put out there throughout the Northwest Territories. And it's also -- when we did get the funding from CIRNAC -- from the federal government, that I wanted to create an opportunity at the ground level to create local employment and to be able to really acknowledge the education and training and try to really enhance this opportunity. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I have nothing further on this activity, and I want to thank the Minister and staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Questions under the executive? Member from Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the Members here, I think the other day, alluded to the housing corp being work for third parties to generate revenue. And I guess I have a -- I kind of have an issue with government competing against private sector. And we seen that, you know, with the RCMP units. And it's not just with this department. It's also with infrastructure and other ones as well. So is this going to be sort of a new way of doing business? Are you going to -- is the department going to go out there and start looking for opportunities that compete against private sector in the future and ramp that up? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This was a one-time opportunity where the federal government had reached out to housing corporation at that time to deliver the housing units. And no, that's not going to be our practice in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, that's good to hear. You know, I think that we have to -- you know, instead of competing against private sector, we got to support them. And, you know, they're out there, you know, creating jobs as well, and they've got their own infrastructure to pay for so it's important.

Just on -- there was some talk, I guess, about homelessness and, you know, the facility in Inuvik. And I'm not sure what the cost of running that facility is, but I'm sure it was up in the \$2 million mark? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. I don't know if we actually have that tallied up number on hand. We might have to get back to the Member.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. The cost currently to operate the two Inuvik shelters is approximately \$2 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I just find it strange is that in other communities, you know, say for instance Hay River, I'll use as an example, we've got a day and night shelter there and I'm not sure, we're probably -- Housing, I think might be putting \$350,000 into it. So if we're spending \$2 million there, I'm not sure what we're spending here in Yellowknife as well, but are we getting, I guess, value for the dollars we're putting out, or do we only get value for the dollars we're putting out when we have NGOs looking after it versus government? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This was a very unique situation that happened in the Beaufort Delta, and I don't look at practicing this going in the future. I want to more invest into education and training for NGOs. I want to more be able to partner with them. With this case, it was quite severe at that time. We were looking at extreme freezing temperatures. There was actually really no NGO that wanted to step up and take on the responsibility. We could not just leave this operation abandoned at that time. And we did have conversations with Indigenous governments. They weren't ready to take this on. They did establish a working group but there was really no commitment at that time from the community to run the operation and we fell into an obligation where we had to treat this as an emergency. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thank you for that answer. You know, when it comes to, you know, people who are, you know, basically nowhere to live, there's no doubt we have to -- you know, we have to step in and do something. But at the same time, you know, when we're spending money, what I'd like to see is that we actually get some value and we take a look and, you know, do an analysis to see if we're actually doing the right thing and going down the right path, because we seem to be putting -- you know, we seem to be putting money into different programs and there may be better ways to do it. So I'm not sure if, you know, if you have the staff to do those evaluations and look at other options. Maybe you just want to comment on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take that back to the department as well because I don't want to take work away from, and the responsibility, from the nonprofit organizations. Like I had said, I'd rather support them. And I do know they're significantly underfunded, and this is something we recognize as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm pleased to hear that you say that you recognize they are underfunded. Not only are they underfunded but they don't have any long-term funding as well. And I think if we want to see some success and make sure that we get good value that we extend those terms out

with them. And yeah, so that's I guess just more of a comment. So thank you, that's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions under the executive from Members? No further questions. Thank you, we will move on to finance -- oh, okay. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask the Minister, the executive, about eight months ago we passed a motion to transfer public housing units that tenant lived in for over 20 years, for most of their life, where they raised their children. And today I just wanted to ask the Minister how many of those units were transferred?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We did roll out that initiative earlier in this government as well. We didn't have such a significant uptake. I was under the assumption that we probably would have gotten rid of a thousand of our units; that's what I was assuming. But what had come back is that in response that a lot of the people weren't ready to get into homeownership and looking at a transfer and the responsibility of 100 percent of the operation and maintenance and the utilities that come with it as well. To date, we've received 52 applications. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yes, I know there are people that I have been talking to, they want -- they're waiting. And I sent in numerous emails to the Minister to get in contact with these people. And there's a lot of people that are -- I know people have different perspectives. Some people in favour. Some people are not in favour. That's up to them. But there are a lot of people that are interested. They want to become a homeowner. And they're waiting patiently. They're waiting from the executive office where all the decisions are being made. So I just wanted to ask the Minister will this be completed within this fiscal year?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd have to follow up on those requests coming forward because what I've seen so far is that there's a number of circumstances that lie within those transactions as well too. And just looking at every file but also trying to create fair, adequate opportunity for them as well. I

don't want to see units being transferred and then later on we've transferred something that needed \$100,000 worth of work, and we just basically walked away. I want to make sure that they are secured. But the priority is to get them out of the social programming. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yeah, no, well this will really free up a lot of housing for the Housing to build more houses in small communities. And I can't believe it that we do have a homeless specialist in our own territory where there's 50 percent of the population are Indigenous and most of the people that are living in those units are Indigenous people. You know, and it is -- I find it offensive because in our -- like, we never really had any issues with this in the past. And this goes back to colonization. From the beginning, we've been asked -- we've been told how to live, what to do, all those things. There's a lot of legislations in place. And now with this handbook, whatever, tenant's handbook is also telling tenants what to do. And I find that very offensive. And I know that -- and they said they were going to, you know, like, put it in Indigenous language as well. Like, we never really had that issues. We never had an issue with homelessness before. Now, because of colonization, we do have a serious, serious housing crisis in small communities. Even in Tlicho region alone, we have more than six people living in a single household, and transferring this unit to long-term tenants. And I know what she's saying that -- I know there are some arrears that's probably stopping some of the transfer to take place. Like I said before, some of these outstanding arrears stems from going back using the last year's income tax notice of assessment. And I said it before that last year maybe they were working; this year they're not working. And some years are good that way. Just like it's being reported on the CBC news report. So I just wanted to ask the Minister when can she do the transfer? Like, can she do it sooner than later? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Housing is there ready and available to be working with these individuals in making sure that we provide the adequate services. We've got 52 applications so far. And like I had said, that the condition of the units as well too that we need to make sure that when we transfer these units over that they are -- they don't come with issues. We've got to make sure

