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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

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**Hon. Diane Archie**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

(Sahtu)  
*Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**

(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat*

**Mr. Richard Edjericon**

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Hon. Julie Green**

(Yellowknife Centre)  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister of Justice*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendah)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**

(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

**Ms. Jane Weyallon Armstrong**

(Monfwi)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 15, 2023****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, 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. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms. Lesa Semmler):**  
Welcome Members. Ministers' statements.  
Minister of Housing NT.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 308-19(2):  
COMMUNITY HOUSING PLAN UPDATE

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Madam Speaker, today I would like to provide an update on the progress of Housing NWT's community housing plans, which is a comprehensive, detailed information document to better direct housing investments in the Northwest Territories' communities. Through partnerships with Indigenous governments, community governments, and stakeholders, over the last three years housing plans have been completed in Fort Good Hope, Whati, Paulatuk, Enterprise, Nahanni Butte, and the K'atlodeeche First Nation. These plans provide communities and stakeholders with the tools necessary to direct the future of housing in their communities.

A housing plan includes an assessment that combines baseline data with housing needs identified by the community. It also includes the housing plan itself, which identifies the community's goals as well as actions for the future in their housing investment. As set out in Housing NWT's mandate, we understand the importance of meaningful partnership with communities, and it is essential that these plans are the products of meaningful collaboration.

Madam Speaker, Housing NWT recognizes that each community has unique needs. The community housing plans initiative was developed in recognition of this and to give communities a voice to express their own housing situation, issues, and priorities. For example, Paulatuk's housing plan reinforces the need for home designs that recognize the

community's location on the Arctic Coast. The K'atlodeeche First Nation's plan priority is energy efficiency, housing and innovative ways to share materials and expertise. In Enterprise, community leadership prioritize the need for improved communication, both internal and external, while Nahanni Butte has signified a focus on self-sufficiency and community development. In Fort Good Hope, priority was placed on building local capacity to be capable to support private home repairs. As of today, ten additional plans are currently underway at various stages.

As part of the development of the Hay River housing plan, Housing NWT and the Town of Hay River hosted a housing forum in the fall which brought together stakeholders from across the community to discuss solutions to housing issues in Hay River. Additionally, Housing NWT has partnered with the Town of Fort Smith and worked on their housing plan that began in December 2022. In the Inuvialuit settlement region, we have partnered with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to develop a regional housing plan. As part of this work, staff from both organizations have travelled to Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok to hear from community residents and leadership and will be visiting the other Inuvialuit communities in the coming months.

Through the community engagement process, various elements are reviewed and prioritized and one such example is when those community plans is underdeveloped, includes plans for local shelters to assist women and children fleeing violence.

Madam Speaker, with the arrival of federal distinctions-based funding to Indigenous governments and to avoid the duplication of work and housing is no longer proposing to develop unique community housing plans for all 33 communities. Instead, we are supporting the development of community housing plans where communities or Indigenous government leadership has expressed an interest.

Madam Speaker, strong partnerships are key to success and outcomes, and these community housing plans are proof of all of that work. We

are excited to combine the work on the community housing plans, along with our work on the partnership with Indigenous governments, to improve our supports working on priorities that are important to the individual communities and regions. We will continue to reach out and work in partnership with Indigenous governments, community governments, and stakeholders to increase the well-being of individuals and communities as we continue to address the housing needs across the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Madam Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 309-19(2):  
MINISTER ABSENT AND MINISTER LATE  
FOR THE HOUSE

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Shane Thompson will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the federal/provincial/territorial sport, physical activity, and recreation ministers' meetings in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

As well, Madam Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Julie Green will be late for the House today as she is currently participating in a phone meeting with Indigenous Services Canada's Minister Hajdu. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Ministers' statements. Members, I'd like to draw your attention to the presence of former Member Daryl Dolynny, who was the Member of Range Lake in the 17th Assembly.

Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

### Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1360-19(2):  
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, prior to 1989, this government recognized the inequity with respect to Indigenous representation in the GNWT public sector. In an attempt to address that inequity, the government of the day drafted the affirmative action policy. It was meant to place Indigenous people into public sector workforce. Madam Speaker, thirty plus years later we are still talking affirmative action and saying how it has not worked.

Madam Speaker, this government committed to a review of the affirmative action policy and in

doing so set up the advisory committee on diversity and inclusion. Now this government is considering replacement of the current policy with two policies: the Indigenous employment policy that prioritizes the hiring of persons who are descendants of the Dene, Inuit, or Metis people, Indigenous to the present boundaries of the NWT; and

The employment equity policy that would provide preferred hiring status to Indigenous Canadians, racialized persons, persons with disabilities, long-term Northerners, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Madam Speaker, we are under the assumption the existing policy has not worked, and what I have not heard is the underlying reasons of why this would be true. If underrepresentation continues to exist, what are the factors that contribute to it?

Madam Speaker, prior to moving forward and replacing what we have, there must be a reasonable and measurable basis if we are to commit to implementing any new policies. If we expect to achieve success, then we need to conduct an analysis, both internal and external, to determine if the targets we have set are reasonable and, if not, why. We must follow that up with a reasonable action plan that supports accountability at all levels of government if we expect positive results on affirmative action.

Madam Speaker, what was once an immediate need to include an underrepresented Indigenous population in the government workforce has been expanded further with no clear metrics to justify the need for such a change or for a policy at all. When we cannot fill current government positions, then we need to get it right.

We should be targeting Indigenous and Northern post-secondary students for employment, developing an Indigenous and Northern recruitment, training, and retention policy. Madam Speaker, if we expect the North to grow, we must hold deputy ministers and management accountable to ensure all Indigenous people, long-term Northerners, and their children are a priority for this and future governments. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1361-19(2):  
SENIOR CITIZEN LONG-TERM CARE

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, elders in our communities need a facility to live in. We have spoken in this House many times about

overcrowded homes in Nunakput. In many homes in Nunakput, large families, cramped in small spaces, includes elders and ones we are supposed to be taking care of. Madam Speaker, we're supposed to be making sure our elders age in our homes and with dignity in our communities and not getting homesick and not missing family.

Madam Speaker, many elders are living with extended family, cramped houses, living in our own public housing units that are difficult to maintain. Many of the elders are forced to leave communities and go to Inuvik and live in the seniors home and the hospital. This is not right, Madam Speaker. We should be able to do better for our elders.

Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok are very isolated communities on the Arctic Coast - elders in my communities living their entire life beside the ocean with a small group of families around them. This is all what they know. We shouldn't be forcing our elders to leave the coast to move to Inuvik because we don't have facilities to take care of them in their home communities, Madam Speaker.

Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk, we even have private secured funding to build the facilities and a private-public partnership with monies to build these elders facilities and this Minister's not giving us the opportunity. I want to work with my Minister, Madam Speaker. We're dragging our feet. It's been three years since I brought this up in the House, and it needs to be taken care of. We're in our last year of this government, and let's try to make a difference and work together. Let's get it done. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1362-19(2):  
DEVOLUTION

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the devolution agreement came into effect on April 1st, 2014. While five Indigenous governments in the NWT have signed on to devolution, there are still Indigenous governments who have not. I think there's more than five at this point.

Madam Speaker, devolution was intended to allow the NWT to take responsibility for public land, water, and resources. It was also intended to provide economic benefits. But, Madam Speaker, these benefits only flow to the governments who have signed on to the devolution agreement.

For those who are partners in devolution, there is a seat at the table, there is decision-making power, and millions of dollars in resource royalty payments. For those who are not partners in devolution, there's an opportunity to participate in lands and resource management but without decision-making authority. Chapter four of the devolution agreement describes post-devolution resource management, specifically, the Intergovernmental Council.

The Intergovernmental Council is intended to allow the public and Aboriginal governments to cooperate and collaborate on matters related to lands and resource management. Their intergovernmental agreement on lands and resource management addresses Indigenous governments who have not signed on to devolution. It states, under section 4.9, the council may invite observers to its proceedings and determine whether and to what extent they may participate. This may include representatives of boards, councils, co-management boards, regulatory bodies, or other entities established under settlement agreements or self-government agreements.

The agreement goes on to explain how an Indigenous government can become a party to the agreement with the consent of the GNWT. It also states that nothing in the agreement shall affect existing obligations of the GNWT in relation to any Aboriginal government that is not a party. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mahsi, Madam Speaker, and mahsi colleagues. Madam Speaker, the devolution agreement created the Intergovernmental Council. The Intergovernmental Council is the body that cooperates on all lands and resource matters but how can Indigenous governments, who have not seeded their inherent right to their land, not have any decision-making authority when it comes to land management decisions?

The IGC has a legislative development protocol. This protocol does allow non-IGC Indigenous governments to potentially participate with the drafting process of any particular legislation.

Madam Speaker, devolution was supposed to increase northern control over lands and resources, but the aftermath of devolution divides Aboriginal governments between those signed on and those not. The creation of the IGC and the roles of Indigenous governments at this council demonstrates more divide and conquer by the GNWT than cooperation and collaboration. I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1363-19(2):  
HOUSING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the government's housing policies are not working for Indigenous people. There are too many barriers in place for Indigenous people to succeed in being a homeowner. These policies are working against our people, not for them.

Madam Speaker, the territorial government receives funds from the federal government to provide housing for Indigenous people however more of our people are homeless. Housing NWT has a homelessness specialist to fix the problem, but the solution is simple: Give public housing houses to current tenants to be homeowners and build more houses to eliminate homelessness.

Madam Speaker, Housing NWT policies and procedures are not serving Indigenous people. They are developing a manual on how to be a good tenant. This is an insult to the Indigenous people who live in housing. Our ancestors did not need policies and procedures or guidelines on how to live and be a good steward on their land. Colonialism changed this. It created more problems and barriers for our people to live and exist in our homeland. The Indian Act, residential schools, the 60s Scoop, all interfered with our ways of life and living. Madam Speaker, we were seen as not civilized but have lived in an organized responsible manner for thousands of years. We do not need Housing NWT telling us how to live or controlling the funds given to solve the housing problems caused by colonization. The money received from CIRNAC for Indigenous funding should be provided to Indigenous governments to address housing consistent with self-determination, our land claims, and our self-government agreements. Madam Speaker, we should not be begging Housing NWT for accommodation in our homeland. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1364-19(2):  
EULOGY FOR LUCY FABIEN

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Lucy Fabien was born on August 26th to the mother Eda Fabien and father Angus Delorme. Lucy was survived by siblings Warren and Richard Delorme. Lucy had three children - Melissa, Scott, and Jamie; two

grandchildren, Shanelle and Serena; and her small bosses Lila and Drake Delorme. After Lucy passed, they had many tributes on social media for Lucy and all of them depict a wonderful human being filled with love and positive comments which shows the impact Lucy had on anyone she had reached out or was part of her life. She would give her shirt to help anybody.

Lucy was also full of humour and laughter and would remind friends of certain milestones that occurred in friendships were developed and nurtured. Lucy had nicknames for many people. Some I've seen on social media, but I won't say who the real persons were, nicknames like Matilda, Hamburger, Cupcake, CKLB, Chum, AJ, Mary Football, Lyndom, critical minerals Punk, Ed Muffin, Senai, and so on. Lucy loved to laugh, play pranks, and joke around. She always showed love and affection to her family and friends.

Lucy joined her mom, dad, brother Kenneth Tinker, grandparents, and family and friends on her final journey. The world was a better place with her in it but Heaven gained an angel on November 16th, 2022.

As her friends and family would say, I love you Lucy. Farewell My Friend, and condolences to the family and all her friends.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1365-19(2):  
CABINS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not believe that this territory can move forward on settling land claims without first sorting out the issues of rights-based cabins. And, Madam Speaker, this is a bit of a catch-22 in that the cleanest solution to settling rights-based cabins is settling land claims, because once an Indigenous government has their land and their cabins are on it then they can sort that out with their membership. Yet, Madam Speaker, we have heard time and time again, in many meetings with Indigenous governments, on no matter what the subject, quite often it comes back around to complaints about cabins. And, Madam Speaker, I want to point out just how inconsistent we are in this.

Many rights-based cabins right now do not have leases or taxes, and we have posted notices on them that they are squatters. Some Indigenous governments have shared which cabins they identify as Indigenous rights. Others are saying they will not do that because they do not trust



the government. Some rights-based cabins, many years ago someone was told they had to get a lease and then they were instructed by their Indigenous government not to pay those lease fees or taxes and so they're now in collections with the GNWT. Some rights-based cabins, Madam Speaker, are unauthorized occupants but are paying taxes because we tax squatters. Some Indigenous rights-based cabins have actually applied for tax exempt status. There's about eight different scenarios you can be in with your rights-based cabin. Part of the problem is saying every rights-based cabin needs a lease is then you are going to pay lease fees, you're going to pay taxes, and quite often these hunters and trappers cabins are not actually in compliance with our cabin regulations. They may be too close to the water. They may not be up to building standards. All this results in multiple infringements of what is a clear Indigenous right to have cabins to hunt and trap, Madam Speaker. I do not believe we are going to make any progress until we settle this. And there are things we can do.

One is to create some form of tenure so that those who have rights-based cabins can be protected knowing that is their cabin; they have exclusive use to it. There's different ways of what that tenure can look like but I propose it is not the traditional lease that we're requiring for everyone else.

Secondly, we need to have some consistency on when a rights-based cabin has to pay lease fees, has to pay taxes. I propose most of those should be a nominal fee, at best, and we certainly shouldn't be sending our hunters and trappers, or our elders living in their cabins, to collections, Madam Speaker. I think it is losing trust with our residents and, ultimately, we're not going to make any progress on many of these issues until we solve this. I will have questions for the Premier about what we're doing to solve this issue once and for all. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1366-19(2):  
INCREASING THE POPULATION OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in December 2022, the NWT recorded the highest employment rate in Canada. But like the rest of the world, NWT employers, including the GNWT, struggled to fill many positions critical to our success. But our population growth is not keeping up with our needs. By the 2040s, our population is

projected to grow by only nine percent while Canada's at 25 percent.

Madam Speaker, the bureau of statistics projects that by 2035, the population will decline in 18 of 33 NWT communities, including Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Whati, Fort Providence, and Tuktoyaktuk.

Sustaining and growing our population would benefit our economy and society in so many ways, Madam Speaker. It would help boost economic opportunities and growth. Employers, including our government, would be able to fill vacant positions and provide needed goods and services. We know we're facing acute labour shortages in the next decade. We will need almost 14,000 people for new job openings in the next decade, including 270 nurses and 140 other health occupations. Population growth will fill jobs and reduce the cost of living, Madam Speaker.

Higher population would also support more and better social programs. Federal transfers are directly linked to our population growth. More residents mean bigger tax base and making it more feasible to maintain and expand our social safety net and our infrastructure.

Population growth would also help address our mounting demographic challenges. We have a rapidly aging population. Many people, especially young people, leave looking for better opportunities elsewhere. A larger population would provide more opportunities for our young people to stay and work here. It's also about supporting residents of small communities to be empowered to stay in small communities.

