



17th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Standing Committee on Social Programs

Report on Transition Matters

Chair: Mr. Alfred Moses

MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Alfred Moses
MLA Inuvik Boot Lake
Chair

Daryl Dolyunny
MLA Range Lake
Deputy Chair

Wendy Bisaro
MLA Frame Lake

Jane Groenewegen
MLA Hay River South

Norman Yakeleya
MLA Sahtu

COMMITTEE STAFF

Doug Schauerte
Committee Clerk

Danielle Mager
Committee Clerk Trainee

Patricia Langlois
Committee Advisor

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS

REPORT ON TRANSITION MATTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Background	1
Transition Issues	1
Service Delivery.....	1
Inter-Departmental Strategic Frameworks	2
Anti-Poverty Action Plan	2
Early Childhood Development Action Plan.....	2
Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan.....	4
Departmental Programs and Issues.....	5
Department of Education, Culture and Employment	5
Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative	5
Auditor General's 2010 Report on Education	5
Inclusive Schooling	6
Skills-4-Success	6
Auditor General's 2013 Report on Income Security Programs	6
Enhancements to Student Financial Assistance	7
Anti-Bullying Legislation	7
Aboriginal Language Revitalization	8
Department of Health and Social Services.....	8
System Transformation	8
Child and Family Services.....	8
Continuing Care	9
Pharmaceutical Strategy	9
Medical Travel Policy	10
Water-Quality Testing	10
<i>Health Information Act</i>	10
Health Promotion and Prevention.....	10
Chronic Disease Management	11
<i>Health and Social Services Professions Act</i>	11
Department of Justice	11
Auditor General's 2015 Report on Corrections.....	11
Wellness Court.....	12
Integrated Case Management Pilot Project.....	12
Outdated Information Systems.....	12
Recalculation Services	12
Northwest Territories Housing Corporation	13
Housing for Seniors	13
Core Need and Public Housing Quotas.....	13
Conclusion.....	13

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS

REPORT ON TRANSITION MATTERS

INTRODUCTION

As the 17th Legislative Assembly draws to a close, the Standing Committee on Social Programs continues to monitor a variety of important programs and initiatives. Through this transition report, the Committee wishes to highlight areas that are likely to require attention in the 18th Assembly.

BACKGROUND

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is comprised of five Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Committee's role is to perform the following, with respect to the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment; Health and Social Services; Justice; and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation:

1. Review multi-year business plans and budgets, Bills, boards and agencies, including the Status of Women Council and programs for seniors, youth and persons with disabilities;
2. Review departmental performance, including that of boards and agencies; and
3. Consider any other matter referred by the House.

TRANSITION ISSUES

I. Service Delivery

The Committee has long-standing concerns about limited access to services in small communities. The reason is often a lack of presence on the ground—for example, no local police officer, social worker, nurse, mental health worker or addictions counsellor. This weakens the effectiveness of government programs. It is especially concerning in light of evidence from the Early Development Instrument, and other sources, which shows that small communities are home to a disproportionate number of vulnerable individuals and families.

Another long-standing concern is departmental silos that create fragmented experiences for people trying to access services. The Committee has consistently urged the Government to provide services in a more integrated manner and to revise policies that operate at cross-purposes. An integrated case

management pilot project is underway in Yellowknife, and the Government has committed to adopting integrated approaches in a range of other settings. The successor Committee is urged to promote this way of doing business because of its proven success in other jurisdictions and its far-reaching potential to help our most vulnerable residents.

II. Inter-Departmental Strategic Frameworks

1. Anti-Poverty Action Plan

In response to a motion¹ carried in the 16th Assembly, the Government began working on an anti-poverty strategy. In June 2013, the Government tabled an anti-poverty framework.² In February 2014, the GNWT action plan followed.³ In June 2015, a territory-wide action plan was released.⁴ The action plans are based on five priorities: 1) child and family support; 2) healthy living and reaching our potential; 3) safe and affordable housing; 4) sustainable communities; and 5) an integrated continuum of services.

While the Committee supports this initiative, it has urged the GNWT to allocate more funding to it. In 2014-15, \$2.5 million—the equivalent of \$60 per resident—was spent on a patchwork of activities. Moreover, the action plan contains no systematic approach for dealing with homelessness, a growing problem in the Northwest Territories. The successor Committee is urged to track the progress of the action plan and to push for stronger, more comprehensive, and longer-term funding.