that they -- we are transferring over units that don't actually have the problems. And I've travelled throughout the Northwest Territories. I've pretty much been to every single community throughout the territory, and I've seen a number of issues. I've been into a public housing unit where we had tenants using a -- what you call those, outhouse -- what is it? Honey bucket. You know, and we lack our services as well too in trying to people to maintain our units and housing maintain those as well. And to try to adequately get people purchasing these units, I need to make sure that they're safe and they're healthy units that we're transferring. I don't want to create the barriers for these transfers, but we do have this opportunity that's out there, but we just don't have the huge uptake that I was expecting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Monfwi.

MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. I know that within our LHO, they are understaffed in Behchoko, Whati, and Gameti, and there's nothing in Wekweeti. There's no LHO office there. So I know that they are understaffed and they are overworked and, as a result, many of these units are sitting empty. Some of them have been sitting empty for over ten years. And I can tell you there's a house that has been sitting, that's vacant since 2009. To date, it's still sitting vacant. In 2009, it was in good operation. And what the Minister's office should have done was gave that unit to the family member that are living in the area or the family that grew up in that house. And there's a lot of them like that. And I can tell you that there's a lot of people -- the reason I am pushing is because a lot of people, they want to be a homeowner but they can fix up those units as well. I know in my region, they want to fix up those units. They want to become a homeowner. And we do have a lot of skilled people too as well. And this is a good project for the trades program, even with the SNAP that my colleague mentioned during our Member's statement. So there's a lot of opportunity, work, and the Minister shouldn't be making a decision for the people that the people should make. You know, like they should be given a chance, an opportunity, to become homeowners. And she said I don't want to create barriers. You know, I mean my goodness. Like I said, our people have been here, and I know -- I heard her say before that I don't want to set up people to fail. We've been here for thousands of years and we're going to be here for another ten thousands of years. You know, I just want this Minister to do the right thing. Just give those units away to those people, to the people. And the arrears is their mistake. It's not the people's mistake. It's the

Housing that they created those arrears through their policy that is not working for the people in the Northwest Territories, and especially in my region because we have the highest arrears, housing arrears, on their book. So I think the housing -- it's up to her if she wants to answer me. But the Housing should do the right thing, transfer those units as soon as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I hear where the Member is coming from, and I hear this comment throughout the Northwest Territories. But I put this opportunity out there. This was a new initiative, a new approach to say that these single-family housing units are up for sale, here you go, purchase them. But like I had said, we didn't have the huge uptake that I was expecting. I was honestly expecting to get rid of a thousand units. That's what I thought it would honestly look like. I wanted to go to the federal government to say we need a replenishment of a thousand units. We're selling them. We're going to have these agreements done in the next ten years. And I wanted to have a different conversation. But then the reaction from the public, like I had said it wasn't as -- the uptake wasn't as strong as I thought it would be. And then going back to the local housing authority and hearing that they're understaffed, they're overworked, I want to say that, you know, we're trying to improve the communication and the support for them at that local level. But I can tell you that I've travelled throughout the territory. These are probably the most -- these positions are very hard to staff. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The time has expired, so I understand. We get ten minutes to ask questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just part of the executive, I guess, I'm just -- I want to just chat a little bit about housing, and we heard some of it today and, as you know, I still have -- you know, we still have problems in our communities. Have been for a while. You know, I sat on the AFN housing committee for a while, and I understand the need of trying -- at least meet the demands in housing throughout Canada, and it's growing every day. You know, homeownership repairs in the communities is growing. Repairs are important. New homes, public housing down the road. You know, we already know that in 2036 that CMHC are going to be looking at cutting back on CMHC dollars to housing corporation completely. That's only 13 years away. And so what's the plan? So

while we're trying to figure out the housing corporation even by that time, we probably would already have settled claims in the Deh Cho and Akaitcho region and including the Metis. But at the end of the day, you know, the vision and mission statement of the housing corporation overall really needs to be looked at now and -- because we got to allow for change that, you know, housing is going to be looked at and delivered at the local level.

And it's already under agreements, you know. And so how -- what's Housing NWT going to look like in 13 years? You know, it's really interesting. But in the meantime on the interim basis, you know, we look to our colleagues and your neighbour in Nunavut, and my colleague Caitlin Cleveland talked about that as well, and they've been aggressively lobbying Ottawa for housing for their jurisdiction for quite some time. And they've been successful. And they did -- you know, I'm happy to hear that, you know, they're making real progress in a lot of these areas. And same thing with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. You know, they've been doing the same thing. You know, just to touch on housing overall, you know, like, to look at all the homes here in the Northwest Territories, just to catch up on new homes, you know, I'm just thinking outside the box here, whether it be 4,500 to 6,000 -- I mean homes, you know, given new construction costs given today is -- it's crazy. The prices just went up, you know. So just to catch up on homes today, you know, I'd be surprised that we're looking at about almost \$3 billion just to catch up. Not including the homeownership repairs in the communities. You know, that alone, you know -- you know, repairs alone is \$1.2 billion. And not the mention that the ongoing costs of new homes in the community. But we're still going to need public housing sometime down the road. And the thing is that we -- I guess what I'm trying to say is that maybe it's something that we should really think about now as a housing corporation that maybe we should have a -- I know that you're already saying that you're already working with the, you know, Indigenous governments and this and that. I understand that. But the reality is that we are going to have claims done by -- in 13 years when CMHC dollar happens. So we got to start thinking differently here. And, you know, sometimes whenever -- to me, whenever we make application to CIRNAC on our own and -- it just means that, you know -- you know, there's the trust and some barriers there that just is created when we do those kind of things. So I guess at the end of the day, I guess what I'm trying to say is that we may have to revisit our vision and mission statement of the housing corporation and how it's going to look in 13 years from now. And then what can we do now

to improve that. You know, maybe by working together, we could do what Nunavut did. They were aggressive coming up with a housing plan for Nunavut to address, you know. Right now just what I mentioned, you know, we're talking about \$4.8 billion. You know, I could be high, I don't know.