The need and benefit of sustaining and growing our population is clear. That's why last June, this House, with the support of every Regular MLA, passed a motion calling on the GNWT to create a comprehensive strategy to match Canada's population growth. At present, the GNWT lacks the unified framework to address demographic challenges and opportunities. The GNWT's response tabled last fall was disappointing. It pointed to the failure of the GNWT's last population growth strategy and declined this Assembly's recommendation to develop a new unified strategy.

Our territory needs and deserves a better plan. Our incredible, culturally and mineral rich, diverse North has so much to offer, Madam Speaker. I hope we can share it with more of the world. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1367-19(2):  
MINING AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Madam Speaker, the Northwest Territories has a resource-based economy. Mining has driven our development for decades. It has built roads and power lines, provided high paying wages, apprenticeships, and other opportunities for Northerners. Mining has also driven significant secondary business development throughout the territory, including within the service industry and through contracting. NWT communities benefit from socio-economic agreements, and Indigenous governments who have signed onto devolution share in the resource royalties our primary industry creates.

Madam Speaker, without resource development, the Northwest Territories would be a very dismal place, with little opportunity for residents to better themselves financially. It is with this in mind that I want to recognize and celebrate the mining companies that are driving business development in our territory. At every opportunity, we should be encouraging junior companies to continue exploring and help them to expand their operations.

In January, the GNWT, along with Indigenous governments and MLA Weyallon Armstrong, attended the AME Roundup conference in Vancouver. Roundup is a long-established conference that I attended way back when I was a student at UBC and continues to be one of the largest resource conferences in Canada. It is a great opportunity for the GNWT and Indigenous governments to build relationships, establish partnerships, and attract business in the NWT.

When I attended Roundup in 2020 as the Minister of ITI, I was thrilled to witness the partnership announced by Det'on Cho Nahanni Construction, a corporation owned by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and Cheetah Resources, to manage the operations of Nechalacho rare earth mineral project. This partnership was the first time in Canada that all mining operations were contracted to an Indigenous firm, enabling them to be miners on their own lands.

So today, Madam Speaker, let's recognize and celebrate the value of mining in the NWT. And especially the progressive and innovative partnerships that are emerging, showing a new way of doing business where Indigenous people are the decision-makers and the beneficiaries of the rewards.

And, Madam Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to wish MLA Weyallon Armstrong a happy birthday. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1368-19(2):  
MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madame la Presidente. That's a tough act to follow.

This is the 14th time I've raised midwifery as an MLA. Based upon an update received recently from the Minister of health, some good progress appears to have been made. Although I would say it's been a long road. Work on creating a full midwifery program began a decade ago in 2013. Here's a summary of where I'm told we are now.

- Work has gone ahead under the coordination of a territorial midwifery program implementation working group. Staffing has and continues to be a big challenge but, again, good progress appears to have been made. I'm told that a territorial manager is staffed and tasked with overseeing midwifery care through the NTHSSA regions and in cooperation with the Tlicho Community Services Authority and Hay River Health Authority.
- A territorial midwifery specialist is staffed in Yellowknife, providing postpartum care through Stanton Hospital. The Yellowknife team has two of four midwives hired, also providing outreach services in Behchoko since 2022.
- A lactation specialist was staffed in September 2022 with federal funding for one year, supporting Stanton Hospital and the regions.
- Fort Smith was fully staffed with three midwives although a recent staff departure has cut service, with patients having to travel to Yellowknife.
- Hay River has full services while recruiting continues.
- The work of the implementation group is apparently being carried out under a project charter. That's news to me, and I'll have questions.

With these actions, I am told that full implementation of midwifery services for the NWT is moving into its final phase. One aspect of implementation that I don't see referenced is the rollout of program structure and design through consultation with the Midwives Association of the NWT. That group expressed concerns in late 2021 with the model of central nodes of midwife expertise providing remote

services to clients and community health nurses, not midwifery services located in all regions. The update provided to me noticeably lacks references to midwifery service delivery in the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta and I'll have questions there as well, Madam Speaker.

That said, it looks like the long road from 2013 has an end in sight, and I'll have questions for the Minister of health on what remains to be done and how we're going to begin evaluating what we do. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to rise and recognize Daryl Dolynny who is my constituent of Great Slave. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to recognize the Manitoba interns who are going to be future politicians coming up. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I'd like to recognize Georgina Lloyd. She is the assistant deputy minister with Northern Affairs for Crown Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. She is in Yellowknife this week and has meetings with the Aurora College transformation staff to discuss federal engagement opportunities relating to the transformation of Aurora College into a polytechnic university, and we're happy to have her here. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

I am pleased to recognize a group of legislature interns visiting us from Manitoba. They are here this week to learn more about our consensus form of government. With us today are

- Cheta Akaluka
- Bea Basaran
- Hannah Drudge

- Tayla Gudnason
- Alina Hart
- Dane Monkman, and
- Dr. Kelly Saunders

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Replies to budget address, day 6 of 7. Member for Thebacha.

### Replies to Budget Address

#### MS. MARTSELOS' REPLY

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the fourth and final budget for the 19th Assembly was delivered by the Finance Minister one week ago, on February 8, 2023. Overall, among the many issues we dealt with throughout this term includes the fragile fiscal situation that our government finds itself in right now. According to this year's budget, the Government of the Northwest Territories' total debt for 2023-2024 is \$1.47 billion, which is not far from our territory's debt capacity of \$1.8 billion, although I will acknowledge that for the first time in the life of this Assembly, the GNWT's debt has reduced since last year's budget. However, Madam Speaker, for several years that has not been the case as our territory's debt load has been steadily increasing year over year for the last ten years.

Not since the 17th Assembly has the NWT seen a reduction of its overall debt load. It must be stated, though, Madam Speaker, that the high amount of debt that the NWT has continued to accumulate is not because of spending of the 19th Assembly. No. Our debt has climbed to where it is today because of the decisions made of previous MLAs from previous Assemblies, which is the Legislative Assembly by extension, the people of the NWT must now pay for.

Let me be clear and more specific, Madam Speaker.

I believe our present-day budget restraints are largely due to the decisions of the former Finance Minister from the 17th Assembly, who also happens to be the former Member of Thebacha from that Assembly as well. I say this because it was the Finance Minister who signed off at the 11th hour on the contract for the new Stanton Hospital building, which is the elephant in the room. I say it is the elephant in the room, Madam Speaker, because it was that project that put the Government of the Northwest Territories hundreds of millions of dollars into debt. In fact, according to this budget, the Stanton Territorial Hospital project has a debt

load of \$120 million. What's worse is that at the end of the 30-year lease with the new hospital, the government would spend over \$1 billion on this P3 project.

On that note, Madam Speaker, another mistake made with the old hospital building, now known as the Legacy building, is the fact that officially the Government of the Northwest Territories still owns that building yet for some reason our government signed a 30-year lease to rent that building to a third-party company, that's not even based in the Northwest Territories, called Dexterra. Why is that? Who made that decision? The answer is that the 30-year lease was signed by the Minister of Finance in the 17th Assembly.

Based on all of this, Madam Speaker, I'd say the former Finance Minister from the 17th Assembly has a lot to answer for, since it was the Stanton Hospital project and other related decisions that put the Government of the Northwest Territories into a weakened financial position we're in now.

One other issue with this is that the opening of the newly renovated Stanton Legacy building has been delayed multiple times. First, it was supposed to open by summer of 2021. Then again by spring of 2022. And now they're saying by the summer of 2023. Moreover, Madam Speaker, there are several other issues that have occurred throughout this Assembly which I want to address now.

For example, in 2020 during the pandemic, the Department of Finance amended some of the liquor regulations to allow people to order liquor to be delivered to their homes. This was known as "dial-a-bottle." I strongly disagreed with the decision at the time and I believe that was the wrong thing to do. To me, that decision was almost like government was encouraging our population to drink more alcohol. Those types of decisions have consequences which hurts vulnerable people the most.

Madam Speaker, another area the Government of the Northwest Territories needs to address is the disaster assistance policy, because the current policy is not sufficiently addressing the needs of the people of the NWT. As it's currently written, the disaster assistance policy is only applicable to people when a natural disaster occurs with damage so widespread that a significant number of people or properties are affected. There are holes in this policy and some residents have been falling through the cracks. People, like my constituent who endured a tornado that destroyed his home, are excluded from the disaster assistance policy because it only affected his property. So just because there is only one casualty from the

disaster, does that make it okay? That is not fair and it is not right, and it needs to be fixed.

Madam Speaker, another area I have taken issue with is the one-time recruitment and retention bonuses that were given to a select number of health and social services staff. The issue with this is that these bonuses were not eligible to all health staff, only certain positions who perform certain duties within health and social services. The bonuses were not distributed evenly among staff, particularly long-term staff. In fact, I know of several nurses who have worked for the Government of the Northwest Territories for many years, some for nearly 20 years, yet they were not eligible to receive the retention bonus. There is something seriously wrong with that because it has created the unintended consequence of sowing division amongst new and old nursing staff. For our government to prioritize giving recruitment bonuses to brand new nurses, medical laboratory technologists and midwives, but not to long-term nurses who have lived and worked here for years, is not okay.

In addition, Madam Speaker, there is the issue of the exorbitant fee increases for residents who have cabins on land leases across the NWT. While this decision is another carryover from the previous Assembly, it is a decision that is affecting all leaseholders who renew their lease agreements and must pay the new \$840 minimum cost with this. I have constituents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who own cabins and they have told me these new costs do hurt. Many of these residents have asked to bring the Minister of Lands to my riding so they can discuss these changes with the Minister himself. I have tried numerous times now to coordinate a visit with the Minister, but it has not occurred yet. I am working on this with him, and he has committed to do a visit before the end of the Assembly, which I am looking forward to.

Madam Speaker, I also want to address a matter that is currently before this Assembly, and will be voted on very soon, which is the carbon tax. First of all, I want to be very clear that I am very much against this federally-imposed tax on carbon emissions. In fact, I've never been supportive of this tax since it was first introduced in 2018. And the reasons for my position are because this tax is harming regular people and businesses across the NWT. The final implication of this tax is burdensome for seniors, for families, and for businesses of all sizes, and the financial burden is only going to get worse as time goes on since the tax is going to increase every year until 2030. As leaders, we need to do what's best for the territory and the people we represent. So for those reasons, I will be voting against the

carbon tax bill that will be voted on in this session.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the polytechnic university and the transformation process of Aurora College. First off, I want to thank the Minister of education, again, for reiterating several times now, throughout this Assembly, that the headquarters of the future polytechnic university will be in Fort Smith. My constituents are happy that Fort Smith will continue to be the education capital of the NWT. However, there are two Fort Smith based college positions that are currently being borrowed by the Yellowknife campus, both of which must be returned to Fort Smith as soon as possible. These are two senior management positions that were intended to be based in Fort Smith but for reasons beyond me, which I do not agree with, the positions are currently stationed in Yellowknife. So that is another area that needs to be adjusted by our government very soon.

Also, Madam Speaker, one other aspect about the college transformation that I do not agree with is the fact that our government is basing that process on a document that was written by a former assistant deputy minister of education who is now living in the Caribbean. Plus, that document, the Foundational Review of Aurora College, is from the 18th Assembly which is filled with old ideas and a hostile tone towards Fort Smith. Our government should not be following any reviews that do not make sense, nor ones that only favour further centralization to the capital.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, I also take issue with how the Department of Finance has conducted the review of the affirmative action policy. Last week the GNWT announced its intention to replace the existing affirmative action policy with two new policies in its place, which the government has named the Indigenous employment policy and the employment equity policy.

The Indigenous employment policy mirrors the existing affirmative action policy, prioritizing the hiring of Dene, Inuit, and Metis people born in the NWT, which is good. However, Madam Speaker, the employment equity policy would give preferred hiring to Indigenous Canadians, racialized persons, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community and long-term Northerners. While there is some good in this second policy, such as providing preferred hiring to long-term Northerners, there are major aspects of it that I do not agree with. Specifically, I don't agree with providing preferred hiring to Indigenous Canadians at-large. As I said in my statement last week, I

have no issues with Indigenous Canadians who are not born in the NWT being employed by our public service. I just take issue with that group of people getting the same affirmative action status as the Dene, Inuit, and Metis people born in the NWT. In my view, these new policies do not resolve the issues with the affirmative action policy. It only widens the net for who qualifies as priority one hiring into our public service. Therefore, I call on all Indigenous leaders to reject these two policies and for them to make that known to both the Finance Minister and that department.

Madam Speaker, as we embark upon the final year of this term, I think this is an opportune time to also discuss some of the 19th Assembly's mandate items. For example, decentralization is a key mandate item for this Assembly yet most of the new jobs created over this term have gone to Yellowknife instead of the regional centres or small communities. This is a mandate item that must be improved upon and must continue to be pursued into the next Assembly.

Madam Speaker, another aspect of our term's mandate has to do with the price and type of electricity generated in the NWT. We said we would reduce the cost of power and increase the use of alternative and renewable energy, and similarly, that we invest in the expansion of the Taltson hydro dam. Well, we did not manage to reduce the costs of power this term; in fact, it has only gotten more expensive with each year. So we must continue to work on that into the future. As for the Taltson expansion, this government and the federal government have made several strategic investments to advance this project forward. While construction has not yet begun, pursuing this expansion would help the NWT succeed in our 2030 Energy Strategy. I am strongly in support of this mandate item, and I support the efforts of the Minister of Infrastructure with this undertaking. There are still some aspects of the project that need to be worked on with Indigenous governments so hopefully that work will conclude before the end of this Assembly.

Also, Madam Speaker, one point I want to make regarding the mandate item to create a polytechnic university is that the former residential school building, that is currently being used by Aurora College in Fort Smith, must be removed. That should be the first thing done to the new Fort Smith headquarters university campus. I also want to see in that future facility a university-size gym, a theater for the arts, along with a new single residence, a modern cafeteria, and a student lounge. I also think the new building should have an Indigenous accent to it.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, another priority of this Assembly was to increase mental health and addiction programs, including aftercare. I have said several times through this term that a new territorial aftercare facility should be situated in Fort Smith because I believe that's an ideal location for it, and I think the former Trailcross Treatment Centre building would be a good location to consider this. I say this because I think placing an aftercare facility in a non-industrialized location, that's not too far for the NWT residents to travel to but is far enough away from the familiar environments of peoples' addictions, can be very beneficial for our people.

Madam Speaker, enabling seniors to age in place with dignity is another priority of this Assembly, which I am unsure how we've done to address. Nonetheless, one suggestion to advance this item is exactly what I said in my statement yesterday, which is for Housing NWT to create and implement a seniors' housing strategy. As part of that strategy, we should implement a flat-rate single-fixed cost system that determines the rent for seniors regardless of income level, race, or which part of the NWT they live. Doing this would help reduce the amount of rental arrears incurred by seniors and provide them with far more less financial stress. I think Housing NWT needs to lead these efforts and work in partnership with Indigenous governments and seniors' organizations to help craft an effective seniors' housing strategy.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I believe that this Assembly has succeeded in advancing several of the mandate items that we created at the beginning of the term. However, I think we all know that as MLAs, more work still needs to be done to help improve the quality of life for all the people of the NWT. And as the MLA for Thebacha, I will continue to fight to achieve the priorities that I outlined today. With that, I'd like to thank all the amazing constituents of Thebacha for their continued support in me as their representative. I also want to thank my family, including my husband Peter, my sons Gerry and Mickey, and my dog Rambo, for their steadfast support in whatever I do. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Replies to the budget address. Member Yellowknife North.