2. Early Childhood Development Action Plan

Scientific evidence shows that the degree of support and appropriate stimulation children receive before the age of four will have a crucial impact on their well-being and productivity in adulthood. Citing this evidence, the Committee has repeatedly called for enhanced services for infants, very young children, and their parents. A motion carried in May 2012 called on the Ministers of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services to develop a comprehensive plan. The Government produced a ten-year strategic framework and a three-year action plan.⁵ While these documents were well conceived, the Government's commitment was disappointing. In the budget for 2014-15, only \$511,000 in new money was allocated, while the remainder of the budget was re-profiled from health-promotion and prevention activities (Department of Health

¹ Motion 11-16(4). Development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy. Carried on February 11, 2010.

² Tabled Document 97-17(4). *Building on the Strengths of Northerners: A Strategic Framework toward the Elimination of Poverty in the NWT*. Tabled on June 6, 2013.

³ Tabled Document 26-17(5). *Government of the Northwest Territories Anti-Poverty Action Plan: Building on the Strengths of Northerners 2014/15 – 2015/16*. Tabled on February 10, 2014.

⁴ Tabled Document 251-17(5). *Working Together: An Action Plan to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty in the Northwest Territories*. Tabled on June 1, 2015.

⁵ Tabled Document 251-17(5). Tabled on February 7, 2014.

and Social Services) and the K-12 school system (Department of Education, Culture and Employment).

A controversial component of the ECD action plan was the implementation of junior kindergarten. The roll-out was to be accomplished by adjusting the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR)—just within the legislated threshold—instead of infusing new money into the school system. Implementation was to take place over three years, beginning in small communities in 2014-15, and following in the regional centers in 2015-16 and Yellowknife in 2016-17.

The proposed rollout drew a number of criticisms. First, the Committee felt that the adjustment had been made without due consideration to the impact on the overall learning environment. Second, the Committee felt that the funding model was ill-conceived, as it unfairly impacted mill-rate communities. Third, the Committee was concerned about the quality of programming, noting that junior kindergarten is most effective when it is delivered by specially-trained early childhood workers in well-equipped play-based learning spaces. The evidence shows that schools are often not the appropriate place for early childhood programs such as junior kindergarten. Fourth, the Committee observed that developmental delays are already well underway by the age of four and asked why the Government was not focusing resources on children aged 0-3. Regular Members also voiced concerns along these lines, as did numerous stakeholders, including representatives from the Yellowknife school boards and Aboriginal Head Start program.

The Government subsequently suspended implementation in the regional centres and Yellowknife and agreed to complete an evaluation of the implementation that took place in small communities in 2014-15. The Government has left it up to the 18th Assembly to determine whether or how to proceed. The successor Committee is strongly urged to look for the Government's evaluation and review it carefully.

The successor Committee is also urged to review the Government's feasibility study on universal daycare,⁶ which was prompted by a motion of the Legislative Assembly in 2013. The study compares the funding and policy frameworks of the Northwest Territories, Québec, and Scandinavia, and shows that our jurisdiction spends considerably less on early childhood development, including daycare, than other jurisdictions. As a percentage of GDP spent on early childhood development, the Northwest Territories allocates 0.4%, while Canada allocates 0.6%; Quebec 1.1%; and Denmark (the highest among countries belonging to the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) 2.2%. On average, OECD countries allocate 1.1% of their GDP to early childhood development.

⁶ Motion 26-17(4). Universal Affordable Daycare. Carried October 31, 2013.

A related topic is government support for daycare infrastructure. In the spring of 2015, Kids' Corner Daycare in Fort Simpson asked for a contribution toward the cost of a new facility. The request was turned down, despite the fact that Children's First daycare in Inuvik had received \$1 million in 2013 for similar purposes. The GNWT has promised to produce a multi-departmental policy on infrastructure funding for non-profit and private-sector organizations, and the successor Committee should inquire into its estimated date of completion.

3. Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan

Released in February 2014, the updated Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan⁷ combines the 2012 action plan with the recommendations from the 2013 Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness. The updated plan points to a range of government services across the continuum of care. However, as Members are repeatedly told by their constituents, the reality on the ground does not always match up with the Government's promises. The Committee has asked for improvements in a number of areas, including withdrawal management services, community counselling, and aftercare. Members have also encouraged expansion of on-the land healing programs. The successor Committee is urged to push for stronger action in all these areas and request performance evaluations of pilot programs and established activities.

In addition, the Committee has expressed repeated concerns about the closure of the Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Facility in 2013. Members would like to see more northern-based treatment options and less reliance on southern facilities. Moreover, the Committee has urged the GNWT to partner with Nunavut and the Yukon in establishing a pan-territorial residential treatment centre. The incoming Committee is encouraged to pursue this proposal.