But the point is that, you know, we need to really start reaching out to settle claims and Indigenous governments as a new partner. Who knows? Maybe your structure that you already have here in your organization chart here, you know, there could be another organization there where we have -- you know, that we call the Circle of Leaders but not -- sometimes not everybody's there. Also we got to figure a way around this because housing is a problem. And right now, you know, I said it today that, you know, I'll be continuing to advocate for that. So anyways, I just wanted to share that with you because I'm just saying that, you know, at the end of the day we all got to work together. You know, we're -- you know, when we make a decision, we got to think seven generations ahead, you know. And housing's still going to be around. It's still going to be a problem. So anyways, I just wanted to make that comment in regards to the executive and the way they're thinking and then just how we could improve on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. A lot of comments there, but I appreciate them all coming forward as well because, you know, I first of all want to touch on AFN and when I first got the portfolio that, you know, there was some talk amongst AFN but they didn't recognize anything north of 60. So that conversation did not contribute to the Northwest Territories and what we needed up here in the territory. And also I want to compare us to Nunavut is that, yes, we do see the major plan that they do have out there but it doesn't come with any funding. You know, it's a plan that's out there, it looks great, but here in the Northwest Territories we're very unique. We have settled land claim areas. We have non-settled land claim areas. We've got Indigenous governments that are in negotiations. We don't represent as one where Nunavut represents as one. And when we're having the conversation, there is 17 Indigenous groups that are having the same conversation that we are with really different significant needs and building in different climates. What we're building in Nunakput is not going to be what we're going to be building in Nahendeh, you know, and what we're going to be delivering

in the Sahtu is not going to be in a timely manner as what's being delivered in Hay River.

You know, we're up against a lot of challenges here in the North. And looking at our success, we had over \$500 million coming to the Indigenous governments through the distinction-based funding that the Indigenous governments are front and centre. They are putting their land claim agreements to work. They are recognizing their self-government agreements. And us as housing, we're sitting there side-by-side as a partner, not to compete with them but to give them our expertise. This is what we build; this is how we build; and these are the changes that we've made.

And right now, our energy plan is out there for consultation for the next two weeks, and that is something that is quite important to the portfolio. And I also want to recognize that we never had a replenishment of public housing units in four decades. Four decades, Madam Chair. You know, we've administered the same public housing units. And we needed the federal government to recognize that we need a replenishment. And I see that Housing NWT and the staff have made significant progress. And also the partnership of meeting with Indigenous governments, we're more welcome to the table than looked at as if what is it that you want now. You know, and I see a lot of our negotiated contracts that are going out.

Communities are building on behalf of their own communities. They're creating the employment. The money is staying in the North. So I see the progress that we have made. And our vision and mission, we've updated that this year as well too. So there's been a lot of work but it doesn't say that it's going to stop. But we still open those conversations and whatever. And I do have a scheduled meeting as well too with the Minister of Housing for Nunavut as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, did you --

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I got one minute left. I appreciate what she's saying. And the thing is that on the interim basis, you know, again, I am still concerned about, you know, how we make application to CIRNAC and I heard your comments today. But I think we're going to have to work a way to work with Indigenous governments much closer because it's still a problem. Again, I don't know what the housing corporation takes for administration on those dollars. And, again, we're still struggling with housing in the community. As an example, last -- this year I brought forward a housing situation in Lutselk'e, and I put the documents on the table and it's

still not resolved. You know, so -- you know, to me, I just don't want to keep using these words, yeah, I hear it but nothing gets done, right. So we're going to have to really make the change at around -- but anyway, going forward, I think we need to come up with a better plan that's going to be inclusive because after 2036, we don't know what the government's going to do. I don't think they're going to just shut the door on us. I think there might be just a different program, different name, whatever. But anyway, Madam Chair, I'm just going to leave it there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. And I'll take that as a comment. Are there any further Members that haven't spoken to executive? Seeing none, we'll move on. Thank you.

Finance and infrastructure services, beginning on page 383, with information items on 384 and 385. So if Members could direct their questions to the information on these pages. Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that there's \$955,000 for debt repayment. I'll note that in a previous fiscal year there was only \$300,000. Can I get a confirmation that this is the money we owe to CMHC for mortgages and an explanation of why it increases? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the \$955,000 does represent debt payments to CMHC pursuant to the social housing agreement. The \$313,000 actuals in 2021-2022 represents the interest portion associated with that debt payment. The balance is for principal, and that doesn't show up in expenses, but we still have to budget for that principal payment. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Can I get an updated figure of the total amount of money we owe CMHC? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. He's just finding his numbers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. For 2023-2024, the outlook will be a remaining \$3.3 million in debt owing to CMHC. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I know we're always talking about CMHC and we're always trying to get them to up our operation and funding and kind of pause 2038 but I think probably a good strategy, try and lobby that they just forgive us this money. That sure would be nice.