#### MR. JOHNSON'S REPLY

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do share the view that it's clear that our problems started with the 17th Assembly, Madam Speaker, but I will address my

comments today to the Minister of Finance for the 19th Assembly.

Firstly, I believe this budget is lacking in two areas. One is more money for NGOs. I know this budget contains some increases for our nongovernment organizations, which was a result of the last budgets negotiations, and I thank the Minister of Finance and all the departments for their work on that, but I am concerned that this is simply set out to be a one-time funding. I spoke with many NGOs who had contribution agreements with no increase for over a decade, Madam Speaker. And I think what we are looking for here is a permanent policy, a change to the stock contribution agreement form, multiyear funding, and an inflationary increase built forward so that this is solved going forward for all Assemblies, Madam Speaker, not just a one-time top-up.

The second point I would like to emphasize in order for me to support this budget is more funding for our communities. We have heard that multiple times in this House, and I think from day one there was some uncertainty and a bit of a tension in the budget of whether reducing the funding gap by \$5 million meant \$5 million total or it meant reducing the gap \$5 million plus the inflation that gets built up over the time. It's clear the government is proposing that it's just \$5 million fixed. At the very least, we need to see carbon tax revenue shared that is revenue neutral for those communities so that we are not actually passing a budget and a carbon tax that further puts our communities behind.

As well, Madam Speaker, I've made this point before. I think the budget is a time to open up some policy asks that are purely political. The GNWT doesn't like to do anything without a thorough review, without talking to everyone, without the strategy, the "what we heard" report, and then the legislative proposal. But I think everyone once in a while -- and I think budgets are a great time to pick out one thing and just announce that you're going to do it. In my last two budget addresses, I suggested that we introduce five paid sick days for workers. Our pandemic taught us that forcing people to choose between missing pay, where they struggle to buy groceries or going to work sick, is putting their coworkers at risk and it's ultimately hurting the economy. I once again make this plea. That is a simple change we can make. I know there has to be a grand review of the Employment Standards Act and we have to talk to everyone in the world about it, but sometimes you can just pick something out and get it done, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, once again, I know I am asking for money, and I will not be remiss to say that we have to make hard choices. Some things I am willing to do on the revenue side, one is to create a high-income tax bracket. Presently in the Northwest Territories, under GNWT tax once you make over \$147,000, you pay the same tax rate whether you're making \$150,000 or \$500,000. Almost every other jurisdiction in Canada has a tax bracket above 147. The Department of Finance estimates creating additional brackets, depending how they look, is somewhere between \$800,000 or \$3.5 million.

Secondly, I am willing to increase our corporate tax rate by one percent. We have one of the lowest corporate tax rates in Canada. We're largely always kind of pegged to Alberta, because we have this concern what Alberta's doing, but I'll note the Yukon next door has a much higher corporate tax rate and their economy's doing a lot better than ours, Madam Speaker. One percent on a corporate tax is approximately \$3 million, Madam Speaker.

I made this plea in all my budgets - I think we got to end the contracts for all fax machines. I budget this at about \$100,000 in savings. As well there's been a number of proposals over the year for a completely paperless GNWT. We still rely on a whole lot of printing and a whole lot of paper. Estimates have shown that can save governments and our government up to \$1 million. I know there are a number of efficiencies to be found. I am convinced that by creating a service GNWT model, with government service officers in the capital whereby income assistance, housing, many of these social assistance programs can all be dealt with by one person and one form, we will save money. There's some different ways you can make that work but I think the work to get E-services online has really been lacking. Right now, the only things you can do are your fishing license, your healthcare card, and some DMV services. I know there's plans to roll out more, but it seems clear we are years and years away from bringing the social envelope into E-services which would free up a lot of time for our already overworked officers, such as income assistance officers.

Madam Speaker, I want to express my disappointment that government renewal did not bring more effects to our budget in this Assembly. And I think one of the ironic things is a lot of the things that our government renewal was actually trying to do, trying to fix, is one of the reasons we didn't get it through fast enough. The government renewal, quoting from the Minister of Finance's own proposals, want to look at our process and do away things that

are unnecessarily complicated, wasteful, or inefficient. They wanted to do away with getting rid of multiple application forms for a single programming or having unnecessarily complex internal approval processes. I am very convinced that the Department of Finance ran into its unnecessarily complex approval processes in order to implement government renewal where there were just simply too many voices at the table and direction cannot be provided to departments to clean up their processes. In the government renewal plan that the Minister initially presented, there was things like having its software that is intuitive and cross-compatible with other systems. Madam Speaker, our software does not talk to each other.

We heard yesterday the Minister of Housing say in one community she estimates that the housing waitlist is somewhere between three and seven years. The housing corporation doesn't even know what their wait lists are. They don't even know the state of their units. They don't have any coherent reporting on their maintenance. They have little to no software let alone some sort of software that would be compatible with all the other departments and all of the other work we need to do on our infrastructure and our capital planning.

One of the issues that government renewal identified is structure that is having too many middle managers and too much overhead and a culture of micromanaging. This is something that integrated service delivery and integrated case management both recognize, and both made recommendations, yet they were victims of their own bureaucracy where they did not have the authority to make recommendations or make orders to departments. And I get this is very hard. I think the next government, you have to do it from day one. You have to put it in the mandate letters. It needs to come from the Premier. And you have to be willing to move staff around, to redo job descriptions, to redo software, to integrate it all. It's not an easy task, and I don't believe one Minister or one deputy minister has the authority. It really has to be clear direction to set all of that out, and I am disappointed we did not see more from government renewal. But I hope that we find a way to find these efficiencies that result in better programming. I know a number of years the Government of Canada put a freeze on new programs because it was struggling to deliver the programs and services it currently had. And I think we're very much in that situation. It's always tempting to create a new tailored program but that creates a lot of staff time. It creates a lot more work when we have a lot of programs that we simply know need a top-up. We have a lot of programs in competing areas

that are multiple forms that I think can just be done away with or rolled into one. We need to stop trying to specialize so much.

Similarly in this vein, I think we need to do a lot more for digital government. One of the principles of E-government that I love is the once-only principle. This is a principle where a government can only ask for a piece of information once, Madam Speaker. If you provide your 2019 T4 to the government, you can only do that -- they're only allowed to ask once. And then it is shared with all of the other departments. This applies for birth dates, your address - once only. I can't even imagine how many times people, in addressing social assistance, apply the same forms and the same documents over and over and over again. We hear these stories and I think, you know, there are lots we can do in that digital government thing.

So just to quote the Minister of Finance, you know, words back at her, I really do believe in value-based budgeting and priority-based budgeting, and I think this year over year incremental budgeting that the GNWT does, where each department goes away, comes forward with their proposals, and we get this mishmash without clear centralized coordination, is not working for us. We don't have a clear picture of what programs are giving us value for money. And I guess I just express disappointment that we did not get far enough in this government and that this budget is not doing it. And I hope that in the remaining time we can make some progress on that.

But ultimately, Madam Speaker, I've shared a number of solutions of things we can do. I've shared my two funding priorities, which, is at the end of the day our non-profits are delivering the best value for dollar. I don't need a government renewal to tell me that. And they need a little more help. And our communities as well, Madam Speaker, they need a little more help. I've provided a few ways in which I am willing to fund that and make some hard decisions. I look forward to our continued budget negotiations. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Replies to the budget address. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 1373-19(2):  
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** I think I need some sick days.

Madam Speaker, many of us understand why the affirmative action policy was first implemented 30 plus years ago, and still we seem unable to reach our target for Indigenous hires. Why is that? Is it because of the education levels? Because of the type of positions available? Because of location of potential Indigenous employees? Because we have a young population not of working age? Is it because we have settled claims and people are working there instead? Is it because of the buddy system that we often hear about? Is it about racism? Is it about hiring the committee bias as well? Whatever it is, we need to know what those barriers are prior to developing something that we may or may not need.

So, Madam Speaker, will the Minister confirm what research and measures, if any, were used to determine the success or failure of the current affirmative action policy? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I might draw your attention back to the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework. This was put out I now believe back in December of a couple of years ago. That was the fruit of much research and consultation at that time, looking at a number of barriers across a number of areas that we were going to start to address. You now see, and you'll see in the main estimates, there are targets being set for each department. There are also in addition to that in order to set those targets, there was a labour force statistical analysis conducted in June of 2022, and that has provided a basis by which we can begin to have those targets. And now continuing with the work that we're in to evolve the public service, to be more representative, we've come forward to make good on the promise to review the affirmative action policy. So there's been much research done. The affirmative action policy has been looked at and reviewed multiple times. There's never been the will to get it over the line and to make it better, to try something better, to try to fix it. It hasn't delivered, very simply. We all know it hasn't delivered because the needle hasn't moved. It's not only because of this policy; I completely agree. But that's where we get into that recruitment and retention framework that does some of that work. This is one more step that's going to refocus attention on the hiring of Indigenous Northerners while also ensuring that there's other groups, including long-term Northerners, who also will be benefitting from an employment equity policy. So a lot of research went into all these pieces, Madam Speaker. Thank you.



**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I've been getting a number of calls like this lately just because of the meetings that are happening in the communities, and people are very concerned. You know, what we seem to be doing is pitting Indigenous people against Indigenous people and others as well.

So, Madam Speaker, will the Minister confirm the rationale and the criteria used to support the need for this review and potential replacement of the current policy with two distinct policies, being the Indigenous employment policy and employment equity policy, when the whole intent is to increase the number of Indigenous people into the government sector? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, under the current policy, the affirmative action policy, there is still this ranking system that goes on, what everyone knows as the P1s, P2s, but within that you have P1A, P1B, and all these different sorts of ranking depending upon the position, depending upon who's in the position. So there's already complexity within there that categorizes people under different ways depending on the job and then creates this priority listing. Madam Speaker, what we're actually doing now is separating that out so that it is very clear that first there is the priority on the Indigenous employment policy that would take preference for the Indigenous Canadians in the Northwest Territories, within the boundaries of the Northwest Territories, while not losing the fact that we -- the Northerners, the long Northerners are also arguably subject to wanting to ensure that we continue to have them prioritized for the public service. But within that, Madam Speaker, there are other equity groups in Canada that we would like to see as members of the public service. There's not a flood of people coming to the Northwest Territories. If there were, I think that would be a good problem to have quite frankly, but there's not. The employment equity policy operates as a secondary policy to the Indigenous employment policy, and it matches numbers. So instead of just this blanket ranking, we're now going to say if there's positions, and we know that our labour market has ten people available and we have positions available, we can start to fill up our positions with the folks that we know are here. The Indigenous employment policy, again, comes first. The other one comes second. We're matching targets numbers now, not just ranking people. So this is actually a much more targeted way of going about it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Supplementary. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yeah, you know, in the beginning, like I said last year I think in a statement, is that when this policy was first implemented, I think it was targeted towards Indigenous people and they had to add in the P2s I think to get it passed, and after talking to some of the drafters anyway. So I just want to make sure that we get it right.

So, Madam Speaker, will the Minister confirm if there was any consideration given to do away with the affirmative action policy or keep it or replace it with other forms of support or programs such as an Indigenous and northern training and recruitment policy, an Indigenous and northern post-secondary student hire policy, Indigenous and northern internship policy, or using a majority Indigenous hiring committee to support Indigenous hires? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Speaker, I think my first two answers were already long so I'm going to try and get this one shorter, but this one could be longer than the last two.

I'm happy to say that really, we have a lot of those policies. And I certainly wouldn't want the fact that we are now at the next stage of really developing our attention on Indigenous hiring, and of being a representative workforce, to lose sight again of the fact that we do now have the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework. In that, there are action items, and within all of that as well and in conjunction with that, we still have the internship program that does operate, and which would apply these equity programs just as it does now with the affirmative action policy. We have the internship approach that we use. There is, of course -- there is, in fact, a proposed increase for the secondment program for Indigenous governments to be working together with the GNWT to have capacity building on both sides. There is the career gateway program. So, again, no shortage of programs that are looking at each of the individual different barriers, targeting some of those individual barriers whether at a student level, whether within community capacity, to try to bring up the hiring. So I do think we need to look at all those things, I agree completely, and we do have a number of those programs already employed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, I understand that we have -- like, we have this policy already in place. We have all these programs in place.

And I guess I ask myself why haven't we been able to meet that target? And, you know, I look at one of the areas that I -- you know, I think that hasn't been mentioned is the lack of accountability of DMs and management. Like, they are the ones there that have to make sure that those policies are being followed. And when I talk to people, I don't think that's happening. But anyways, Madam Speaker, residents are concerned that the notice of meetings in the communities have been left wanting.

So will the Minister confirm what level of notice and consultation has or will take place with Indigenous governments, communities, NGOs, and residents during this review? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, there was a letter sent out to Indigenous governments back in October of 2022, and I know I've heard back directly myself from some, and others I know, or I believe are going to be participating in the community consultations. There's two months' worth of community engagement sessions happening now through to the end of March. And, Madam Speaker, I just want to also note I had also heard that some people of course can't necessarily make it to a specific date. I've asked that we had a virtual session towards the end which would hopefully capture folks who were unable to attend in person at some of these. And, of course, as is the usual practice with the GNWT, there is an open portal on the GNWT finance website around receiving feedback. And, Madam Speaker, certainly most of us are easily to find by way of email if people simply want to write in. Madam Speaker, I'm happy to take people's recommendations and comments in that regard as well. So there are a lot of -- a number of ways that people can submit their feedback, and I hope that they do that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1374-19(2):  
CRITICAL MINERALS STRATEGY

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ITI. I've been looking through Canada's critical mineral strategy that was announced I think a couple years ago now. And like a lot of government documents, it's full of a lot of "we should do this" and "we're going to improve the economy by doing things such as this," but there really isn't a lot of sort of tangible actionable items in the plan. Given that the Northwest Territories contains a lot of those

critical minerals needed for Canada's green energy strategy, can the Minister speak a bit more about when we actually will see things happening under this critical mineral strategy, has the government indicated that they are going to deal with our infrastructure deficit -- or sorry, in our energy deficit that is mentioned as a key barrier to northern development? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister for ITI.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the final version of the critical minerals strategy is still fairly new. I think it was only within the last year they've been doing some consultations on it. And obviously it's difficult for me to say precisely what we hope the federal government may or may not do. What I can say, Madam Speaker, is at this point we have put ourselves in position to be at the second round of tables. They are conducting national resource energy tables right now, "they, the federal government. And we were not initially on round two but we are now. And that process has just gotten underway early this year. That's an opportunity for us to help to define exactly what the Member's getting at - where is that money going to be spent, how is it going to be spent, and what can we do to ensure that it's being spent, frankly, right here in the territory? I look forward to that process taking place. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I appreciate the Minister's comments. I guess I'm a bit concerned that we weren't engaged earlier on in this given, you know, the topics that we've been discussing here around the carbon tax, and a lot of this critical mineral strategy is about transitioning Canada off of fossil fuels and into a greener energy economy. So I guess I'm a bit frustrated by that. But I do know that this Minister is well positioned to be that voice at the table.

