

Standing Committee on
Government Operations



Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Office of the Ombud

20th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Mr. Julian Morse

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SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its *Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud* and commends it to the House.



Mr. Julian Morse
Chair, Standing Committee on Government Operations

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD**

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OMBUD

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (Committee) has reviewed *Speaking up for Fairness: 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud* (Annual Report).¹ The Committee thanks Ms. Krista Carnogursky, recently appointed Ombud, for her appearance before Committee on August 26, 2024.²

Section 33 of the *Ombud Act* requires the Ombud to prepare an annual report.³ The 2023-2024 report highlights the Ombud's focus on investigating inquiries and complaints, public education and outreach, and continuing advocacy to update the *Ombud Act*.

ABOUT THE NWT OMBUD

The NWT Ombud promotes administrative fairness in territorial government administration and services. The powers and duties of the Ombud include:

- Investigating complaints from people who feel territorial authorities have treated them unfairly.
- Own initiative investigations to help improve government services.
- Public education on the principles of administrative fairness.

OBSERVATIONS

Committee wishes to express our gratitude to the previous Ombud, Ms. Colette Langlois, for her tireless work to bring the Office of the Ombud to life over the last five years. From the enactment of the *Ombud Act* in 2018, Ms. Langlois and her team advocated for fairer policies, practices, and communications, helped make services fairer and more person-centred, and participated in numerous outreach and education opportunities to inform the public of the Ombud's Office.

Staffing

In the 2022-2023 annual report and public hearing, the Ombud expressed concerns that the Office lacks the capacity and resources to carry out its full mandate. The 2023-2024 Annual Report and public briefing highlight this worry again, with a 45% increase in inquiries to the Office and increased demand for new training and presentations.

As the Ombud's Office continues to build trust in communities through outreach, it will need to meet the increased demand for its services. Committee wishes to reiterate a recommendation from the *CR 6-20(1) Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud and Special Report on Recommendations for Amendments to the Ombud Act*:

Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Legislative Assembly, in consultation with the Ombud, identify and address any shortfalls in budget or resources that may inhibit the Ombud's Office from fulfilling its mandate.

CONCLUSION

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations *Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud Commission*.

Committee eagerly awaits the government's response to Committee's recommendations in *CR 6-20(1) Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud and Special Report on Recommendations for Amendments to the Ombud Act*.⁴ As the recommendation identified above was included in Committee's report on the 2022-2023 Annual Report, Committee will review that response and follow up directly as necessary.

ENDNOTES

¹ Speaking up for Fairness: 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud. Available at: <https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/taled-documents/speaking-fairness-%E2%80%93-2023-2024-annual-report-northwest-territories-ombud>.

² Public Briefing on the 2023-2024 NWT Ombud Annual Report. Available beginning at timestamp 1:06:00: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkBIO2E6AgA>.

³ The *Ombud Act* is available at: <https://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/en/files/legislation/ombud/ombud.a.pdf>.

⁴ CR 6-20(1) Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud and Special Report on Recommendations for Amendments to the *Ombud Act*. Available at: <https://www.ntlegislativeassembly.ca/committee-reports/cr-6-201-report-review-2022-2023-annual-report-northwest-territories-ombud>.