



Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 40-19(2): Report on Bill 61: *An Act to Amend the Ombud Act*

Background

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (the “Committee”) tabled a Report in the Legislative Assembly on February 14, 2023 on proposed amendments to the *Ombud Act* (the “Act”) contained in Bill 61: *An Act to Amend the Ombud Act*. The Report makes two recommendations.

The GNWT thanks the Committee for its recommendation to undertake further study surrounding jurisdiction of officers of the Legislative Assembly. The GNWT continuously strives to improve how it administers public services and the work of the Ombud is an invaluable part of this process.

The following is the Government of the Northwest Territories’ (GNWT) response to Committee Report 40-19(2).

Recommendation 1:

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

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

GNWT Response

The GNWT recognizes the important work of statutory officers of the Legislative Assembly including that of the Office of the Ombud in highlighting and advocating for administrative fairness in public services.

The Department is currently concentrating on its existing legislative initiatives for the remainder of the 19th Legislative Assembly but plans to undertake a review of the Act early in the 20th Assembly. Noting the recent passage of Bill 61, a review of the Act can be expected to include the jurisdictional issue raised by the Committee Report. This holistic review will also give consideration to the concerns that have been brought forward by the Ombud in their annual reports, as well as other issues previously identified by the Committee.