Can the Minister speak a bit then about how do we become innovative when we're working with the federal government? We have our own regulatory system that's quite, you know -- I want to say, like, strenuous a bit at times, and then if we're going to now add on another layer of government bureaucracy with the federal government, how do we actually go about making sure that we're creating one that works together versus two that are on top of each other creating further barriers? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, certainly we don't want to create government

barriers or bureaucracy, particularly in a context where some of the criticism we get is that our regulatory systems already have quite a lot of layers to them. Certainly what we found in the last recent while is that there's a shift internationally recognizing the value of having a robust regulatory system, one that involves and engages Indigenous peoples from the very beginning so that when a project goes through that process, they know that it's certain, they know that it's secure, and they know that it respects environmental, social governance, and Indigenous factors. And that is what we have here in the North. What we are trying to do is ensure now that the different parties at those tables, the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories, are aligned. I can say, as an example for the Member, Madam Speaker, is the Mackenzie Valley operational dialogue is happening right now. That's an opportunity to bring all these parties together to have conversations to ensure that the way we apply our policies, comply our regulatory processes and work them, is efficient and is aligned and it makes sense to work all together. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I'm glad to hear that the Minister is speaking about efficiencies and such. I guess I rise with a bit of a concern that when we look at other areas where the federal government has come in with this great idea or they've made election promises that they want to see fulfilled, and I'll pick on ECE with the Daycare Act. You know, not a lot of flexibility for us to actually do anything or make our own northern or made-in-the-North imprint on it. So how is the Minister, I guess -- and maybe this is going to be a hard one to answer. How can the Minister ensure that that northern voice is being heard at the table and, if anything, that we're not just the afterthought in this conversation but that rather we are leading the conversation and one of the drivers? And when I look through the critical strategy -- and I encourage everybody to do so -- a lot of it is applying to the North. It's reconciliation with Indigenous people, it's lack of infrastructure, it's critical minerals that are needed. This strategy is about us and so how will the Minister ensure that we are leading instead of just following? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this touches on finance as well because this is an area that's going to potentially drive our future economy.

I have to say we did have the opportunity to comment on the federal critical minerals metals strategy before it was final, and I would suggest

there are a lot of elements in there that I think reflect exactly on the submission that we made and reflect exactly on what we wanted to see in terms of being a strategy that is now high level. The next step, obviously, proof is in the pudding - where are they going to spend their dollars? Those conversations are ongoing. And as far as what I can do, or what any other member of this government can and what we are doing, is getting ourselves out, being at the table, being at the conferences, being at the speaking events, meeting with other Ministers. I am quite fortunate that I had the opportunity to speak on a panel at critical minerals about the competition and the competitiveness of the North when I was there. You know, the fact that we were invited to that I think shows that there is an awareness now that we are going to be in this space. The line in the strategy itself saying that minerals extracted in the territories could be processed in the prairies and supply manufacturing in other parts of Canada. There is a recognition that the value chain for the future of economy, for a greener economy, can start in the North and involve all of Canada. And that, I think, is an important shift of thinking that we want to capitalize on. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. And it doesn't sound like much has changed in the conversation at Roundup since I went in 2020, which was the same things that I heard from the mineral resource sector. They liked our robust regulatory system. They wanted to invest in the North. And a key piece I think that we need to also remember is that when we go to seek investment, we can tell people that their money spent in northern Canada will actually benefit people. You will literally create life-changing projects as we've seen in Imperial Oil up in Norman Wells. So I do think that that is a key piece that we need to keep driving home. Our competitors are places like China. There are places that are in developing countries where the law is not as strict, and I think that is really a key message that we need to be driving home as a territory as well. And I know the Minister will do so. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. And I didn't hear a question in there, so I'll take that as a comment.

Members and Ministers, just a reminder that we have a limited time for oral questions, and Members should have their opportunity to participate. Please keep your questions and answers short and to the point. We've gone

through two Members, and we've used up 18 minutes. Thank you. Next on my list is Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 1375-19(2):  
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES FOR  
ELDERS

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just yes or no answers from the Minister then. Thank you.

So, Madam Speaker, in regards to, I've been always bringing up in the House since 2007 in regards to my elders that are being brought out of the communities of Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Sachs, and Tuk, having to be brought out to Inuvik to long-term care. Families not able to see them, elders getting homesick, and it just draws too much hardship on my elders.

Madam Speaker, I have private monies to use from business, a local business in the Delta wanting to build these units in the communities of Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk. Is the Minister willing to work with that company on looking to get these, I guess level two elders facilities done? Is the Minister of Housing willing to work with us. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for Housing NT.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. And thank you to the Member for the question. I'm always looking for innovative ideas, especially when they're coming as community-based projects and working with Indigenous governments. Yes, I would be open to be having those discussions with the Member and with his leadership. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I get that in writing? No, I'm just joking.

Madam Speaker, so the Minister's committed to that. And what I'll do is I'll reach out to my community leadership of the communities and work together with them to invite the Minister to the community to work on a go-forward basis for elders' facilities in Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk. And can the Minister recommit to that? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Absolutely. I think, you know, the way that we need to address the housing crisis here in the Northwest Territories is absolutely through partnership, and we need Indigenous governments at the table. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MR. JACOBSON:** No, I just want to make a comment. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Minister for that, and I look forward to working with her department to get this done in short order, within a couple of months, not years. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. I'll take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 1376-19(2):  
DEVOLUTION

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. My questions related to my Member's statement on the 2014 Devolution Agreement.

Can the Premier explain the role of the Deh Cho and the Akaitcho First Nations in current legislative development process? Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Madam Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. So I believe that the Member is talking about the Intergovernmental Council, about the land and resources legislation. That is done, like you said, through devolution at the Intergovernmental Council table. For those governments that aren't part of that table, they're always welcome to joint that table but if they're not part of it, then there still is a consultation process that happens if the land and resources is in their areas, and they're still invited to sit on working groups to provide support for those legislative initiatives going forward. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Is there any financial support to allow non-devolution partners a seat at the Intergovernmental Council table? Mahsi.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Every member of the Intergovernmental Council does receive financial support to take part in that table. Any Indigenous government that signs on to the Intergovernmental Council devolution agreement will also get funding to sit at that table. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. And mahsi to the Premier for that answer. The Deh Cho First Nations have not signed on to devolution, nor do they have an agreement in principle or a final agreement regarding their land, resources, and self-government. Given those circumstances, does that lessen or weaken their authority of land management in their region compared to

IGC members in their respective regions? Mahsi.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Having a concluded modern treaty is not required to join devolution or the Intergovernmental Council. However, though, having a finalized agreement does answer questions within their agreement surrounding land management and authority. So we're optimistic, and we're really glad that the Deh Cho is back to the negotiations table, and we're hopeful that their negotiations will advance quickly. But as I said earlier, Madam Speaker, all work at the Intergovernmental Council consults with all Indigenous governments, whether they're at the table or not, on areas that may be applicable to those governments, and they're always welcome to sit on the working tables. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final supplementary. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Has the Premier ever considered that conditional membership into the IGC, based solely on signing onto devolution, is viewed by some leadership as exclusionary and as a tool to try to divide Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I have heard those arguments before. During my tenure as Premier, I actually reached out to the Indigenous governments that aren't part of the devolution agreement, trying to talk to them about what their concerns were, trying to express the benefits of being at that table. But I do respect that they don't want to sign on. I also brought their -- because, again, they asked if they could be part of that table, share in the resources without being a member -- being part of devolution. I did bring that forward to the Intergovernmental Council. In fact, I brought it forward twice during my tenure. I'm only one member of ten on the Intergovernmental Council. We all have equal seats. And it was very firmly said that membership has benefits and that they're more than welcome to sign on but if they don't sign on, then those benefits will not be shared. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Premier. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 1377-19(2):  
COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I have some questions for the Premier, if I could. I'm reading today, right now, on Cabin Radio, a

news story about how they broke the story about how the Northwest Territories is going to get \$8 million a year under a new ten-year federal funding arrangement for all the provinces and territories, and there's supposed to be a special fund set up for the Northwest Territories for \$5 million for the next five years.

I'd like to ask the Premier why am I reading about this on Cabin Radio instead of getting this kind of communications directly from the Cabinet? That's not the way consensus government is supposed to work, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The health minister would like that deferred to her. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. This morning the Premier, the Finance Minister, and I met with our federal colleagues, the Minister for intergovernmental affairs and the Minister of health. We had some questions about what we had been offered at the -- the Premier had been offered at the Council of Federation last week.

What I can tell you is that the net new money available to the NWT is \$12 million. That includes a \$2.9 million increase to the territorial health initiative fund which is spent partly on medical travel and partly on bigger picture items like health sustainability.

There are four areas in which there are tailored -- what they call tailored bilateral agreements. They're worth \$7 million a year for the next ten years. There is a \$2 million top-up to the CHT which will be for hospital services. It's a one-time only. There will also be some money for the escalator, the CHT escalator which is tied to inflation at this point so we don't have a firm figure on that. The personal support workers wage subsidy, we don't have information on that. The health equity fund for Indigenous people, we don't have information on that. So there are some considerable loose ends.

It was our intention to communicate all of this to the Members by the end of the afternoon. The meeting just happened this morning, and I had a subsequent meeting that ended at 2:30. So the information is coming to the Regular MLAs, and there will be a news conference tomorrow in which we will answer questions. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madam la Presidente. I want to thank the health minister for that. I'd like

to know why I'm reading about this on Cabin Radio instead of getting the information from the Minister or the Premier. This is just not the way that consensus government is supposed to work. Why am I reading it on Cabin Radio first? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I can't control who the federal ministers decide to talk to in media interviews. I didn't know that they were going to do that. I learned when the Member learned, and I was probably just about as happy. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Yeah, I actually sent three Ministers an email about this while I was sitting here, before I had even read the Cabin Radio story, saying you guys are doing a media briefing tomorrow, you haven't told us anything? So why are you doing a media briefing instead of talking to us and telling us this news? Thanks, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. Just to say again we met with these Ministers this morning. They choose to do their own media engagement. We decided to do ours tomorrow. We have in the works a message to Regular MLAs. We have provided them with advanced notice of a media release -- or a media advisory. There will be advanced notice of a media release. So we are not working as quickly as the federal government is but we are prepared to answer any questions that may arise, whether it today or tomorrow after the news conference. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Final supplementary. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. So is this the kind of precedent -- like, this is the way that we used to get communications in the last Assembly; I can tell you that. But is this the way that we're going to continue to get information moving forward, is through Cabin Radio instead of communications directly from our colleagues on the other side of the House? Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** The Member for Frame Lake can rest assured this is not a new way of communicating. I've already explained that the federal government is doing its own communications. We don't have any control over that. I've told him what we're doing. And, you know, that is what we are going to stick with. I think I already said, but I will say again, I wasn't best pleased either to read on Cabin Radio that coming out of that meeting, apparently somebody had -- Minister Duclos had done an interview with Cabin Radio about the health agreement. We didn't have a specific

embargo in place, so we have to go with the flow. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1378-19(2):  
INCREASING POPULATION THROUGH  
IMMIGRATION

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Madam Speaker, today I spoke about sustaining and growing our population in the Northwest Territories, and a key tool to grow our population is using immigration. The GNWT currently does not fulfill its annual immigration quota allotted by the Government of Canada through the nominee program. This is a big concern especially within our business community.

So I'm wondering if the Minister can explain why we're not hitting our quotas and tell us what his department is doing to fill the quota and provide guidance if this week's newest immigration pilot will help us actually hit that quota? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister for Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The quota, as dictated by the Government of Canada, was established years ago. I would have to assume it's based on our population. I would imagine that as soon as we hit that quota, that quota would be increased. We're never going to be continuously hitting the quota. We always want to strive for better. I will say that during the life of this government, we have done a lot in terms of immigration and increasing the population, you know, and I'm happy to announce that since I took office we've doubled the number of people coming in through our nominee program. Back in 2019, there was around -- less than 50, with their families less than 70. We're now up to 108 nominees; with their dependants, 140 individuals immigrated to the Northwest Territories last year. So we are making progress, Madam Speaker.

And to the other part of the question, what are we doing? Well, we have done quite a bit. We're developing resources. We've created a welcome to the NWT booklet for potential and actual immigrants to the territory. We've updated and modernized the nominee program website. We've made the application accessible online. We've introduced a

Francophone stream recently. We've made changes to our nominee program. We continuously make changes to make it more accessible for employers. We are working to implement a new stream focused on in demand occupations. We are participating in an economic pathways pilot to attract skilled refugees from abroad.

And to the Member's third question in that series, we expect that there -- well, hopefully some modest increases, maybe five or ten applicants through that stream. But if we keep chipping away at this, those numbers will continue to go up. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the success that has happened over the course of this term, but there's still room for us to grow and there's still room for us to welcome more people to the Northwest Territories. One of the things that I like to do in this job is pick up the phone and call people. And I've had the opportunity to speak to people working in the immigration sector from other jurisdictions who have literally said, why aren't you guys getting closer to your quota? So I think there's room for us to grow.

Madam Speaker, the department's response to the Assembly's motion indicated that ECE's immigration strategy is up for renewal. The strategy concluded in December, and it's not clear what the next steps of this government are. So can the Minister tell this House the status of the review, including who will be consulted, what the scope is, and when it will produce a new strategy? Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. So the strategy was from 2017 to 2022. Part of that strategy -- or included with that strategy was a performance measurements plan. So the department is now reviewing the data, reviewing the administrative records and reaching out to stakeholders to complete that work and conclude that report. There have been discussions between ECE and ITI about the overall future of the program. And so those discussions, while they're ongoing, I expect that near the end of this Assembly/the beginning of the next Assembly, they will ramp up again when we have that capacity to do so. And a determination on, you know, perhaps how the GNWT internally deals with immigration will help inform a future strategy as well. So that work is on the way. I don't expect that we'll be seeing a new strategy during this term, but it is underway. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this time last year

when I asked the Minister to create an immigration advisory council, the Minister informed me that, quote, "ECE and ITI are proactively reaching out to businesses and people who are familiar with the nominee program to find out what we can do to improve the program."

So I'm wondering, Madam Speaker, since there is no intent to create a strategy in the life of this Assembly, where I can find that information that the Minister has been collecting with his department over the last year? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. So we did reach out. The level of engagement wasn't what we would have hoped. Nonetheless, we did identify some areas for improvement. And so the Member can see the result of that engagement in the changes that were made to our nominee program stream, so changes to job advertising requirements and some other streamlining efforts. So that is where she can find those results. The proof is in the pudding. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, earlier this week I made a statement about Nunavut 3000, Nunavut's ambitious aim to build 3,000 new homes by 2030. Its ambition that we desperately need in the NWT but lacking sometimes, especially when it comes to creating new housing to meet our need. So I'm wondering -- because housing is such a huge barrier to sustaining our population, I'm wondering if this Minister will advocate for an ambitious house building and house repair strategy and action plan to support the sustaining and growing of our population, especially since he is the Minister who holds the immigration portfolio? Thank you.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm always advocating to increase our housing stock. It doesn't just have to be the Government of the Northwest Territories building houses. When I meet with other groups and with Indigenous governments, I often speak to them about the need for housing and the roles that they can play as well, so I do that work on a regular basis. It doesn't just impact immigration. It impacts our ability to staff teachers in communities and nurses, and all of those other things. So this is something that is at the forefront of my mind and the department's as well, and I will continue to be an advocate. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 1379-19(2):  
RIGHTS-BASED CABINS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I spoke in my statement today how I think cabins are really a bellwether for how settling land claims are going and, you know, we've seen a number of court cases over the years. I think one of the main problems is that if you have a -- if you're an Indigenous person and you're using a cabin for rights-based purposes, you're treated just like anyone else. You have to get the same leases, pay the same taxes, and follow all the same conditions.