I'm looking here at contract services now. The budget line item I see has gone up approximately \$500,000. Can I just get a summary of what that \$1.7 million for contract services is and the reason for the increase? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Contract services did increase approximately \$500,000. This is explained by an increased investment in additional training for local housing organizations. There's two targeted areas for this additional training. One is in the area of maintenance management system upgrades and associated training as well as accounting training for LHOs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you. I appreciate that, that seems like good money. Can I just get a bit of a sense of whether there are any plans to centralize the way we do maintenance? When I speak to the LHOs, you know, sometimes there's push back about what they're responsible for, what we're responsible for, what exactly gets in the schedule. It seems to me that the housing corp should probably have a piece of software that has every single

unit in it and every single thing that's been done and all of that's inputted. You know, I know that we are really decentralized in this area. But is there any plans to kind of make sure we have a complete picture of every unit and the maintenance going on, whether it's us or the LHO? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the renewal, this is something we recognize, and we're working with this and also upgrades as well too. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, and just a comment on that. I think there's probably some room for -- well, I'll say cooperation. I would rather perhaps some just straight direction from the housing corp speaking to the Yellowknife housing corp. They go off and do one-off contracts and -- giving the example of, you know, they'll renovate a couple bathrooms in some units because there was some water damage and perhaps it's better, you know, for the housing corp to go okay, well, why don't we do, you know, 400 units at once and replace 400 units for taps as opposed to just random orders all across the territory, but. And, you know, I'll note that's how a private sector landlord would manage owning thousands of units. They wouldn't kind of break it down. So I'll leave that as a comment. I know I've made that comment before and they're looking at with the renewal to make sure we know what maintenance is being done and perhaps find some efficiencies.

My next question is I'm looking at loss of sale of assets, and I'll note in the actuals here for 2021-2022 fiscals, there's \$1 million. Can someone just explain to me what that is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The loss on sale represents a non-cash expenditure for the NWT Housing. And this comes about through the disposition of housing assets that have remaining net book value associated with those assets. So in 2021-2022, Housing NWT

disposed of approximately 24 housing units. And as a result of that, there was \$1 million loss on sale that had to be booked for accounting purposes. And within that, the most significant change there was related to Jean Marie River during the flood event. We had four units that were actually damaged beyond repair and had to be basically removed from the books. And the net book value associated with those alone was about \$750,000. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to speak a bit about debt for the housing corporation. I've expressed this before that, you know, the power corp has a similar revenue to the housing corp, and it is hundreds of millions of dollars of debt and the housing corp, with about the same revenue as -- and sorry, I don't have the figure. But you guys got about \$10 million or so, and you don't have a debt problem, that's for sure. And I'm just -- to me, it seems that we're spending, you know, \$30 million on housing -- this is one of the biggest investments we've made in this Assembly -- that to pay outright for those buildings is a mistake. We should mortgage them to the hilt and pay them out over the next 35 years, as anyone who builds a building would do. They would mortgage the asset and, you know, not just pay for it in cash, which is essentially what the housing corp is proposing doing. And I know that is limited by our debt ceiling but is there any conversation with the housing corporation going forward to get approval for more debt? And I'm not saying you got to rack up as much as the power corp. That's a bad idea. And they build, you know, extreme capital, I get that. But it seems to me that just we could leverage the current spend much better with assets that are inherently mortgageable, you know. Is there any plans to try and get a little bit more debt room into the housing corp? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair, I was just waiting for the light to go on. I didn't see it right away. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's certainly different approaches at delivering housing, and one of them is through mortgage financing. And Housing NWT has certainly looked at this in the past and up to this point, you know, we've been obviously

managing a fair number of funding pressures and dealing with the declining CMHC challenge as well. So obviously there's that limited O and M challenge that we do have to consider when taking on additional debt that would bring with it additional interest expense that would have to be serviced. But it's certainly something to consider in the future. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, and, you know, I think there's a different argument to be made, whether you want to, well, get a mortgage for a house in nonmarket community but, to me, if we're going to build a new building in Yellowknife, you know, where it's clear that that asset is mortgageable, it has a value, that would make sense. I guess I'll just leave that as a comment that perhaps, you know, at the housing corp, going forward when it tries to get money out of Cabinet, it might not get money but perhaps it could just ask for debt because that would work too. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you. I'll just take that as a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Any further questions under the finance and infrastructure services? Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, the department talks about putting 100 new homes I guess on the ground, finance are -- or I mean paying for that. I was just wondering, one of the issues sometimes that arise is the securing the land. I'm just wondering if, you know, when we're talking a hundred new homes, has the land been secured for that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. That was a nice short answer. When we're talking about the hundred new homes, you know, I know there's dollars going to Indigenous groups as well. I know that the housing corporation actually bought the -- you know, a building here in Yellowknife as well. So how many of those hundred new homes would actually, say, go

into Yellowknife versus communities outside? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. With the hundred unit rollout, the units were allocated outside of Yellowknife. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And out of those hundred units, you know, we talk about units being sold off and we probably talk about, as well, units, you know, being demolished whether it was because of flooding or whatever. So out of that, what is the net units that will actually be available, taking into account units sold off and demolished? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just have Jim respond because we do have some units that are scheduled to be demolished, and we do have some units that are there that we need to repair as well. We do have a project that's going to start in 2023-2024 of investing money into repairing our public housing units. But I'll have Jim elaborate on the response. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, so the target is to deliver a hundred new public housing units. So that would be added to our existing stock of available public housing units for tenants. Now, we do recognize that there's ongoing dispositions that do occur within our portfolio. They come in different forms but one of them would be under the homeownership initiative program. But the expectation is that those units would eventually be replaced over time through subsequent capital plans and to ensure that we do realize the net increase of a hundred units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The other thing I see here as well is you talk about -- in the activity description here under finance, occupational health and safety for the head office and also for district and local housing authority. One of the things I find in the communities is that it's kind of becoming an issue because we have places, for instance