The successor Committee is also encouraged to push for stronger inter-departmental collaboration on the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. Three potentially fruitful collaborations are recommended. First, a stronger partnership between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Justice would allow offenders to address addiction and mental-health issues more effectively and increase their chances of rehabilitation. Second, a stronger partnership between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment could pave the way for a mental health strategy specifically for youth, with schools serving as settings for service delivery. Third, a stronger collaboration between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation could set the stage for implementing the "Housing First" model in communities across the Northwest Territories. "Housing First" is an evidence-based intervention model whereby permanent housing is secured for individuals who are homeless and living with a mental illness.

⁷ Tabled Document 34-17(5). *Pathways to Wellness: An Updated Action Plan for Addictions and Mental Health, 2014-2016*. Tabled on February 12, 2014.

During its review of Bill 55—which will replace the outdated *Mental Health Act* and come into force in the 18th Assembly—the Committee made a number of recommendations, including developing a strategy for addressing the mental-health needs of youth and adolescents, hiring staff to fill long-standing vacancies among front-line workers and expanding suicide-prevention efforts. The successor Committee is urged to track the Government’s response to recommendations arising from the review of Bill 55 and the development of regulations for the new *Act*.

III. Departmental Programs and Issues

Department of Education, Culture & Employment

Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative

During the 17th Assembly, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment launched the Education Renewal and Innovation (ERI) Initiative. Through a ten-year strategic framework⁸ and a three-year action plan, the aim is to enhance relationships between schools and communities, promote student wellness, renew the K-12 curriculum, and ensure that the education system is monitored, evaluated, and financially accountable. While Members are impressed with the scope of the initiative, they have expressed several concerns: first, the volume of new activities runs the risk of intensifying workloads for principals, teachers, and support workers; second, the large number of working groups, operating simultaneously, seem to be making slow and unwieldy progress; third, not enough attention is being given to the problems of truancy and poor attendance; fourth, there seems to be a lack of focus on educational basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic; and fifth, the amount of new funding is very limited so there is a danger of attempting to accomplish too much with too little. The successor Committee is also urged to monitor the effectiveness of strategies to promote “self-regulation”—defined as the student’s ability to stay calm, alert, and ready to learn. An update on the ERI Initiative should be requested early in the 18th Assembly.

Auditor General’s 2010 Report on Education

In 2010, the Auditor General’s report focused on education in the Northwest Territories,⁹ and included nine significant recommendations for improvement. While the Department committed to fulfilling these recommendations, it has made slow and uneven progress. For example, the Auditor General recommended that the Department report regularly to the Legislative Assembly on key performance

⁸ Tabled Document 155-17(4). *Renewal and Innovation Framework: Directions for Change*. Tabled on October 31, 2013.

⁹ Tabled Document 31-16(5). *Report of the Auditor General of Canada – Education in the Northwest Territories – 2010 – Department of Education, Culture & Employment*. Tabled on May 11, 2010.

indicators, noting in particular that the Department has not been tracking the extent of compliance with the directive on Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE)—which is run by Aurora College—or whether training is yielding the desired results. The Department promised to evaluate the ALBE Program under the *Accountability Framework for the Education and Training of Adults in the Northwest Territories*, yet no results have been tabled. Thus, more than five years have passed since the Auditor General's report, and we are no closer to knowing the strengths and deficiencies of the Department's educational programs. The successor Committee is strongly urged to look into the Department's readiness and capacity to generate results on key performance indicators. In addition, the Committee should request an update on governance reform at Aurora College and on the Department's compliance with daycare legislation, including annual inspections of daycare facilities.

Inclusive Schooling

The Inclusive Schooling directive was reviewed during the 17th Assembly, and the Government's plan is to continue funding it through an enrolment-based formula. The Committee believes this disadvantages "magnet communities" which attract higher numbers of students with complex needs. Moreover, the Committee wants assurance that funding assigned to support any particular student will migrate with the student if he or she moves to a different school. Members have recommended an alternative funding formula—based on a blend of enrolment numbers and the actual number of students who have special needs. The successor Committee is encouraged to pursue this line of reasoning and to monitor a number of related activities, including the Department's methods for identifying student needs and evaluating the true effects of inclusive-schooling expenditures on market communities.