So I'm wondering if the Premier will work to create some sort of different tenure for those rights-based cabins, to put them in a different category than, say, someone who just wants a recreation cabin on the Ingraham Trail? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do know that within the Indigenous treaty land claims, self-government agreements, the cabin issue is addressed in many of them so that is one way of doing it. I also know that it's gotten a lot of attention recently because of the work that the Minister of Lands is doing with the unauthorized occupants in the Northwest Territories of which there are lots. We are trying to work with the Indigenous governments on rights-based cabins to give them the money to help them to identify the cabins that are theirs. We've posted. We've posted twice on people's -- we don't know who's rights-based and who's not; it's an issue for us. It's an issue that keeps continuing to grow. The definition of "a rights-based cabin" is an issue as well. So we are looking at how we can support them, but it's work that will be ongoing. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Speaker. I know that lands is posting notices and they are not getting uptake, and there are a lot of Indigenous governments who are specifically telling their members do not identify your cabin. And I think there's a history there because what then happens is you have to get a lease and then you have to pay lease fees and then you have to pay taxes. And so why would you do that when you could just have your cabin for free? And I think the step here is right now there is a wild inconsistency on which Indigenous rights holders are paying anything for their cabins, which -- and so I think we need to create some sort of status, and I would suggest exempting rights-based cabins from lease fees and taxes. The reason I'm directing

this to the Premier is because it is actually a Department of Lands, a Department of MACA, and a Department of Finance and that I'm quite sure that EIA is going to want to have its hands on what they actually define as a rights-based cabin. So it really is a complicated matter.

Is looking into exempting rights-based cabins from lease fees and taxes something the Premier is willing to do? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do appreciate the Member recognizing that it is not an easy issue. It's contentious not only within our definitions of how we define it but also contentious within Indigenous governments. We have some Indigenous governments that feel that they can put cabins anywhere in the NWT. We have other Indigenous governments saying not on my land. Those are issues that are alive and well. So I'm not going to commit in the House here about the solution. What I am committed to, and I've already brought that to the Council of Leaders, is that is a discussion that will go to the Council of Leaders. In fairness, Madam Speaker, I need all Indigenous governments to help me solve this. I need them to define what it is first. And so it would be inappropriate for me as the Premier to define how and what without the Indigenous governments having those consultations. And it's not going to be easy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, it's back to that chicken and egg problem. No one is going to tell you it's a rights-based cabin if it means they all of a sudden have to start paying taxes and lease fees and they're presently not doing that. And we can't exempt them from taxes and lease fees unless we identify a definition of whether it's a rights-based cabin. So this is why this issue has not been solved. I think at the very least, there are a number of obviously rights-based cabins where they were told to get a lease, they perhaps did not understand what that meant, they perhaps got direction from their Indigenous government to not pay lease fees, and now we are sending those people to collections and ruining their credit. I'm quite convinced that the Department of Finance is just doing this, triggering it automatically, because when they don't get paid they go through a collections process.

Is the Premier willing to stop sending those rights holders to collections until we figure out some sort of path forward? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As stated earlier, I have -- and it took a lot of work to get that item on the



Council of Leaders' agenda. I feel it would be disrespectful for me at this point to make decisions since it is on their agenda as a topic. So I'm going to wait until those conversations happen at that table, and then we'll make decisions based on that feedback. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, Madam Speaker, one of the other things that I grow frustrated about is that there is no definition of a rights-based cabin. Right now, Lands wants you to identify them but they say they have no tool to give you a special form of tenure. They make it clear they will send you a lease fee. I think you can get an exemption from taxes, but it seems to be very inconsistent. It's unclear to me what someone with a rights-based cabin is actually supposed to do, or what the government wants them to do. So perhaps following that Council of Leaders, can I get a commitment that EIA will put something out publicly on a plan forward and task each of the departments going forward with what they are supposed to be doing because right now, I don't think anyone really knows. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would love to make that commitment, but I don't think it would be fair to EIA to make that commitment yet. I think this issue is going to be very, very tenuous at the Council of Leaders' table. I don't know if it's going to be resolved in one month, one year, ten years. So I can't commit EIA to doing that because it may -- if it's in this government, then I'll be looking at it. If it's in the next government, I can't commit the next government. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Madam Premier.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 834-19(2):  
ANNUAL STATUS REPORT 2019-2023  
MANDATE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 835-19(2):  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE – DELINE  
FINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT  
APRIL 1, 2018 – MARCH 31, 2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 836-19(2):  
CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE –  
GWICH'IN COMPREHENSIVE LAND CLAIM  
AGREEMENT  
APRIL 1, 2018 – MARCH 31, 2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 837-19(2):  
INUVALUIT FINAL AGREEMENT ANNUAL  
REPORT 2018 – 2021

TABLED DOCUMENT 838-19(2):  
REPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION  
COMMITTEE TLICHO AGREEMENT  
2019/2020

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following five documents: The Annual Status Report 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories; the Annual Report of the Implementation Committee - Deline Final Self-Government Agreement April 1st, 2018 to March 31st, 2019; Consolidated Report of the Implementation Committee - Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement April 1st, 2018 to March 31st, 2021; the Inuvialuit Final Agreement Annual Report 2018-2021; and, the Report of the Implementation Committee for the Tlicho Agreement 2019/2020. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 839-19(2):  
GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS RESULTS  
REPORT 2021-2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 840-19(2):  
WHAT WE HEARD 2022 ENGAGEMENT ON  
RESOURCE ROYALTIES

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Madam Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents: Grants and Contributions Results Report 2021-2022; and, What We Heard Report 2022 Engagement on Resource Royalties. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. 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, Bill 29, Minister's Statement 264-19(2), Tabled Document 681-19(2), Tabled Document 694-19(2), and Tabled Document 813-19(2), with Member for Deh Cho in the chair.

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

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Committee wishes to deal with Tabled Document 813-19(2), 2023-2024 Main Estimates, Housing NWT. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** There's a motion on the floor and is non-debatable. All those in favour?

Committee, we will take a short recess and resume with the first item. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Welcome back, everyone. Committee, we will continue with Housing Northwest Territories. We were reviewing the Main Estimates 2023-2024. Minister, have you witnesses?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Yes, I've got two witnesses.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Sergeant-at-arms, can you escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have with me here is Ms. Eleanor Young, CEO and president of Housing NWT. And associate deputy minister Jim Martin. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Committee, we were on the finance and infrastructure services. That's page 382 to 385. The first speaker I had on the list was the Member for Monfwi. 385, that's the finance and infrastructure services, towards the back end.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I was going to ask the Minister yesterday regarding this mortgage payment and social housing agreement, 2021-2022 that says 313, and 2023 I just want to know why it's less here compared to now. There's a big gap in between, and I just wanted to know if mortgage payment was forgiven in this area. Like, some mortgage, were they forgiven? Because it's 313 compared to 955, why is it less?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Was that your question?

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yes, why is it less, yes. Are they giving people a break? Like, this 2021 -- I know it might be related to COVID, I'm not too sure. But it's lesser than to current to the main estimate for 2023-2024.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** All right, mahsi cho. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This payment here relates to the mortgage payments that Housing NWT makes to CMHC for the housing assets that were transferred under the social housing agreement. We pay each year \$955,000 under that arrangement -- or loan, and the interest portion of that is \$313,000, and that is the amount that gets recognized as expenditures under the Actuals 2021-2022. The difference is the principal portion which is applied to the debt, which doesn't show up in this case. But we do have to budget \$955,000 each year to cover both the principal and the interest. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi for that. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yes, thank you for the information, because I was just wondering what was happening over there, you know, from 313, because in the small communities we have a lot of issues with mortgage. We have -- there's a lot of people that have mortgage and a lot of them they had to refinance agreement. And some of these mortgage are old. You know, like they're over 20 years old and they're still on their books. And they were recently refinanced. And I just wanted to ask the Minister -- and they did some -- they forgave some of the arrears before. Why not do the same with the mortgage arrears? Will the Minister commit to forgiving the old outstanding mortgages from ten to 20 years ago? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do follow a process when we are forgiving our debts as well too. We do have to follow FMB. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond as we do forgive some of these accounts annually. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, as the Minister mentioned, Housing NWT participates in an annual review process with the Department of Finance and undertakes a review of all our accounts, both on the mortgage side as well as the tenant arrears side. And we look at these accounts and we determine which one of those would meet the strict criteria of the financial management board under the Financial Administration Act to qualify for forgiveness. So we do consider both mortgages and tenant arrears in this process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Yes, thank you. I know I spoke in this House before regarding the BDIC, and they do forgive millions and millions of dollars of business loans. And why not do the same for the housing -- those who have outstanding mortgage or the old mortgage, you know, and I think across the territory there's like 247 outstanding old mortgages. If they can do a write-off, they can do it. It's just that they're not -- they're not making an effort to do it. That's how we feel because a lot of people are asking. And some of the people were saying -- or they said to me that, from the outlying communities, they told us that we live in a house for 15 years and it's ours and we're still paying mortgage. Some of those people have been paying faithfully, you know. And so that's a concern for them. And a lot of them they want to get out of the mortgage; they want it to be written off because they're old mortgage. And so even some are saying too that for lease to own -- I think this has to do with some of the administration too as well. But some of them were told if you're a good tenant for at least five years, no arrears, etcetera, we will do lease to own. So and some of those people they're still paying faithfully, and they don't have arrears, and they're still waiting for the North Slave district office call them to do the mortgage agreement.

And they say we're tired of paying this mortgage or this rent. We're still waiting for them to come and they're having -- you know, we're still waiting. How long we have to wait? How long are we going to wait, because they've been living in there for many years. So I know the administration needs to do a better job at the North Slave district office or at the executive office. They need to get in contact with the people because it's mostly that, that it's an outstanding agreement that we're verbally promised ten to 15 years ago. And people are saying we can't keep paying rent. And they've been in those units for many years. Not only that, I have some constituents that apply for the

homeownership program through NWT Housing. So some of those tenants that are living in the mortgage -- or in a rental unit, they apply, and they were told -- they were denied based on the income, income threshold, because they were told that they're making too much money.

And another couple applied, they say they were -- they told them that you're -- your income threshold is low. And many of these people, like they're working. Some of them are two income and it's hard to maintain to meet -- because of the high cost of living in the small community, especially in the small communities, that it's hard -- it's difficult because of the increase in fuel, groceries, and on top of that the rent. And many of them are paying max rent. I have a constituent that are like for three years they pay like \$109,000 in rent. And I think that should be taken into consideration for them to be homeowners. And it's not just them. There are a lot of other ones too in my community who are -- who have been living in these units for almost 20 years and are paying the same thing, and they probably paid over \$500,000. That's what a -- based on their rent and they have all the documents and everything. And they don't have a major arrears but they still cannot get an agreement in place. So they're still waiting for them to come.

So I just wanted to ask the Minister that will they commit to contact and work with these people to be homeowners because she said that there was 52 applicants received. How many of those are from Tlcho region? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I hear where the Member is coming from as well too, and I found this an area that I would have liked to concentrate on immediately. And there's so many different areas that we've been trying to work on within the portfolio. But the outstanding mortgages is one of them, and what I've learned to see is that we do look at refinancing. We do look at trying to work with the client and trying to forgive the interest is one of the bigger barriers that we're able to kind of be successful with the client on. I'm just going to have vice-president Jim Martin speak about the forgiveness of debts as well and how much we've forgiven over the lifetime of this government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So since the start of the 19th Legislative Assembly, Housing NWT has brought forward for approval

202 debt files that were approved for forgiveness. And that was approximately \$12 million in total. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi for that. Any further questions from the Members on this section? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm not quite sure this is the exact section to ask this but since it's about infrastructure services, I'll go ahead. What's the policy on smoking tobacco and cannabis in public housing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now we don't have a policy that addresses smoking in our units. But through the strategic renewal, we will be addressing this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So the strategic renewal has been going on for at least a year, maybe a couple years. What are the options that the housing corporation is looking at and when is this process going to be finished, at least in terms of the smoking policy? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This has been brought up to us, and we are aware of it. But there's work that's being done on this policy and also looking at the high traffic areas as well. And hopefully we're able to address those too within the lifetime of this government. But we do have 42 policies that will be brought forward and tabled April 1st. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks, Mr. Chair. So one of the these 42 policies that are going to be tabled apparently on April 1st, the House is not sitting, but I imagine then that the Minister's going to find a way to release them somehow, is one of those policies going to deal with smoking in public housing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there won't be a policy enacted April 1st for smoking. We are currently working to determine whether using house rules, which is a conversation we've been having with the Ombud, or whether legislative fix is the more effective and efficient way to do this. But trying to get an answer on that as quickly as possible so we can implement a solution, as the Minister said, by the end of this government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks for that. I think I have a little bit better understanding of that. But, look, I would have thought it would be pretty much common sense that people should not be able to smoke cannabis or tobacco in hallways, entranceways into buildings. There's no policy, nothing on this right now; is that the case? Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's correct.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks. Wow. If you didn't hear me the first time. I just find that really hard to believe that we don't have any policy about access public spaces into public housing, that people are just allowed to smoke cannabis, tobacco there. That's just not in anybody's interest, especially kids. I'll leave it at that. So I really want you folks to sort that out now.