Riverview Lodge, which is basically for probably more single people than maybe couples. But what we're doing is we're getting a mix of people who really expect quiet enjoyment of their rooms but we are now starting to put in people who were homeless, living in the shelter. They've got addictions problems. You know, they invite people over and, you know, there's drinking going on and, in some instances, there's, you know, sale of drugs and that. And so people now are starting to find that there's a safety issue there and eventually somebody's going to get hurt if we don't do something about it. There's people that are staying in there that shouldn't be. You know, they're living in probably other areas of the buildings as well. And it's probably not unique to Hay River. You know, other buildings in other communities as well. So how much emphasis has been put on I guess in dealing with those type of issues? Because as we see an increase in drugs and alcohol and addictions, we're going to -- you know, that's going to be around with us for a while. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate the Member's comments as well because our clientele is changing, and safety is one of the areas that I've highlighted as well as one and with the high traffic areas as well. The only initiative that we do have here is a partnership with Northview that we do like kind of a 50/50 cost share for security because there is a lot of incidents that do happen here in Yellowknife. But we don't have any of those services outside of Yellowknife as of yet. But it's something that we could also consider in looking at the volume and what the LHOs and the LHAs may require if they have those building areas. And there are some in Inuvik as well too. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, you know, you're already doing it here in Yellowknife, but I think that we're going to have to start looking outside of Yellowknife, and Hay River is an example. And we do need somebody -- like, for instance, the Riverview Lodge, I'll use that as an example. There's no caretaker for it so it's kind of, you know, a free for all. And what we need is -- you may not need somebody there all the time but you probably need somebody there, I would say, you know, maybe 8 o'clock at night until 8 o'clock in the morning. But they could also be, you know,

taking a look at the other facilities as well, like the singles. And so we could be using somebody in Hay River as security. And whether it's contracted out just for, you know, 12 hours a day, that would work, so. And the other thing is we do need some protocols in place, and policies to protect the workers because they're going into situations that they don't know anything about anymore. Like, you know, when you're dealing with drugs, it could be dangerous. So I think it's important that we really spend some time -- the department spends some time in developing something to ensure the safety of not only residents but also staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take that as a comment as well. But not only a comment, I want to bring that back to the department because if we're looking at these multi-build complex areas then, you know, in the future we're going to have to consider our clientele as well. We're going to need caretakers or securities in those buildings as well too and really recognizing the safety concerns. I don't want them -- want it to get worse before we can just kind of acknowledge and work with it now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Hay River South? Okay. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: (audio) you know, just in regards I was listening to -- I was on a call upstairs. But listening to on the thousand houses being given away and the uptake on that. The uptake in regards to it, are we giving the houses to people that could take them over, or are we selling them the unit? Just clarity on that and the program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The homeownership program, I'll have President Young just to elaborate on that programming because I don't -- this is not to cause the barriers but to actually deal with the current situation should the individual be in -- outstanding, yes, in arrears, yes. In arrears, that I would like to see those arrears be paid up currently and then transfer the unit immediately. But I'll have President Young elaborate more on the details. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. President Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair. The program is targeted to people who currently live in single-family homes across the territory. As the Minister mentioned, some basic criteria, the arrears -- clearing your arrears before the sale goes through is one of the key ones. And then what happens is the ownership of the unit is transferred. And we talked about the debt component of it. We do a forgivable loan for the value of the home over three to five years, depending on the value of the home. So, under that program, they don't actually pay a purchase price, they get the unit forgiven over a period of time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for that, Minister, deputy. But the question is for that program I guess, when it's being sold or given to them, is it under the means of them taking over the power, the water, everything like that, and it's going to be given -- like, after so many years, given to them at no cost? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's the intent, is that they pay the debt up to zero balance and they operate and maintain that house for up to three to five years and there's no rent collected in that time being. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Madam Chair, no. Just in regards to that, I mean, myself and the Minister, we've been going back and forth for the last two years in regards to something like this. The program was given -- the house was given to the constituent and stuff like that and then next thing you know I said, well, house is given to them; don't have to pay rent? It's given to you, and it's -- I guess the -- I thought it would be forgiven. But all this time it was they still had to pay back the debt that was owed but it was our fault as -- I mean, the corporation's fault for letting them wait two years, two and a half years and having them to pay. Why would that be -- if it's our fault, why wouldn't we take that debt on ourselves as a corporation? That's just a question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I hear the Member as well too, because we were going back and forth and

really trying to roll out this program and trying to get successful applicants. And there was a lot of back and forth going on whether the -- I don't know if we could speak specifically. But maybe just to the situation that an individual may want to go to the bank, outright purchase and whether they're going to pursue a lawyer, there was a lot of back and forth. But I think now going forward, I would like the Housing just to get to the point that here's the program, three to five years, pay your debt, and operate and maintain this unit for three to five years, and then we'll walk away. And I want to keep it very simple. And I've learned from that scenario. But that agreement, it should be finalized by now. We should not be owning that asset anymore. It should be handed over to the individual. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are these units any single dwelling units that people that are living in right now are eligible for this program? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is correct. But what I've seen so far is some individuals will come up to say yes, I want to own this unit and then they will come back to say maybe not. And then we're still collecting rent but they're not actually in the program. They haven't made up their mind yet and it does become very -- people get very concerned once they have to pay the fuel costs, the utilities and then whatever. So it's a lot of conversation that goes on in between the process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, no, I agree with the Minister in regards like that. I mean, the fuel prices are just going up and it's going to -- inflation going up all over in regards to the cost of living. But how long are you expecting now, once a person comes to you, and like what's the timeline that -- through your department, what would you like to see on a timeline for approvals? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I would like to see the approvals happen immediately. Once the debt is at a zero balance, I would like to sign off an agreement and I would like to be done. As long

as we receive the outstanding, that is -- and it kind of gets a little bit complicated because we have to work through FMB as well. And there was a little bit of a barrier. Jim, would you be able to elaborate on -- yes, just with the -- when we're selling the units and then we have to write off the units and then there's still the outstanding on the books that have to be transferred. Yes, okay. I'll just have Jim respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): vice-president Martin.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I hope I didn't confuse you.

