



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to
Motion 21-20(1): Taking Action to Address Housing as a Human Right**

Motion

THEREFORE I MOVE, second by the Member for Range Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories acknowledge housing as a human right by amending the Housing Northwest Territories Act to enshrine the right to housing in legislation;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories establish the Northwest Territories Housing Forum in legislation to provide recommendations and advice to the Minister;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories leverage the Northwest Territories Housing Forum to improve access to federal funding and implement culturally appropriate housing solutions in collaboration with Indigenous governments;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories collaborate with the Northwest Territories Housing Forum to bring homes out of core need within the earliest timeframe;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government establish a territorial housing advocate in legislation to review and evaluate the outcomes of the Housing Northwest Territories Act;

GNWT Response

As an action item related to the Strategic Renewal of Housing NWT during the 19th Assembly, Housing NWT committed to pursuing a substantive review of the *Housing Northwest Territories Act*. This remains part of Housing NWT's work plan for the 20th Assembly.

The NWT Housing Forum, another product of Housing NWT's Strategic Renewal and subject of this Motion, has become an important venue to address housing issues in the Northwest Territories. The NWT Housing Forum was established in early 2023 as a multi-lateral forum for cooperation and collaboration between Housing NWT and Indigenous Governments on housing. The Forum has already played a key role in the policy and program review that was conducted jointly with Housing NWT between 2021 and 2023 during the 19th Assembly. The NWT Housing Forum continues to meet to promote cooperation and collaboration between Housing NWT and Indigenous Governments on housing.

However, it is important to note that the NWT Housing Forum is not the GNWT's to direct. It is co-led by Housing NWT and an Indigenous Government and its mandate involves more than providing Housing NWT with feedback. Participation in the NWT Housing Forum is voluntary and flexible, and may not lend itself to a legislated approach. Any changes to the structure or foundation of the NWT Housing Forum would need to be considered carefully in conjunction with the NWT Indigenous Governments that jointly established it.

Housing NWT is working collaboratively with the NWT Housing Forum to advocate to Canada for more housing funding to come to the Northwest Territories. Housing NWT has also entered into MOU/MOAs with four Indigenous Governments that will help chart a pathway to jointly address the housing needs of those governments. It is important to note that any sort of agreement is not mandatory for Indigenous Governments to work with Housing NWT. Housing NWT is committed to working in partnership with all Indigenous Governments in NWT, should they wish to, to work towards improving housing conditions and addressing core need in their communities.

Housing NWT is currently exploring various options for a potential housing advocate role. Best practices of other jurisdictions and NGOs are being researched to determine what this role may look like in the Northwest Territories.