The other issue I guess I'd like to raise here is free WiFi. I think this has been raised before in the House as a way of trying to improve people's quality of life, access to programs and services, and so on. Does the housing corporation provide any WiFi services in any of its public housing now? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi for that. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, we don't. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Has the housing corporation ever considered this and have you calculated a cost for what it would be in -- I guess I'm particularly interested in

multifamily dwellings where there might be, you know, some efficiency in offering that kind of service as well? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I remember this being brought up earlier in the lifetime of this government. The number that was brought forward was \$1.9 million if we were to offer WiFi in each of our public housing units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks. Yeah, that's a useful number to know and something I think folks on my side might want to think a little bit more about. I appreciate the responses. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Any further questions? Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just got a few questions. You already mentioned that they're going to be completing the housing strategy renewal by April 1st, 2023. Are we on track to have that completed on April 1st? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we are on track.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For some time now in the housing corporation inventory, there's what we call the northern rental units and the Webber homes that's dating back 40 to 50 years. And there are a lot of families that were living in these homes. And, you know, I guess I'm not really sure how the housing corporation is going to look at returning these units over to the homeowners. Say if the unit is 40 years old and if you do a unit condition rating, the thing comes back at 40 percent. And if that's a nonmarket community, then how do you appraise that unit so that it could be sold to the tenant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yesterday we spoke about our homeownership initiative program and under that program, we do a book value calculation but actually the tenant will not have to pay for the house. We forgive the value of the house over a three to five-year forgiveness period. So the homeowner will take ownership of the house at the beginning of that period, but they don't actually have to pay for the value of the house through that program. We actually forgive that through a forgivable loan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Say if there's a unit now that's a little bit newer, say whether it's 20 or 30 years old with a higher unit condition rating, if a family is living in there, say they have some adult siblings and there's only one income, so would that homeowner take into consideration the older siblings or that kind of thing or children as a dependant so that it could be calculated in the sale of that house? You know what I'm saying? Because you got one -- because we got big families, eh, in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have President Young respond. It's kind of a complex response. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So if I understand the question, it would not affect the sale price of the house at all because that's calculated based on the house. But we would be speaking with the family on the income that comes into the house to ensure that they can afford to pay the utilities and operating costs. So we would be counselling and working with the family to make sure that they feel comfortable and that we feel comfortable, there's adequate income to cover the cost of operating a house. We don't want to set somebody up for failure. And so that would be the conversation related to the income. It wouldn't affect the sale cost on the house itself. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday I mentioned that there was over 2,900 public housing units you have. How are you guys going to -- or better yet, how are you going to get rid of these northern rental units

and Webber homes? What's your inventory going to look like, say -- because we already know that 2036 CMHC's going to be cutting back their funding. So what is your plan in liquidating all these homes, these older homes throughout the community? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have 600 single-family dwellings across the Northwest Territories, and those units are currently up for sale but we'd work with the client to making sure that they do have adequate income to run a home and also the upgrades that may be required for those units as well too. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to, say, if there was a client that you had that lives in these Webber units and were interested in purchasing that unit but they have arrears, is there a way that you guys could have a plan to work with the homeowner to look at maybe liquidating these units even though it's at, you know, 40 or 50 years old and say if it's rated at 45 percent on unit condition rating, would you guys be able to look at something like that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If there is an interest out there that, you know, the individual does have arrears, we will enter into a payment plan. And if they are interested in a homeownership program, three to five years, I'm interested in working with that tenant. But I want to make sure that they're able to afford the fuel, the utilities, and so on for those units as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you. And, yeah, and then I guess you have to consider working with probably income support too because some of these families -- again, in small communities, we don't have employment. And so I guess you have to be flexible. So would that be something you guys consider as well? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The homeownership program is -- this is why we look at the income, to making sure that they're able to operate and maintain these

units, that they would solely have to be able to cover the cost on their own. I'm not too sure about income support. If we're selling one unit and then depending on another social program to pay for the unit, that was not the intent. The intent is to have people become homeowners. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this budget this year, CMHC has -- you guys have a \$20 million budget there to get from CMHC too for your operation and maintenance. What's going to happen here now in 2036? It's going to come to an end so how is Housing NWT going to start dealing with public housing after 2036? What is your plan? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Looking at what we may be looking at, 2036, I can't predict the future, but we are working strategically within the department to try to find ways to recover and trying to take care of the declining CMHC funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi for that. I believe the date is 2038. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Well, yeah, regardless what date it is, I mean, we're still going to be -- you know, still going to be needing social housing. And so, again, I'm not really sure how you're going to deal with this after those dates. I'm sure Canada's not gonna just drop the ball and say sorry, we can't give you any more money. At the end of the day, we are going to continue to need public housing. We're also -- like I said yesterday, we're going to need immediate housing, about \$5 billion to catch up to housing and to make homeownership repairs and additional -- maybe even a hundred units a year. But, somehow, we still got to figure that out.

Going forward, though, yesterday I asked a question in the budget here. I asked a question about the \$5 million. There was \$25 million that came from CIRNAC and then another 30 this year. Can you maybe explain to me where did that \$5 million go to from the CIRNAC funding received from the \$60 million? I know you mentioned yesterday that was -- it was -- your answer was all over the place. So I just want that question answered. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just looking at the \$30 million to be correct as this is the \$30 million that is for this government here that's a part of the 60 over two years, is that what the Member's speaking about? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** That's correct. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That funding has not been spent. That \$30 million, \$60 million all together, that will be going towards the repair and renovation of public housing units across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last year when the budget was approved and we went through it, there was a commitment made of \$5 million to be added into housing. And the question I have is that if there was a commitment made by the Finance Minister that that money's going into housing, I want to know from the Minister, did you get that money, and where did the money go to and which community was impacted? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just trying to be clear on what the Member was speaking about. So this was \$5 million that was committed to housing over three years, this money was to support the 25 percent for the co-investment applications going forward. To date, we have 13 that have been approved. And I think there's another eight that are in the process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Okay. So would you be able to provide us -- the House in regards to the breakdown of that so that I could see it in front of me so that I understand where the money went to, because whenever we make commitments, I mean we got to make sure we're on top of that and I just want to make sure that I understand where the money's gone to. So will the Minister commit to that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will provide that to the Member. I don't want to take up all of his time reading a huge list. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Yeah, just a comment. Again, I just want to say that small communities do matter. Housing in the communities are in great supply; we need money, we need to come up with a plan. So again yesterday I mentioned that we're going to have start working closely with Indigenous governments. Again, going forward, I'm just -- and I kind of heard some of the responses yesterday, so. Anyway, 2038 is just around the corner whenever you think about it. And thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi for that. Next on the list, Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions are for the next section.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** For the next section? Okay. Any further questions on this section, finance and infrastructure services? Seeing no further questions, we shall move on to programs and district operations, beginning on page 387 with information items on pages 388 and 389. Any questions? Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering if the housing corp has kind of an overarching asset management plan. And I know we have our capital planning process, but I'm more just curious whether there is some sort of document that exists that sets out the asset management plan going forward for all of the units? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Annually the housing corporation does conduct a unit condition rating. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, so housing, as the Minister mentioned, does undertake a regular review of our assets both in terms of condition and age, and this is good information to inform how we prioritize our dollars that are available for capital investment year to year. We also do look to the longer term, and we did outline in the core need report that was tabled -- I forget the date that was. It was tabled a year ago or so, but during the last

review of the mains. And in that report, we did outline a 20-year outlook for required public housing replacements to sustain our public housing stock, and those details were outlined there. And we did indicate that we needed to replace, over that timeline, approximately 1,300 units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, admittedly I have to delve into that report. And I know we always throw around these numbers of billions of dollars to get our stock up to where it should be. I'm just curious, you know, we have a budget here with a \$30 million increase and that's good. But do we have kind of a monetary figure of -- you know, in an asset management plan if you -- the last question was how are we going to pay for this or what is it going to cost. I'm just -- the bare maintenance, according to replacing that 1,300 unit number, how much money or additional money we need? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a big number. It's \$1 billion. We mentioned this during the last review. But we do recognize it's a large number, and we do continue to certainly look for supplementary funding sources, such as the federal government, to help supplement our capital investments and stay ahead of this, the aging infrastructure investment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** No further questions; just a comment. You know, I -- well, it would be nice to get -- I guess there's that \$1 billion figure which is to basically do the bare minimum and maintain our assets going forward and replace those that are well beyond their life. How much approximately is that per year that we would need? Yeah, I think that's probably a more tangible number for me to understand, is how much would we have to increase the housing corp's budget to just meet that basic asset management standard? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Is there a question?

**MR. JOHNSON:** What? That was a question there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** All right. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin reveal the number. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So annualized, that would be around \$55 million a year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Okay, next on the list we've got Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's lots of good programs here under the grants and contributions and transfers part. And I would be remiss if I didn't ask about the seniors aging in place retrofits and repairs. Noting that it has dropped slightly from the 2022-2023 -- and I'm on page 388 of the estimates. I'm just curious to know why we're seeing a little bit of a drop there. And given, you know, I think that we've had lots of conversation around keeping seniors in home as long as possible, it's quite an important topic. So could the Minister provide more information on that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin explain the reason why the number has dropped. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so the seniors aging in place amount here at 2.1 for the 2022-2023 revised reflects the additional funding that was invested into homeownership programs overall, part of that \$4 million that was mentioned. For the subsequent year, a component of that funding was allocated to the expansion of the hundred units to cover the O and M for 2023-2024. So that explains the slight delta there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So if I am understanding that right, a portion of the money that was meant to go directly to these retrofits or repairs was then used for



administrative purposes by the department?  
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It was the operation and maintenance of the hundred-unit rollout. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Is that a yes then, it went to -- okay, I'll move on. I'll follow up with the Minister after.

I am just looking at the preventative maintenance program line item as well, and I do note that it has stayed the same from the revised estimates that's on the same page. Right now, so it's sitting at \$1.244 million. When we've done some of our community tours under social development, we've seen units within the different places, and I'm thinking of Behchoko right now, where there's not an obvious reason to an outsider or an untrained eye why that unit isn't being fixed up and repurposed or having someone moved into it. So to me -- what's the saying, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of flesh? And so, you know, I don't understand why we wouldn't want to be increasing funding into the preventative maintenance program in order to sort of decrease our expenses down the line in repairs.

Can the Minister speak more to whether we're going to see that line item increase soon or if there's other funding that can be accessed to do the same work? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And there's two things that are happening right now. The first is that, as noted, there was an increase to these overall budgets implemented as of last year that we're starting to take applications for. The second thing, as folks will have seen through some of the recent announcements, a number of the programs we're adjusting the individual components, the individual limits, to those programs, and preventative maintenance is one of them. So we're increasing the individual amount available for each preventative maintenance application, or application for a suite of programs as it soon will be. So the first thing we have to do is get these

programs rolling out, and then we will monitor and adjust as is required from there, taking into account where we see the pressure points. There are a whole bunch of changes happening at once, and it's a little bit hard to assess where the pressure points are going to be until we get a year or two under our belt with the combined changes. But we will be taking a look at it and monitoring it on an annual basis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Yeah, and I appreciate that. I think you have to sometimes -- and I keep saying let's move it 80 percent instead of always waiting for 99, which is unattainable. So I do like that idea of what I'm hearing and then it being an iterative process that, you know, the findings will be looked at. I guess under that, my question or comment would be, you know, if we are finding that people -- and I'm assuming this is people -- if they're coming in to get this money, that it's potentially going to be oversubscribed I'm assuming. And so if that is the case, and there's more want than we have money for, would the department be looking to come back to us for more money for that or would they just be saying no, we're done with our money for this time period? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once the review is done, we possibly would be bringing this back during our business plan review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm now looking at the homeownership initiative. It's my understanding that the GNWT or the department has halted intakes on this program until the summer and not due to a limit of funds but rather an inability to process all the applications that are coming in. I'm hearing often from constituents and people, particularly as I have a riding that has several apartment buildings but then also several single dwellings, you know, a lot of people are wanting to move between those two and are finding that they just have no options. The fact that they need to move super quickly as well to purchase homes when they do become available is also an added stress. And so basically I'm hearing a futility in the group sort of demographic of people that should be now purchasing their homes, settling down more, starting their families, and most of them feel quite bleak that they're going to have any opportunity to do so

in the Northwest Territories. So \$814,000 is very low. Can the Minister or the department speak a little bit more to, am I correct that the application intake has been halted, and sort of what is the plan there to get that not waiting until December. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And as I mentioned a moment ago, we have a lot of moving things happening at the same time and we had just a bit of a miscommunication internally in terms of that program versus all of the other program changes and the move to a single intake process. So no, we are still accepting applications for the home bridges program and the district office is happy to see folks if they'd like to come in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** I'm glad to hear that. And honestly, I think it would be good to maybe get some messaging out. And I don't know that -- I mean, it's a busy session, but it might be out there already, but I do think there is still perception that program has been shut down for now.

My next question is around the homeownership repair and mobility modifications program. And so it's my understanding that this has to do with helping people with disabilities and such live within a noninstitutional setting or at their home. You know, again very low amounts of money. We have an aging population. I get that there's sort of an overlap of seniors aging in place with disabilities and modifications for that. So can the Minister or department comment on do we see that -- you know what, and I'm looking at the wrong number. But, okay, well maybe if the Minister or the department can speak a little bit further to that and where that program is at and whether or not we're seeing again more need than maybe we have money for? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the Member is speaking about the homeownership repair mobility modification program. \$1.9 million increase? Is that the line that -- okay, okay. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin elaborate on -- because we did -- we

were undersubscribed during COVID so if you could just explain. I'll just have President Young respond. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** There's just so many changes.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the one thing I want to say here is that as folks may be aware, we're moving back to a one intake process effective this coming year. And one of the things that's going to allow us to do is take a look at an application and move it to the right place within our budget and try to monitor that more closely and, you know, adjust within as we are working through the year to make sure that we're addressing. One of the things we heard, and one of the reasons we're moving back to one intake, is that if you weren't quick off the gun in getting your application at the beginning of the year, we would run out of money before somebody with perhaps a higher need was getting addressed. But going back to the one intake process, we can compare applications and address the most urgent priorities and work through the system that way and then try to balance through programs. So that's the attempt we're going to be making with the changes we're making this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you to President Young for giving me four more seconds so I can ask one more question there. So, yeah, I do really appreciate that. And actually what I'm hearing, I'm hoping, is that this is now transitioning to more of a wraparound client service or focused thing. So I think that is great and sounds like people have been listening to our side of the House.

So my last question has to do with the Habitat for Humanity line item. There is no money, no contribution. I have only heard good things about this program. I'm assuming we've just sunsetted our contribution. However, can the Minister or department speak to whether or not there is more want to increase Habitat for Humanity funding and how they see that organization playing a role in addressing our housing needs? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This program is very successful. I think we've -- not I think, but we've opened one of

the -- or celebrated one of the units that were opened here in Yellowknife, and there was a plan to be constructing I think three more. I'll have President Young respond of the \$50,000 contribution that we were contributing to this program annually. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin. Sorry. Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The habitat for humanities is partly being funded through the national co-investment program. So what we've done internally is instead of taking this money out of grants and contributions, we're taking it out of the \$5 million annual contribution we have for cost matching for habitat for humanities. We do still have a partnership with them. We have a commitment to do at least ten builds. And they are seeking currently more federal funding through Canada. So it is a wonderful program, and we do hope to continue it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi cho. Any further questions in this section here? Ms. Cleveland.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my first question is in regards to the Canada-NWT housing benefit program. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not this program continues to be fully subscribed and also what the total amount is with the GNWT and federal contribution combined? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This program is a 50/50 cost share that we did renew an agreement with them, I want to say two years ago, and we do have a contribution made territorially. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For 2023-2024, we have a budget of 2.7. Currently right now Housing NWT is supporting approximately 270 clients, and the expectation is that the funds that are available will be able to fully support that client intake. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Cleveland.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if there are any applicants who were denied, either because

they do not fit the criteria outlined or because the fund is fully subscribed? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This year, due to the increase that has happened over the agreement with Canada, we have had enough money to fund applications this year. There would be some applications who may not be eligible due to the criteria of the program, but we have been able to -- everyone who's been eligible, we've been able to meet their needs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Cleveland.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will say that from my office, this is probably one of the programs that gets recommended the most to constituents who are especially just really being hit hard by inflationary increases that we're feeling in the territory, and so it's definitely a program that is much used and much appreciated by the people of the Northwest Territories, and I definitely recommend that the government continues to support this, especially right now with the economic landscape across the country.