MR. MARTIN: No. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, as the Minister alluded to, in some situations when we're dealing with clients there may be arrears that are outstanding and, certainly, you know, those would be areas that we would continue to, you know, work closely with the client on to address. Now, there may be situations, though, where there are arrears that may very well satisfy our criteria for forgiveness. And Housing NWT considers this as part of a government-wide process every year. And in those situations, we do have to meet the strict criteria of the financial administration manual and the Financial Administration Act in this area. But it's certainly an area that we do look at seriously and do a full review every year of where we can address those arrear situations through the forgiveness approval process. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. In regards for the timeline though, the timeline and -- so if somebody came forward, wanted their unit, are we looking at six months? And like what's that really tight timeline because I do have constituents that want to come on the program but they're -- you know, they're kind of tired of waiting. But I just want to see, and then the forgiveness part. And you got a minute, 47 seconds so be brief as possible because I got one more question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes. Six.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): You got that, Member?

MR. JACOBSON: Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. No, Madam Minister, like in regards to community corporations and stuff like that, I know that the department's really interested

and keen on working together with local community governments in regards to builds. I'm really pushing for my Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk elders' facilities. I've been working on this since 2007, and I'm really tired of seeing my elders in Inuvik hospital and away from family and not seen and just like they're put on a shelf. And I'm really hoping that we could try to work together with private-public partnership to build these units on a lease back; is that possible? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would entertain the co-investment application to be honest. Like, we've seen so much uptake throughout the Northwest Territories and we do support those applications with a 25 percent as well. But I'd be willing to work with Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok if they were wanting to put forward a submission to build maybe possibly one of our duplexes, or whatever that we've designed so far throughout the Northwest Territories, to address seniors housing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Ok. Going to be a four-plex design for elders facilities so we could take our loved ones back home to the community and watch them ourselves and having local people being able to -- like, it's a level two -- I don't know, Madam Chair, in regards to being able to wash them. You know, wash them and take care of them, feed them, and work with the community corporation to provide jobs through the community to take care of our own. And are they interested, are they able to do this and entertain? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll let the Minister answer briefly, and I'll move on to the next person. Thanks.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll follow up with the Member and also with the leadership as well too because we do need that partnership in the community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, so this is the section that I was referenced to earlier when I was asking about the \$2 million for the Inuvik shelter that was originally found in executive on page 380. And I'm just wondering if the Minister

can point me to where that \$2 million is now housed within finance and infrastructure? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're just trying to look for emergency services. Yes, I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So the base budget to support the Inuvik shelter operations is located on page 384 under the emergency shelters line item. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, that line item has not grown. So in 2022-2023, it was \$2,997,000 and then again in this year it is holding steady at the same amount. And so I do not see an increase of the \$2 million that was originally in executive earmarked for the Inuvik shelter. And so I'm wondering why there's no increase if the Inuvik shelter is now coming out of that emergency shelter's pot found under homelessness initiatives? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So within the \$2.997 million for 2023-2024, we currently have allocated approximately \$560,000 for the Inuvik shelter operations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm wondering why when the government operates it, it has a \$2 million budget but when a third party NGO operates it, it has a budget of \$560,000? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. This comes with a lot more different expenses. And like I said, this is -- for me, this is a one-off. I don't want to see housing coming back and administering and taking over shelters. This was an emergency that had happened in Inuvik, and we just did not have any NGOs, nobody to step up and take over the responsibility.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So just so that I can get this straight, no NGO could afford to operate a shelter at the budget they were given by the housing corporation, so everybody walked away from the table. So housing corporation stepped in and said we are going to operate this shelter because we need a shelter in Inuvik, and the cost of doing that properly is \$2 million. So now the government has come back and said it is too expensive to operate a shelter in Inuvik, we're going to get a third party to do it, and we're going to give them a quarter of what we spent in order to operate the shelter properly, is that right? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I hear the Member's frustration. But this did not only have to do with funding. This had to do with the training. This had to do with the staffing. This had to do with what was actually being dealt with at the ground level. Safety was a major issue. We did end up having a fire in Inuvik as well too. We did end up losing one of our warming shelters. It's not only the NGOs looking at them not operating this shelter in Inuvik. We had this put out for an RFP, and we had no submissions. We had no interest. And what were we to be doing in Inuvik, and we needed to step in. We had a couple of deaths that had happened during that time as well too with people freezing. This was an emergency, and housing had to step in. And it didn't only have to do with just the funding that was there but we would like to see this go back as a -- back to the NGOs. And we do have two interested parties right now, which we're very lucky to have them. But the Indigenous groups weren't interested in taking this over as well too. We had an emergency in Inuvik. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I agree that there is an emergency in Inuvik when people are at

risk of dying because they're freezing to death or people are not able to flee instances of family violence and find shelters to go to. So I agree with the Minister that it was an emergency. Where I don't agree with the Minister is that they are acknowledging that it is more expensive than they had originally anticipated to run a shelter so they're stepping out. When committee travelled to Inuvik, we heard firsthand from people that it is not realistic to expect an NGO in small communities to find third-party funding in order to operate a shelter. And the original contract that went out had an expectation that NGOs went and sourced their own funding to make it work. And so I find this very frustrating and very unrealistic. But I'm on a time crunch, and so I think I've made my point there. I want to know what other shelters are funded by that emergency shelters budget, please.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Madam Chair, I'll have Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Vice-president Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So other shelters funded under the emergency shelters program would include the Salvation Army, the Hay River shelter, the Fort Simpson shelter, contribution to the YWCA, also a contribution to the Yellowknife Women's Society. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So, Madam Chair, that is even for all of those places, and I understand that this is not the only funding pot because I believe Salvation Army also receives money from elsewhere. But if you take out Salvation Army, which we really shouldn't because it is still an emergency shelter, but if you take that out and you have the five remaining shelters in communities, or even if you take out YWCA, one of them, you have about \$600,000 for each shelter to work with. It's not enough money to operate shelters notwithstanding the point either that that means we've got Inuvik, Yellowknife, Fort Simpson. We have 33 communities, and we have a housing crisis. We have overcrowding. We have 900 people on the waitlist. From those 900 people on the waitlist, we have another 487 people who have arrears that wouldn't qualify to put their name on a waitlist. We have an issue here where we do not have the housing that the Northwest Territories require. We do not have the housing to keep people alive. And so turning around and putting in \$3 million to keep people alive is not realistic. And we hear almost every week from