Skills-4-Success

In the closing months of the 17th Assembly, the Government presented its 10-year strategic framework known as Skills-4-Success. The goals of this initiative are to build residents' skills and post-secondary credentials, enhance employment supports, improve the recruitment and retention of qualified workers, and provide northerners with the information they need to make smart career decisions. In the 18th Assembly, the Committee is encouraged to monitor this strategic framework for its effectiveness. The labour-market forecast and the territorial needs assessment, as prepared by the Conference Board of Canada, may also be of interest.

Auditor General's 2013 Report on Income Security Programs

In 2013, the Auditor General's report focused on income security programs. Deficiencies were identified in a number of areas, including the management of client files, financial oversight, program evaluation, staff training, and staff safety.

The Department responded with an action plan, and the Committee has been tracking the Department's fidelity to its commitments. The successor Committee should continue tracking the Department's progress, including the corrective action plans for addressing deficiencies, the evaluation of five new Employment Transition Officer positions, and the expansion of public-housing units for clients on income assistance.

Enhancements to Student Financial Assistance

Since before the 16th Assembly, the Committee has been asking for enhancements to the Student Financial Assistance Program. Members are pleased that some enhancements are finally in place. Students can now give their consent to be connected with potential employers in the Northwest Territories. In addition, basic grant amounts have increased, and debts will be forgiven more quickly if students reside in the Northwest Territories. A northern bonus will also be offered to any student who settles here. As these enhancements are part of the government's population-growth strategy, the successor Committee should monitor data on key performance indicators, including the current proportion of students who have chosen to settle in the Northwest Territories upon completion of post-secondary studies and any subsequent increases. In addition, the incoming Committee may want an update on the appeals process.

Anti-Bullying Legislation

During the 17th Assembly, a motion was passed urging the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to address bullying in the schools.¹⁰ The government's subsequent decision to amend the *Education Act* was also based in part on compelling independent research. A survey of 1,600 NWT students showed significantly higher levels of bullying here than in most of Canada.¹¹ In addition, cyber-bullying has had tragic results across Canada, sometimes leading young people to take their own lives.¹² Accordingly, the amendments to the *Education Act* sought to define bullying, including cyber-bullying, and provide, through regulations, for a territorial school code of conduct and safe school plans. The Bill was passed on November 1, 2013, but the regulations have not been developed to date. This points, once again, to the Department's tendency toward slow progress. The successor Committee is encouraged to request a status update on the development of the regulations, territorial school code of conduct, and safe school plans.

¹⁰ Motion 5-17(2). Anti-Bullying Measures. Carried February 16, 2012.

¹¹ Tabled Document 105-17(3), *Health and Health-Related Behaviors Among Young People in the Northwest Territories*. Tabled on November 6, 2012.

¹² Motion 16-17(4). Supporting Federal Action on Cyberbullying. Carried May 31, 2013.

Aboriginal Language Revitalization

Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories are struggling to keep their languages alive. This is largely due to the combined impact of colonialism, residential schools, and the dominant use of English in the North. Over the past 20 years, the percentage of residents who speak their aboriginal language has declined by nearly 20%. If this trend continues, the Northwest Territories may lose its aboriginal languages altogether.¹³ The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, together with key stakeholders, has initiated a new approach to language revitalization. Funding has been allocated for 5-year regional aboriginal language plans, including enhanced funding to help aboriginal governments build capacity in implementing the plans. The Department also recently reviewed its directive on aboriginal language and culture-based education (ALCBE) under the Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative. The incoming Committee is urged to track the effectiveness of the 5-year language plans and the renewed ALCBE directive, and to ensure that financial-accountability mechanisms are in place for the 5-year language plans.

Department of Health and Social Services

System Transformation

During the 17th Assembly, the Department of Health and Social Services began to modernize and streamline the health and social services system. Bill 44, the amended *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act*, received assent in March 2015 and will allow the Minister to combine the regional authorities into a single territorial authority. The new legislation will also allow for the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to be brought into the public service at a later date, but at considerable cost. The Committee urges the Minister to continue communicating openly with the Committee and the public on this important endeavour. The successor Committee should request status updates on several activities, including contract negotiations with the Union of Northern Workers Local 21 in Hay River; the Privacy Impact Assessment, which is the formal process for identifying potential privacy risks associated with the amalgamation of regional authorities; and the implementation of new provisions pertaining to critical incidents.

Child and Family Services

In recent years, the child and family services system in the Northwest Territories has received significant scrutiny. The Committee's 16th Assembly report¹⁴ on the review of the *Child and Family Services Act* contained over 70 recommendations,

¹³ Minister's Statement 174-17(5). Aboriginal Languages Programs and Progress. March 4, 2015.