My next question is in regards to some of the programs that are offered by Housing NWT. And I do note a bit of an increase here to the programs and different operations or regional operations. And I'm wondering has the major and minor home repair program specific to seniors aging in place, have those been fully subscribed over the last year? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, they have been. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Cleveland.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, one of the concerns that I have, and I understand that, you know, there's a process that Housing NWT follows, but the minor and major home repair program, as well as the home mobility and accessibility modifications program offered by Housing NWT, the first two are for health and safety

related repairs for seniors aging in place, and then the second one is for people really to be able to access their home and use their home. And my concern is that the application period is isolated to April 1st through to November 31st. And, you know, we're all human. We know that life changes don't happen on a schedule and never when it's most convenient. And so I'm wondering what happens when people, you know, need major or minor repairs to a home outside of April 1st to October 31st or changes to their home due to mobility and accessibility challenges? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a number of programs that are here. And looking at that program intake, it was to -- looking at for material delivery, making sure we do have those available in the smaller communities. But should they miss that application time period, we will be looking at the emergency repair program. We won't turn the client away. We will try our best to making sure that they are accommodated through the programming that we do have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Cleveland.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm wondering if the housing corporation -- and, you know, people in the Northwest Territories understand that sometimes, you know, things can't be transported right away because of whether it's breakup or freeze-up or anything else that's going on, that's just a way of life in the Northwest Territories, but I'm wondering if we can remove kind of an administrative burden or something that might turn people off from a program and really take away the April 1st to October 31st deadline on applications and just look at applications as they come through the door, especially related to health and safety and mobility and accessibility? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will take that back to the department. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Cleveland.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have no further questions on this section. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** North Slave district office, there's an increase from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024. I just want to ask or know how many of these will be allocated to Tlicho region, these funds?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Just a second, I'm just trying to find the section here. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. From 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 Main Estimates, in the North Slave district there's a projected increase there of approximately \$1.2 million, and that's explained by the additional investment in homeownership programming for the district. And that does include certainly the Tlicho region. And these are programs that are application-based. So an exact determination of the allocation to Tlicho would have to be determined following the application process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** So can they be specific on what that program is for?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. That increase includes all the programs that will be receiving an increase in 2023-2024. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** I was just wondering because if that includes the LHO office?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, that doesn't. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. And here on the next page on page 389, here it says North Slave, North Slave district office or North Slave active positions. And here you recognize Tlicho but there's nothing there. Why is that?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our Tlicho office, we have one position in Behchoko and our headquarters office runs out of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. And Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. So that North Slave district office here, it says there's -- you recognize North Slave district office for the active position. And, I mean, for North Slave district, but you recognize Tlicho but there's nothing allocated there. So I ask why is that?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. That was for the active positions on 389. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have President Young respond. Sorry, I was commenting on the wrong section. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** All right. Mr. Martin.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Eleanor Young. President Young.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe this is just a formatting. The format for the pages is something that we fill out for the main estimates but as you can see, we filled it all out as North Slave office positions for 12 positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Well, North Slave district office there's -- it's not just Tlicho region. Tlicho -- four Tlicho communities. There's Lutselk'e. There's Dettah. There's N'dilo. There's Lutselk'e. So how many of this position goes to the outlying communities?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry, can the Member repeat her question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, I just said that it's not just Tlicho communities. There's four Tlicho communities. There's Dettah, N'dilo. There -Lutselk'e. There's Fort Resolution and Yellowknife headquarters -- I mean, North Slave. You know, Yellowknife is -- for us, it's headquarters. So I'm just -- how many of this position is allocated in the outlying communities?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to correct, it's the four Tlicho communities, Lutselk'e and Yellowknife and Dettah, N'dilo. Fort Res is in our South Slave Region for our purposes. And the 12 positions work with all of the communities listed. So there will be program officers, technical staff, finance staff. They work with all communities, all LHOs out of that district office. They're not assigned per community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Will the Minister commit to decentralizing the North Slave district office to the communities?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a conversation that is actually happening at the Tlicho housing working group. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Well, that's good. I think then we know that, you know, we'll get -- program will be operating effectively and efficiently and especially for the people and for the elders, you know, that require interpreters and all that.

So seniors aging in place retrofit and repairs, okay, it increases. It increased this year to -- 2023-2024, it increased. So I just wanted to ask for the income threshold, what is the income threshold? Is it the same in all the regions or is it different, like from Tuk to Behchoko?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the purposes of these programs, I believe the income threshold is the same. But I will preface that by saying and the income thresholds are under review in 2023-2024. So that's a live conversation at the moment about whether those income thresholds need to be reconsidered. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Thank you. It's good it's being reviewed, but can you give us a number? Like, there must be a number. Because the reason why I'm asking is because we have a lot of, okay, seniors aging at home and we have a lot of people that retire and even for two income, they apply for the program they're not eligible. And it's -- they went from being two income earners household to retirement, and it's difficult for them to make ends meet.

And because this income threshold. They need repair done to their unit to their House but as a result of the income threshold, they're denied most of the time. And they were -- they were a taxpayer and they provided to the program and services that's being delivered right now. So that's why I ask if it's -- if there's a number that, you know -- if they have a number, it would be nice if they can share it with us. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will follow up with the Member. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** For emergency repair, that is another important one too, where there's lots of issues especially for the private homeowners. So that one too also increased, and I just wanted to ask for 2023-2024 -- I know it's for 2023-2024 and I know that they are collecting or they're -- I know people are applying for the new fiscal year because they're saying that for this program there's no more funds. So when can people start receiving some repair done to their place? Do they have to wait until April 1st, or can they receive funds or help for the emergency repair to their units before April 1st?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The applications, there should not be restrictions on when the applications are to be received. And we are taking basically the one-window approach working with our clients as well and to try to best accommodate their housing needs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Weyallon Armstrong.

**MS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG:** Okay. Habitat for Humanity, so there's allocated for this year. I just wanted to ask if -- I know they were advertising before. So how does this Habitat for Humanity work?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have an agreement with Habitat For Humanity to be committed to, I think it's ten units. I'll have President Young elaborate on the programming and the agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So first to clarify, there is money for habitat but it's coming out of our capital budget, not our operating budget. So we do have a \$100,000 still this year I believe it is for habitat identified.

With habitat, it's, as the Minister said, a partnership. They have a board and an executive director. They receive applications and screen applications and look for clients for the programs. Their goal at this point is to try to do half their units in Yellowknife and half their units outside of Yellowknife. And so I do know that they are trying to look at Behchoko for the coming delivery cycle if they can find a client there. So they'd be advertising looking for clients to apply in Behchoko. They have delivered in Yellowknife and Dettah, N'dilo, more recently. But the criteria for the program are under Habitat for Humanity's. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Next we have Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My first question is with regards to the line in program detail vice president's office. In the main estimates, it has \$383,000. And then the previous finance and infrastructure services, it has \$510,000. So that adds up to \$893,000 for the vice-president's office. I wonder what that

entails. Could you just give me a brief -- I'm asking that question -- the previous section and this section, and it adds up to \$893,000 rather than one line. It's almost the same as the expenses with the president's office, Mr. Chair. So I'm just wondering why separate them? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was a change for 2023-2024 Main Estimates with the VP office for programs. The coordinator position was reprofiled from the VP office into program development. And that was subsequently restructured under a new position reporting to the director of programs, and that explains the reduction from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024. So we're essentially down to two positions in the VP office for programs and district operations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** My second question is I've heard the Minister say that they're going client-based and other people saying that they appreciate the client-based direction that the housing corp is taking. If you're really serious about this, I would like to see oversight for the client-based programs. There should be a neutral oversight appeal board for clients. And I wonder if the Minister or the department will examine this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. At one time in the past, there was a board that was established for housing. And we're looking at reinstating that as well too through the strategic renewal. I'll have President Young elaborate on the details. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, yes, as the Minister said, we're reengaging with getting an appeal board structured and it is external folks that would be asked to be on the board. That appeals structure hears certain types of claims, like things like rental assessments and things like that. It does not hear things that would typically go to the rental office under the

Department of Justice. So we do have to separate the two functional areas. They'll hear certain types of claims and the claims that are appropriate to go through the Residential Tenancies Act would go to the rental office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also would like to see a policy on expulsion of drug dealers within the housing corp. We have many drug dealers that seem to be able to rent these houses, get into housing very easily, and pay the minimum rent because they're not working but they're doing other things, and big fancy cars sitting outside their house. I think that we have to have a policy. I don't know how we could deal with that but we have to think of something creative and innovative to ensure that this is not happening and that we look after families that really require housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is something that I've recognized as well too and I all them high traffic areas as well. And just looking at the health and safety of the tenants in our units and also the families as well. We do try to work with our tenancy agreements as well too and I want to enhance those agreements as well and just a lot more education with the clients. But I do understand that it requires a lot more attention than just basically that. We need legislation. We need something to drive and making sure that we do this correctly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to question the seniors aging in place retrofits and repairs. Does that come with a means test for seniors? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that does come with a means test. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Chair, I want to question the means test for the homeownership program. Does that come under a means test also? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** So, you know, Mr. Chair, if we're going to continually use the means test for seniors and for people who are trying to gain ownership just because -- because I had a client from Fort Smith that applied to the homeownership program and were refused. They were just like \$10,000 over. The whole philosophy of homeownership has got to change and also the means test for seniors, if we truly believe in some of our statements that we make in this House. You're discouraging people from working. We should be encouraging people to work. And until that is switched around to the housing corp, we will never make change within our own people that want to have homeownership, that are able to -- or should be encouraged to work, and there should be a minimum amount of people who -- like the minimum wage amount that should be assessed at a certain thing but, you know, there should be a certain minimum payment monthly for people to encourage them to work. And until we change all these factors within the housing corp, things are not going to change too much. And I wonder if people start stepping back and looking at the whole picture, if we could make change. And I think that's the only way we are going to make change. We have all these policies coming from people who do not know our people, okay. We have bureaucrats writing these policies that are not okay. And I wonder if we could try and correct that and the Minister could be more innovative, staff could be more innovative, junior staff also be more innovative to our clients in all the NWT because they're the people that are accessing these housing are the ones that require some hope for the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And through the work that the housing has been doing up until this point, we are in the process right now of reviewing all of our programs as well. We work very closely with the Council of Leaders, and they have put forward their discussions with us as well on what should be changed. The Council of Leaders is the Indigenous governments throughout the Northwest Territories who equally participate. With that, they have been contributing to the changes that you'll see in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Martselos.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My last question is, there's 56 applicants for homeownership that were done across the territories. How many actually are complete? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A lot of those applications there's a lot of back and forth that's going on to try to, making sure that these applications are successful. I don't have the number in front of me right now. But we do our best to try to support the individuals. What I've seen so far is some clients are interested in the homeownership program and once they realize that they're paying \$300 a month, \$800 a month, and just kind of questioning the utility costs and the maintenance of the units. But we try our best to try to counsel the tenants and also encouraging them that they're still going to be eligible for our programming. Just because they got into the homeownership does not eliminate them from applying back to the housing corporation for any type of upgrades for their unit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Do you have another followup?

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Chair, I asked just the number of completed applicants, and I got a big long spiel. And I really would appreciate that the Minister be very direct in the answers. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My apologies to the Member. I just wanted to describe what it's like to try to process these applications. I will follow up with her with a number. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple questions actually. The first one is just elaborate there on what Mrs. Martselos said, talked about, which is the means test. The means test, can you tell me, I guess, how it is used? Like, is it just based on what -- on income, or does it take into account, you know, the cost of living as well? Like, you know, you might have somebody who has an older home, they're above the threshold, but their cost of living brings them down below that threshold. Like, how is it used? Thank you.



**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's based just on income right now. But then what the Member is describing is exactly what I want the changes to reflect, to making sure that we don't set the clients up for failure, we don't put them into a deficit that they're not able to operate and maintain their home, that we create the programming and create the changes that is best suited for the client. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One issue I want to bring up, and it's probably under the major repairs, is in Hay River we have an issue, and it may be in other communities as well, where they use wood basements. We have a number in Hay River, I know, that are compromised because of frost. And the repair costs for those are probably a \$100,000 plus. And I'm just wondering if there's any programs or if there's any I guess appetite to look for additional money to help those seniors that are facing that, because I know in Hay River there's a few seniors that have issues and continue to have issues with their wooden basements and which is really compromising their house, and it's a safety issue. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll bring that back to the department. I know there's several unique situations throughout the territory. I want to use Nunakput as an example as well too where we have severe mould issues with the kind of builds that we construct in that area as well. I'd like to bring that back to the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I had sent a request to the department I guess on that issue, and I don't recall getting a response but I'm glad I received one here today. And I hope that you can do something with it. And it may be looking at a separate program that's probably a double major repair program, because it's going to be costly.

The other thing I want to just talk about is seniors aging in place. And with respect to their retrofits and repairs, do you have the numbers, I guess, in front of you that would -- how many

applicants, how many were approved and how many were denied? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Member could -- is this for seniors programming? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Seniors aging in place retrofits and repairs.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have vice-president Jim Martin respond with the numbers. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the approved applicants under the seniors aging in place retrofits and repairs program, for 2021-2022 there was 128 applicants approved. And up to January of this year, we're already up to 203. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And out of the I guess total number of applications received, how many were denied and I guess the reasons for denial? I guess lack of money would be one but what else would there be? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We try to work with our client. I don't want to complicate what it is that we do. If they are denied for one programming or we're oversubscribed, we our best to try to move that program around or what type of repairs that individual may need. The department tries very hard not to deny the clients. We don't have that number in front of us right now, but we can get back to the Member with the number. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One issue that I see arises once in a while is the fact that seniors, who have been approved under retrofits and repairs, in communities I guess where -- like, Hay River's going to be an issue. I'll use that as an example just because

the flooding, the amount of work that's going on there. I know there's people looking to have work done this year. They've been approved. And I know the cost -- when the costs come in, they're probably going to be a lot more than what you think it's going to be and it's going to be over that -- over the limit. How do you deal with that? Do you top that off a bit, top it up a bit, or do you just put it on the client to pick up the difference? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the changes that we have made with the seniors program is we increased I think it's the seniors aging in place modification and repair from, I think it was \$10,000 to \$15,000, and we limited the co-pay. But I'll just have Eleanor respond further on the details. President Young. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there's a number of mitigation tactics we'll use. One might be to rescope the project, if that's possible, within the scope of the project. We also can look at different procurement techniques. So, for example, perhaps bundling like-projects together to try to get pricing that will work within the budgets we've got. We try -- because these are set in policy, we do try to work within the program caps as much as possible, so we try to use those other techniques first to try to accommodate that or split it over two years. There's a number of tactics we can use to try to accommodate it if that's the issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, and that's good to hear that at least you're looking at ways to kind of reduce that cost and get it within budget because I know in Hay River there are a number of people with compromised roofs on their houses and with that, you know, they've been tarped for a couple years, two or three years, and they've been -- and there's been ongoing damage because of water and that as well which then, you know, it's the insulation on the inside, it's the electrical, and then the whole issue just -- and damage gets more costly. So, you know, the quicker we can actually deal with these issues as they arise, the better. So I guess more of a comment than anything. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister, did you want to provide? Any further questions in this section? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. This is the section where there's some discussion of homeownership programs, and I'm just wondering how does the housing corporation sort of, what kind of metrics, what kind of measurements that it keeps around homeownership? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have President Young elaborate on the response. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. And primarily our metrics would be based on applications, number of applications we receive in any given year, the budget that's spent on any given year. We don't have an awful lot of detail of homes outside of those that we support through our programming. But in terms of our own programming, we would keep a fair amount of data about amount of money we spend on programming, the number of homes we approve, etcetera, etcetera. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, if I guess the corporation is going to continue to promote homeownership, I think you probably need to measure it a little bit better. You know, is it -- I don't know, do you look at sales of vacant units? Or, you know, do any of the clients in public housing get opportunities or options to purchase the homes that they live in, and if so, how is that tracked over time? I guess I'm just trying to figure out how do you actually measure success of your homeownership programs. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we began in the life of this government that homeownership was identified as a priority, letters have gotten out to all public housing tenants that were possibly eligible or interested in becoming homeowners. I said previously that the uptake of it was not as strong as I thought it possibly would be. So then we ended up coming up with a different type of homeownership programming where we have the three to five years and the forgivable with