the MLA from Hay River South about how this is not saving lives and it is not doing its job. So I'm going to leave that there because the next question I have is any of the funding from homelessness initiatives earmarked for youth because our youth are also screaming out for housing solutions to keep them safe when they're living in places that are not safe. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And this issue was brought up to me as well too in looking at housing homeless youth. The thing that we -- we don't have a shelter -- I don't know if we support the current shelter that is here in Yellowknife, but they weren't of age to sign a tenancy agreement contract. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So that brings me to other questions of somebody needs to be able to sign a tenancy agreement contract in order to access emergency shelter funding? That doesn't really add up for me.

One of the things I want to point out here to housing corporation, and I hope they'll take very seriously, is we have a tremendous amount of youth in this territory who are suffering from homelessness. We have a shelter here in Yellowknife, thankfully, and I wish there was one in every community that could directly serve our youth that are suffering, but the one in Yellowknife here has ten rooms for long-term stays, 20 beds for night-to-night stays, and every single night they end up having to turn youth away. That's devastating.

We have heard firsthand that the young girls who use those shelters actually have to sit down and talk to each other and decide who's going to have a safe place to stay that night and who's going to go find alternate solutions. So we need to make sure that youth shelters are seeing this funding as well and that this line item is increased to actually be representative of the work that shelters are doing. And if we're not going to create houses upstream, then we need to make sure that we have emergency shelters to keep people alive downstream. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I agree with the Member as well too,

and I just -- you know, through the homelessness strategy, we will be seeing changes throughout this government and looking at the collaboration and the approach. There's additional information and comments that are made towards that strategy but I hear where the Member's coming from. Thank you. I'll take it as a comment.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I will now move to Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too want to address the homelessness initiatives and especially homeless shelters. Fort Smith doesn't have a homeless shelter at this point. There was a proposal that went forward. It was a pilot project for five tiny homes. A solution, not an ongoing expense to the homelessness initiative. And yet it never came to fruit because I don't know who decided it wasn't a good project, but I think that the Indigenous group that actually had the homeless shelter pilot project knows what they're doing. They have a proven record.

And the former Minister of housing could attest to that. And the amount of monies that are, you know, like even -- and now we're having the tiny homes done in Fort Good Hope or somewhere in the Minister's riding. So it wasn't good enough for my riding but it's okay for some other riding. I don't agree with the way things are done sometimes, and I'm very vocal on how things are done. And to have that Wilfred Laurier Foundation, or whatever I read in some documents somewhere, involved in this homelessness whatever emergency -- or the tiny homes is also not okay. I want the Minister to clarify exactly what that is. And just a short answer would be great so I have time for other questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Fort Good Hope has a K'asho Got'ine Housing Society. They have the direct relations with CMHC. They receive their own federal funding. They've funded their own community housing plan. This is a community that has taken housing to a whole new level. They've owned it, and they're the ones who are administering their tiny home project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: So we also have \$30 million that was put over by the federal monies to address some of the issues with housing. Is some of that money -- you know, the money is

really important to the people of the Northwest Territories and to the Indigenous governments. I'm wondering if that \$30 million will -- if the Minister would consider that the \$30 million go per capita to each Indigenous government so that they could run their own makework program to repair all the houses in the communities and regional centres? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And we've already have issues maintaining our own public housing units. This will be going towards our own repairs for public housing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, just before Christmas there was an issue with a mother and a daughter that were told they had to leave their housing unit, and it was all boarded up. This is just a couple weeks before Christmas. And now they're couch surfing on mats and I was going -- I might table the whole thing before session ends. And then the place is all boarded up. The Indigenous government has agreed to go in and try and to correct the situation because they're members of one of the Indigenous groups back in Fort Smith.

We created that situation. And then we come back and say oh, we're going to fix this up and we're going to do that, but when people are at the 11th hour, no matter how -- what kind of condition the house was in or -- and the mother, who is almost 90 years old, gave -- and she's also a senior, the one that was kicked out of the house with the daughter and they're couch surfing. But it's okay. It's okay to throw people out and become homeless. And that's not the policy that we as Ordinary MLAs want to see, and I want to know how that's going to be corrected. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Receiving the \$30 million for the next two years, this is something that we did not expect. We do have a lot of our units throughout the Northwest Territories that are either abandoned or very poorly maintained. And this is an opportunity where we're able to address issues such as these. We don't have the budget to be repairing every single unit throughout the territory. The \$30 million over two years is what's going to help us get to that point of repairing our units. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: So the policy of the NWT Housing Corporation is that you make people homeless, you forget about them, and hopefully that nobody complains? And, you know, these are people that would never get through the front door. And it's really -- makes me want to understand how people think overall and who makes the policy and how it is implemented and why are people that are disenfranchised, have addiction problems, are poor, and we throw them out of their unit just before Christmas?

They're now couch surfing, they're homeless, and where do they go? You know, it's a really unusual situation, and I'm sure it happens everywhere and nobody says anything about it. But you know what? When I got elected, I wanted to make sure that the people that were never heard are heard, and that's my job here, especially the people in my riding of Thebacha. And for the broader South Slave and the people of the NWT, because there's many like that. And this Minister and this department continually does the wrong thing, and I want to know when it's going to be corrected. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the Member for the comments as well too. I hear where the Member is coming from. We deal with a lot of complex issues within Housing, and it's not our priority to be evicting people out of these units.