¹⁴ Committee Report 3-16(5). *Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act: Building Stronger Families*. Tabled on October 21, 2010.

and called for a less adversarial approach, including the use of least-intrusive measures.

Then in March 2014, the Office of the Auditor General released its audit of child and family services. The audit identified serious deficiencies in a range of areas, including accountability, investigations, risk assessments, and screening of foster homes.¹⁵ The Department responded with an action plan that promises to provide greater voluntary supports for families and to usher in a more collaborative approach. While some progress has been made, several initiatives are delayed or stalled, and the annual compliance audits have yet to be released. The successor Committee is urged to assess the extent to which these audits replicate the Auditor General's key indicators and thus provide a sound method for tracking improvements over time.

In addition, in the spring of 2015, the Committee completed its review of Bill 47, the Government's long-awaited response to the Committee's 2010 report.¹⁶ The successor Committee is urged to monitor the Department's response to the Committee's recommendations, including its recommendation to rewrite the *Child and Family Services Act* during the 18th Assembly.

Continuing Care

Over the next fifteen years, the Canadian population is expected to age dramatically, and one of the highest proportional increases in the over-65 population is expected to take place within the Northwest Territories. This demographic shift will strain the healthcare system and increase demands for housing and infrastructure. Hundreds of new care beds will be required, and demands for homecare services will rise. Indeed, the needs of seniors are already pressing, as there are wait-lists for long-term care and concerns that homecare services are too thin on the ground. The Committee has urged the Government to go beyond its preliminary framework entitled *Our Elders, Our Communities*¹⁷ by establishing a comprehensive action plan. The lack of thorough long-term planning is a serious concern, and the successor Committee is encouraged to pursue this issue.

Pharmaceutical Strategy

In 2012 Alberta Blue Cross prepared a report for the GNWT to look at cost-saving options for the management of drug benefits. A pharmaceutical strategy was subsequently initiated for the purpose of revising the GNWT's policy and

¹⁵ Committee Report 6-17(5). *Report on the Review of the 2014 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services*, Standing Committee on Government Operations. Tabled on May 29, 2014.

¹⁶ Committee Report 18-17(5). *Report on the Review of Bill 47: An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act*. Tabled on June 3, 2015.

¹⁷ Tabled Document 90-17(5). *Our Elders: Our Communities*. Tabled on June 2, 2014.

regulatory framework, establishing procedures for bulk procurement, introducing catastrophic drug coverage, and considering alternatives to the NIHB formulary. A comprehensive rollout of the pharmaceutical strategy did not take place as planned in the 17th Assembly. Accordingly, the successor Committee should request an update.

Medical Travel Policy

Since the 16th Assembly, the Committee has been urging the Government to modernize the medical travel policy and address inconsistencies in its application. The Committee asked the Government to complete this task within the life of the 17th Assembly, but the goal was only partially realized. The incoming Committee should ask for an update on the new ministerial directives in the first quarter of 2016.

Water-Quality Testing

During the 17th Assembly, the Committee repeatedly urged the Government to improve its water-testing regime through more rigorous standards and better public reporting. Concerns about water quality have been amplified by recent drought conditions and boil-water advisories. A new public website on drinking water quality was launched in 2015, and the successor Committee is encouraged to monitor the website, the frequency of monitoring activities, and overall compliance with national water-testing guidelines.

Health Information Act

Bill 4, the *Health Information Act*, received assent in March 2014 and is expected to come into force on October 1, 2015. With this legislation, the Northwest Territories is joining several other Canadian jurisdictions with health-specific privacy legislation. The successor Committee is urged to request an early status update on the implementation of the *Act*, including the Health Information Act Manual, the risk-management toolkit, the delivery of staff training across the Northwest Territories, the communication plan—which should include broad circulation of plain-language materials, and measures being taken to ensure that aboriginal language speakers understand their rights and what the legislation means.

Health Promotion and Prevention

Throughout the 17th Assembly, the Committee has recommended more resources for activities that promote good health and prevent diseases or family dysfunction. The successor Committee may wish to request an update on these activities, including how funding has been allocated and results from key performance indicators.

Chronic Disease Management

Many chronic diseases are preventable, yet they cause a lot of suffering and drive up healthcare spending. The Committee urges a stronger response to chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer. Diabetes is a particular concern, as more than three thousand NWT residents have the disease, and over 200 new cases are diagnosed every year. The Committee may want to request an update, including results from the diabetes prevalence study, which is due in January 2016, and evaluations of the various prevention and disease-management programs.