that as well. I'll have President Young elaborate on the further details. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to add what the Minister said, really the way we design our programs will lend itself to some of that reporting. So we have the homeownership initiative which is the -- you know, the sale of public housing units in our communities. We have the home purchase program which is more in market communities. And we do track any of our own vacant units that we sell. So we would be able to provide that kind of detail on a year-over-year basis. And that's what I meant, you know, when we track it by program is the easiest way for us to be able to measure success and see change year over year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, okay, thanks. Yeah, those are good metrics. And I guess while we're just on the subject of metrics and data, does the housing corporation actually produce an annual report that tracks all of these sort of metrics, indicators, and where do people find that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We just track the approval of the applications right now. We don't really have anything in place. We just create that type of report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks, Mr. Chair. So I'm sure if I go to the public accounts, I'm going to find audited financial statements for the housing corporation, but is there sort of like a performance report or, you know, to tell people what you folks do, because if you don't, maybe that's a good thing to start. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have an annual report that is created and, you know, just identifying what it is that we need to look at for improvement as well too, whether our programs were successful or not. But we will be looking forward as -- for further improvements and there's a lot of areas that, you know, data collection and I'm not -- yeah, data collection and other services that we may

need to establish here within the corporation to better track our information out there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I don't think I have anything else but I do want to encourage the housing corporation, or whatever you call yourselves after April 1st, to start to track some of these metrics and data. And I know my colleague from Kam Lake has raised this with you, so collect the data, but just as important as collecting it as reporting it. Because if you don't collect and report, you got no way to improve. That's it, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Any further questions on this section? Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Chairman, I've already asked some questions, but I got two more questions. I'm not sure if I'm allowed to mention that? Okay, can I ask my two questions? Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm just trying to figure out how we could continue to build new relationships with Indigenous governments here in the Northwest Territories. And I'm just trying to figure a way, because last year I sent a letter to the Minister of the Housing Corporation going back to June 10th, 2022, and regarding Housing NWT repairs or homeownership replacement for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding. And based on my tour of my riding, I put together a letter and a list of names of people that really need their homes repaired.

And it's a long list of names that I have for my four communities, outlining basically the scope of work and what needs to get done. But it was clear that when I got a letter back three months later more or less saying that they got -- the housing corporation's working with, you know, the Indigenous governments on the housing strategy and that kind of thing. But I think what needs to be very clear is that what I was asking for too as well is that we need an additional \$350,000 but that probably could be up to \$400,000 now to actually do a unit conditional rating of all the private homes in my riding. And the purpose of that is to -- as you know, you already know what unit condition ratings are. And just for people that don't know, is if you have a home and you go into the community, and let's say the life cycle of a house is 50 years, and that homes is 20 years old or 25 years old, then, you know, you want to get that building assessed so that it meets the National Building Code and all applicable codes that

goes along. So, you know, then you could hire somebody to come in to do an inspection. You look at the building, you look at the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, the structure itself, etcetera, to give you an idea, you know, if that unit needs repairs. So out of a hundred percent, you know, if a door is -- you know, the jam is split or whatever it may be, you know, you could repair it or replace it then you'll know. And you do that to the whole house. And then at the end, you rate that house at let's say at 60 percent. Well, then we got all these homes in the community, the private homes that we want to take a look at. But for that 60 percent, there's 40 percent of work that needs to get done to bring that building up to code. So on average, looking at the housing corporation tenders for public housing retrofits, they're coming in anywhere from 150 to \$200,000 depending on where it is.

So having said that -- but in my riding, we got over 500 and probably 50 homes that's public housing. I'm going to say -- so we'll just say 350 homes that needs to be looked as an example. And, but the thing is that the replacement costs on those things are probably going to be \$222 million if we were take that same 350 homes and then replace it, so. But the repair costs, you know, on a high number, you know, could be up to \$70 million to take that home and bring it back up -- brings in the life cycle from another 30 years, if we were to do it. So I'm just thinking outside the box where if we could take that \$350,000, or whatever it costs to do it, but this -- I asked this question earlier, and it -- I think it was people didn't really understand why I was asking this, this money.

And essentially it was just to have somebody come into that unit that's certified as a journeyman, that's able to understand mechanical, electrical, building structure, etcetera, and they sign off on it. And then once it's signed off, then you could figure out what the cost is going to be to fix up those units. So I think that we have a good thing here. I think if we could work together and try to help find the money and give it to the Indigenous governments so they could hire their own people to do the inspections.

Having said that, then maybe we could be forging new relationships and look at that maybe working together and applying for money from CIRNAC together and then come up with a plan. Come up with plan over four or five years to make all the repairs in the communities. And I mean, I think that's a good initiative because, like I said, if the replacement cost is over \$222 million versus \$70 million just to bring it up to code, well that's a good investment. And it's good for the community. It

creates jobs. It's healthy for the families and so on. There's so much that could come out of this.

So I want to see if there's a way that maybe moving forward that -- I wrote a letter, like I said, last year. Maybe if we could pull that letter out and look at it again and trying to work together and see how we could try to make that happen. Again, we could apply to CIRNAC and help with that. And then also once we get that together, we would come up with a plan and work with the communities and then it's a win-win for everybody. So I just want to just mention that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'm going to try to not take up too much time. I'm kind of excited for the Member to speak about this as well because it's -- the Gahcho Dene Housing Society has been the only community that has taken this initiative and has taken housing to their own level and actually even beyond. Right now, they've accessed money through the federal government, have a strong working relationship with CMHC, and don't really require for us to be at the table but for us to be partnering and supporting their initiatives going forward.

They actually do have the unit condition ratings as well too, and they have looked at the homeownership and not public housing, but looking at housing repairs for their own communities. Right now they do have a couple of apprentices that are attending school in Fort Smith. They've got some high school students that are attending the SNAP program in Fort Smith as well too. And with that housing society, they went and took three of their individual employees and they are taking a leadership program with Aurora College as well.

So that just displays how significant a partnership can be. Working together at a smaller community and really watching them navigate themselves through the federal system and just exercising their own leadership, it's quite inspiring. But if it could be done in that community, it can be done in any community throughout the territory. So I like where the Member's going with those comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the Minister for your response. I think it's a really good idea that -- I like what you've done in Fort Good Hope. You were there last fall and we like what we seen there too as

well. So I guess maybe what I could do is if -- I want to make sure I want to be very clear that what I'm asking for is separate and outside from what the housing strategies that's already ongoing in the communities of YKDFN and Dettah and -- sorry, Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. This here is a separate little project where we could just really work together and identify what the, you know, the units are and then what are going to cost to repair those things and so on. And it's going to be a win-win. So I think if we can look at it that way. And then I would like to -- if it's okay with the Minister, I'd like to forward that email back to you and see if we could work together on that and if we could get some kind of commitment. And I just got off the phone with the chief in Fort Resolution and, you know, he's excited if we could do that because it's a win-win where we could get jobs.

And we need jobs in the community. So anyway, so if it's okay -- and maybe working with the deputy minister and, you know, trying to at least come up with a plan and figure something out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to following up with the Member. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Edjericon. Mr. Edjericon, do you have any further questions?

**MR. EDJERICON:** Mr. Chairman, no, I think I had a commitment from her already, so I look forward to reaching out to her and trying to get this thing sorted out. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** All right, mahsi. Are there any further questions on this section? We can live with it? All right, let's see what the program says. There will be no further questions on this section. There's an additional information item on page 390, lease commitments. Any questions? Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's be remiss not to mention my favourite landlord Northview, who I note since we lease from them we're now sharing security costs at one of their buildings. And (a) I don't really want to head down a path where we have to add security guards to all of our public housing units. We certainly cannot afford to do that. And I'll note security guards don't house people so there's money probably better spent. But I guess my point here is are we going out to re-tender any of these leases any time soon? And I'll note if we're going to do that, we're going to have to do

it in real small sections and probably phone some landlords. There's not a lot of people who can just give you 80 units in response to a tender. But are we going to get out of these leases any time soon? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now we are looking at trying to get out of I think it's 21 of the leases. But also trying to do things differently as well too. Instead of putting this out and looking for 80 leases, we're trying to -- not that -- don't record that number. That's -- I'm just exaggerating. I don't know if it's 80 or 40 or whatever. But just trying to break it up so we have smaller businesses that may be able to get into any type of agreement with us that may have ten units available and not 60 kind of thing. But we're looking at options to better accommodate the leases here in Yellowknife and throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you. And can someone just help me understand. My understanding is that Housing First currently also operates out of Northview through leasing. But I'm just wondering if those are we hold those leases or the nonprofit does, or whether that is anything to do with the housing corp.? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, Housing First is not our program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Mr. Johnson.

**MR. JOHNSON:** No, just I hope we can find some creative ways to, you know, slowly diversify the way we are leasing and, you know, work with some smaller landlords. I don't even think it's -- you know, there's some four-plexes in town I think we could probably try and lease. And, you know, if you get something like a four-plex with separate entrances, you're not going to have people selling crack in the hallways and, you know, you're not going to need security. So I think with some creativity, we can diversify this. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Are there any further comments? Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Yeah, just quickly something my colleague said made we wonder. If we want to get out of leases, because we're trying to get

them into smaller -- or sort of get more landlords involved in our portfolio, for lack of a better word, but yet we have a housing deficit, I don't understand then why we wouldn't just turn around and lease more spaces to have more housing units. Why do we need to remove leases to add new leases and not just have more spaces as needed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Young.

**MS. YOUNG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And vice-president may be able to add some specific numbers to what I'm going to explain. But the money that we're using to pay for leases basically is equivalent to what we're paying for operating for a public housing unit that we would own. The numbers may be slightly off but it's the same money that we're talking about. So if we let go of a lease, we'll be using for that money to pay for the public housing unit we put the client into. So it's the same money right now being -- it's either paying for a lease or it's paying operating costs for a public housing unit. So there isn't -- getting out of one doesn't give us more money to spend on more units, I guess. The only net impact if we have our own units, then the public units that are out there are available to other clients outside and maybe Canada housing benefit clients or other programs, but they wouldn't be, you know, under a public housing lease per se. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Yeah, I probably didn't maybe explain my question right; it's been a very long day. So I guess why would we not add more leases? I'm not talking about like so we would actually need more money, not saying that can we free up any money by doing this. More of a sense of, like, is there -- if there really is -- and I mean, I guess I'm answering my own question because I don't think you're really going to find any spaces so it's probably a moot point. But I think if we have people on a waiting list and we have the ability to enter into new leases, then we should be doing that to just get people housed. But, again, maybe that's more of a comment, Mr. Chair. I don't know if the department wants to answer. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll take that as a comment.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Any further questions?

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Actually, this might be a little bit of leeway as well but since my colleague brought up the security at these apartments -- and it is my understanding the security that has been jointly hired does look after several of the apartments, not just one building in particular. But it is my understanding that the more specialized firm that had been hired earlier on coming from Alberta was -- is no longer being contracted and it's back to northern security firms. Could the Minister or department confirm if that is truly the case? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. So as was noted, Housing NWT has entered into a partnership with Northview and does recognize the importance of security and ensuring the safety of our tenants. And we are in a current arrangement/agreement with them under existing lease arrangements, and we're now assessing an extension of those arrangements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Yeah, my question was is that southern firm still being contracted for this work, or has it gone back to a northern companies that don't have necessarily the same specialized training as that southern firm had? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Minister.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mr. Martin.

**MR. MARTIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Housing NWT does have funding arrangements in place with Yellowknife Housing Authority and is supporting the local security firms for a number of our own buildings. But in addition to that, we are in a current arrangement with the risk

control company which, as was mentioned, is a southern company at this time.

Now I should mention as well, just a supplemental, that we understand that risk control does also have two local employees working with them at this time as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi. Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you. And yeah, and I do appreciate that at the time when we -- you know, I was raising this issue and the department was responding, and the reason to bring in that southern firm was that training but, you know, as that goes farther, and I hear that we're looking at this contract and this arrangement, I feel that maybe the best way to maybe go forward, and perhaps you have to pull the colleague in from ECE or something is to help -- or to ITI, is to, you know, help develop the local firms to have that capacity in the North to do that more critical risk control type work, which does, you know, require specific types of training that just aren't available.

I do want to note that I have looked and seen the security guard position posted for our largest lease provider, or largest landlord, and it's like, I want to say the salary range is, like, \$18 to \$23 an hour full-time. So I can't remember what that worked out to but it was, like, I want to say \$60,000 max maybe, not even, for some of it. And for that level of pay to be doing that level of work is just unacceptable and, really, I think is a liability. So more, again, of a comment. But I really feel that rather than us saying this is a problem, we can't deal with it and I don't like security guards there, however, let's try to develop that northern people -- and I'm happy to hear -- but I don't want to see the answer be that that company comes up and sets up another shop and that competes with four other firms that are operating here already. So while it's great they're hiring local, you know, I would rather see we build that capacity into the northern firms. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi for that. Minister, do you have a comment?

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that. I'll take that as a comment. That's really good information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Ms. Nokleby.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Good. Any further questions on this section? Before anybody says yes, we're moving on here. I

didn't see anybody. Anyway, okay, thank you, Members.

Please turn now to housing corporation summary found on page 373, with information items on pages 374 and 375. And I guess we will entertain questions on this section. This is the overview. Any questions on this section? Mr. O'Reilly.

COMMITTEE MOTION 364-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 813-19(2): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2023-2024 – NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION –  
DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT (PAGE 373),  
CARRIED

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation at this time. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge):** Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. The motion is in order. To the motion? All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Consideration of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation 2023-2024 Main Estimates operating expenditures is deferred.

---Carried

Mahsi, Minister, and mahsi to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** May I have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Deh Cho.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 813-19(2), and would like to report progress, with one motion adopted. And, Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do I have a seconder, for the report? The Member for Nunakput. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. The report of the Committee of the Whole has been concurred with.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Orders of the day for Thursday, February 16th, 2023, 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 7 of 7)
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to the 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
  - Motion 73-19(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 27, 2023
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

- Bill 57, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2022
- Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Ombud Act
- Committee Report 40-19(2), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 61: An Act to Amend the Ombud 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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 16th, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:38 p.m.