But then we also have to be guided by policies in order to maintain that we have adequate services. But then through the strategy as well too, I'm hoping to see major improvement with our client service, with our communication, and with our program delivery, also recognizing that we are a social program and we need different resources and we need different supports.

The clientele we are working with today is not the same clientele we dealt with 20 years ago. Now we have a different situation in the Northwest Territories. And I'm hoping that as we go forward, we're able to fund certain positions and being able to really take and address housing differently as we move forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I'm not going to ask any more questions but, you know, it's a disgrace that we

have private industry who abide by law to give -- they even have to give notice when they want to evict people. But the housing corporation just goes up, boards the house up, all their belongings are inside, throws them out before Christmas, and then it's okay, you know.

So when government is saying yeah, you could do this and then the other hand is doing something else. And private industry, those are their own homes. Those are their own units, whether they be apartments or single units, are told that they have to abide by the Tenancy Act. But yet our government and the NWT Housing Corp doesn't have to follow the Tenancy Act. That is unbelievable. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. I'll take that as a comment. If you have no further comments, I'll move on to Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't also really have a lot of questions but I think I'd be remiss if I didn't comment a bit on some of the concerns I also have in echoing my colleagues.

Over the last few years, I've had an opportunity to become more familiar with people that are experiencing homelessness and in particular the youth. I don't think that anybody on the social development committee would argue that that sort of has been one of the reoccurring themes throughout all of the conversations, the engagement, the people that come to us, is this huge gap for youth and housing. Personally, I've worked with a youth where the department's response to me was well, if they don't want to go to the shelter, which we've already heard is full, then they need to find somewhere for themselves to live and in which case then the department would help them sort of set up that foster care or guardian-type situation.

And to me, it's just -- it's heartbreaking to watch this young person who so wants to do better in life and has come from just nothing, absolutely nothing, with no supports, trying to raise themselves up and do better through sport, through other things, and then just constantly hitting roadblocks and barriers at every opportunity. And I don't know how at 16-years-old this person continues to persevere because I know when I was 16, there's just no way that I would have been capable of advocating for myself, let alone, you know, actually following through on everything.

So I just wanted to stress the real importance here of the youth component and the youth piece and also echoing the concern around, you know, that sort of almost being that well,

this person doesn't fit into this program or this policy and therefore there's nothing we can do. And it falls on everybody else to then pick up the pieces for that child. And as my colleague mentioned, it was extremely heartbreaking to go to sit and listen to young people talk about not even having their basic needs met and a place to lay their head at night.

And thinking back on the vulnerability of myself as a young woman, I can't even imagine not having my mother's home to go home to every night to sleep in and the choices that would have to be made in order to find a place to sleep and then add in -- I grew up at least in British Columbia where it was only the most minus five degrees outside; it was not minus 35, so I don't even know how some of these kids are making it through the night. And I feel that given the situation that we're going to see more and more youth, unfortunately, choosing the route of suicide as they feel hopeless.

I guess my last -- or my next comment is around just looking at the revised estimates for this area for the total contributions, that there has been no change from the 2022-2023 to the 2023-2024. Again, very disappointing and quite surprising given that this is the number one priority for us as MLAs and for all of us when the 19 of us first met, save a couple that have joined us since, and I know that they too also still feel very strongly about this given their statements in the House.

So I guess I'll ask a question around can the Minister commit to somehow, in the next while, increasing this amount of funding, whether that be through a supplementary appropriation for the emergency shelters, etcetera, or by giving a large donation to Home Base so that they can then build their second part of their complex? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take that as a -- not as a comment but I'd like to bring that back to the department. I don't have an answer for the Member right now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Member for Great Slave.

MS. NOKLEBY: Yeah, and I think that it's really one thing for the Minister to really keep in mind that if you do this piece now with these young people, you will reduce the number of people that are then homeless going forward in the future. So this is something where the return on investment here is so strong and so important and it's not just around housing; it's around

mental health, physical health, all of that. So, again, just more of a comment but I do hope that the Minister recognizes that prevention is going to save us a lot more money than waiting for these kids to fall through the cracks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I hear the Member loud and clear. And just trying to find solutions and trying to find adequate funding in order to address the majority of these issues throughout the territories. I do hear where she's coming from. We do have youth that are aging out of the health -- not the healthcare system, the foster care system as well. And I need to take this back to the department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. All right. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): The motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 813-19(2), and I would like to report progress. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Hay River North. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills.

Colleagues, before we adjourn, I wanted to provide my ruling on the Point of Order that was raised by the Member for Great Slave earlier today.

I have reviewed the unedited Hansard to find that the Member for Great Slave does not have a Point of Order. The Minister of MACA, in responding to some direct questions from the Member for Great Slave, made reference to feeling love from the Member. Today is Valentine's Day, Members, and I am satisfied that this was intended to be a light-hearted response to some tough questions and not an insult.

Colleagues, there have been a few occasions this week where the debate has become heated and inappropriate words have been used. We are expected to disagree in this place but the people we represent expect us to disagree without being disagreeable. I caution all Members to show respect to one another and to be careful with the use of humour and sarcasm in the debate as different people respond to it differently. Thank you.

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):
Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 15th, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 1343-19(2), Impacts of COVID-19 on Education
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Replies to Budget Address (Day 6 of 7)
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents

16. Notices of Motion
17. Motions
18. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act
 - Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
 - Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Response to the NWT Chief Coroner's Report on Suicide
 - Tabled Document 681-19(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 26-19(2): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
 - Tabled Document 694-19(2), Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2021-2022 Early Release of Data
 - Tabled Document 813-19(2), Main Estimates
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 15th, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:58 p.m.