Health and Social Services Professions Act

Once in force, the *Health and Social Services Professions Act* will enable the GNWT to regulate numerous professions under a single law, and ensure that only qualified professionals are licensed to practice. The legislation will also empower the Minister to establish a mechanism for reviewing professional conduct. The successor Committee may want an update on the drafting of regulations, including the extent of stakeholder involvement, and an indication of the professions that are next in the queue for regulation. Fee amounts may also be of interest.

Department of Justice

Auditor General's 2015 Report on Corrections

In 2015, the Auditor General's report focused on the correctional system within the Northwest Territories. The audit found that the Department of Justice has not met its key responsibilities for inmates and has failed to comply with key rehabilitation and reintegration requirements. Deficiencies in case management were also found to limit the Department's efforts to rehabilitate inmates. The successor Committee is strongly urged to track the Department's action plan for correcting deficiencies and to assess the extent to which the audit tools replicate the Auditor General's key indicators and thus provide a sound method for tracking improvements over time.

In addition, during its review of Bill 63: *An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act*, the Committee noted that Corrections Services Division is struggling with capacity issues, and that the changes associated with Bill 63 will place even greater strain on the courts and correctional resources when offenders cannot pay their fines. There will also be greater pressure to find work opportunities for offenders who participate in the territorial work/fine options program. The successor Committee should urge the government to track additional costs and fund the anticipated shortfall.

Wellness Court

In the previous assembly, the Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted research on specialized courts which divert accused persons from mainstream courts and address underlying causes of criminal behaviour. During the 17th Assembly, the Government responded by introducing the Wellness Court. This alternative court provides treatment and community support for offenders with addictions, mental disorders or cognitive challenges. The successor Committee may want an update on the program's effectiveness in providing timely and reliable supports such as counselling, housing, and income assistance. The new Committee may also want to inquire into the potential for expanding the program beyond Yellowknife.

Integrated Case Management Pilot Project

The integrated case management (ICM) pilot project is adopting a client-centered, multi-departmental model of service delivery, and is geared to clients with complex needs. The successor Committee may want to inquire into the results of the first evaluation phase in Yellowknife, the number of clients in the program, the proposed expansion to Inuvik, and strategies for overcoming barriers to multi-departmental program delivery.

Outdated Information Systems

The IT systems supporting the Courts of the Northwest Territories, Corrections Services and Legal Registries are outdated and at risk of failure. Minor improvements and interim measures are no longer proving adequate, and the Committee believes these aging systems should be replaced. The incoming Committee is encouraged to take up this concern and push for its inclusion in the 2016-17 operations budget.

Recalculation Services

Recalculation services allow for adjustments to court orders for child or spousal support, based on updated financial information. Most Canadian jurisdictions offer this service, but the Northwest Territories does not. The only recourse for our residents who fall behind on support payments or become unemployed is to seek legal counsel and have the matter resolved in court. This is expensive and inefficient. The Committee has repeatedly asked the Government to provide recalculation services. The Department of Justice completed a feasibility study in 2013 and has since advanced the policy work necessary to develop a Bill. The successor Committee may want a status update on the development of a legislative proposal.

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

Housing for Seniors

The Committee's view is that the Government is placing too much emphasis on aging-in-place strategies and should do more to address seniors' housing by retrofitting existing stock and constructing new facilities. Members believe that future housing needs of elders and seniors cannot be handled by the Government alone. To this end, Members urge the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to engage in creative problem-solving with other GNWT departments, non-profit organizations, and private-sector investors. Members also urge the successor Committee to pursue this theme.

Core Need and Public Housing Quotas

The Committee would like the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to review its method for evaluating core need. Members question the extent to which housing shortages throughout the Northwest Territories are accurately captured by the existing core-need template. The method for determining community quotas for public housing should also be revised in light of local needs and demand. With the recent decline in housing affordability in Yellowknife, the demand in the capital city far outstrips the supply, and this trend seems likely to continue. The successor Committee is urged to pursue these concerns.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends the following actions:

1. That the Government of the Northwest Territories focus on delivering services and monitoring performance in a more responsive and efficient manner, working against the current preoccupation with process and bureaucratic complexity.
2. That the successor Committee strategically review the reports released by the 17th Assembly Standing Committee on Social Programs.
3. That the successor Committee hold a two-day strategic-planning retreat early in the 18th Assembly.

CONCLUSION

This concludes the Standing Committee on Social Programs' Report on Transition Matters. Members extend best wishes to the successor Committee.