



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**17<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, May 30, 2012**

Pages 701 - 750

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>701</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>701</b>
11-17(3) – Transboundary Water (Miltenberger) .....	701
12-17(3) – Building for the Future: Northern Solutions for Northern Housing (R. McLeod).....	702
13-17(3) – Oil and Gas Potential and Activities in the NWT (Ramsay) .....	702
14-17(3) – Minister Absent from the House (B. McLeod).....	703
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>704, 709</b>
Location of New Hay River Health Centre (Groenewegen).....	704
Early Childhood Development Framework Funding (Dolynny) .....	704
Benefits of Early Intervention in Childhood Development (Bisaro).....	705
Importance of Early Childhood Development Initiative (Hawkins).....	705
Increased Funding and Support for Open Door Society in Fort Simpson (Menicoche).....	706
Lack of Adequate Facilities to Provide Early Childhood Development Programming (Moses) .....	706
Shared Approach for Early Childhood Development (Bromley) .....	706
Supporting Parents to Enable Healthy Childhood Development (Yakeleya).....	707
Acknowledging Teachers, Child Care Workers and Other Instructors Working with Children (Blake) .....	708
2012 Arctic Winter Games (R. McLeod) .....	708
Increased Funding for Preschool Programming (Nadli) .....	709
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>708</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>709</b>
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>709</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>710</b>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION</b> .....	<b>710</b>
5-17(3) – Early Childhood Development (Moses) .....	710
<b>MOTIONS</b> .....	<b>710</b>
5-17(3) – Early Childhood Development (Moses) .....	710
<b>FIRST READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>717</b>
Bill 2 – Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012 .....	717
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS</b> .....	<b>717</b>
<b>REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE</b> .....	<b>749</b>

ORDERS OF THE DAY .....749

**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, May 30, 2012****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 11-17(3):  
TRANSBOUNDARY WATER**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, in 1997 the governments of Canada, the Northwest Territories, Yukon, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan signed the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement. When we signed, our governments agreed on the principles for co-managing the Mackenzie River Basin's water ecosystems. We also made plans for signing bilateral agreements between each of our provinces and territories.

It took us longer than we'd planned, but we are making progress on the bilateral agreements. This follows the work that happened in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly to develop a Water Stewardship Strategy with Aboriginal governments, communities and the federal government. Following the direction of this Assembly, we are working with our partners to ensure responsible stewardship of our territorial waters. This agreement will help us to manage an environment that will sustain present and future generations.

In 2007 the NWT and Alberta signed the Bilateral Water Management Agreement Negotiations Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the process, schedule, principles and information required to negotiate the bilateral agreement. Negotiations are following a three-phased process: information gathering and sharing, negotiating and writing, and agreement finalization.

Our territory is represented by the GNWT, Aboriginal governments and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. To date, three meetings have been held with the Government of

Alberta. At the most recent meeting with Alberta in April, we brought together information to share as a basis for negotiations, and talked about our interests and how to achieve them in the new agreement. As with all negotiations, we started with our shared interests.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada are working together to implement an Aboriginal and public engagement process for the negotiations with Alberta. We are engaging with Aboriginal leadership to seek input on negotiation principles and interests. We'll also gather public input and we'll meet to talk about how to achieve our shared interests before we finalize the agreement.

Though the GNWT is not a primary regulator of water use in the NWT, we do take on lead roles and partnerships to protect our water resources. The NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan will serve as a foundation as we continue negotiations on a bilateral transboundary water agreement with Alberta. The action plan identifies a number of key components, including transboundary water agreement negotiations, community-based water monitoring and a collaborative partnership approach.

Our department continues to work collectively with our partners to gather and compile information needed for negotiations with Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the next bilateral meeting with Alberta is planned for late June. This meeting will allow each jurisdiction to explore options to achieve their respective interests in the bilateral agreement. We are hopeful that we can conclude this bilateral agreement in early 2013. After that, we will begin discussions with British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Yukon. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 12-17(3):  
 BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE:  
 NORTHERN SOLUTIONS FOR  
 NORTHERN HOUSING

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The strategic framework Building for the Future: Northern Solutions for Northern Housing, released on April 16, 2012, outlines the direction that the Housing Corporation will be taking in delivering housing programs and services to NWT residents.

Our new strategic framework has refocused the GNWT's approach to housing delivery based on what we learned from the shelter policy review. Building for the Future capitalizes on the successes of existing housing programs and services, provides improvements where there are gaps in support, and makes changes to programs to better suit the needs of territorial residents.

Building for the Future identifies eight strategic priorities and related actions that will, over the long term, address the spectrum of need from homelessness to home ownership. These eight strategic priorities are:

- strengthening public housing;
- improving home ownership supports;
- increasing housing options in non-market communities;
- improving housing services;
- strengthening the approach to homelessness and transitional housing;
- addressing housing challenges for the working poor;
- developing infrastructure solutions based on individual and community needs; and
- addressing the declining federal funding.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke last week of the changes in the public housing rent scale, but today I want to highlight other actions contained in Building for the Future.

As part of our priority to improve home ownership supports, the Housing Corporation will be expanding the availability and targeting of repair programs. We're introducing a new emergency repair program called SAFE for situations like freeze-ups and furnace failures. The program will target low- and modest-income homeowners, including seniors on fixed incomes, and will be available any time during the year. There will be a streamlined application and approval process, and arrears and land tenure will not be considered as part of eligibility. This program will be of significant benefit to low- and modest-income households to address emergency problems before they cause even greater issues in their home.

The working poor face unique housing challenges. The challenges are partly addressed through the changes in the public housing rent scales but also by the new Transitional Rent Supplement Program announced as part of the budget. This new program will support low- and modest-income residents that are unable to get into public housing but are in core need because of high market rents. This program will help students, lone-parent families and those ready to move from transition housing to market rentals.

Mr. Speaker, each year the federal funding for operating social housing is declining. This is a major challenge facing our government and by 2037-38 the remaining \$17 million in annual federal funding will be eliminated. We continue to work on this priority with the federal government, but we can't wait for Canada to change its approach. We have made investments to address the declines so far but we have to do more. Our costs to operate public housing keep going up while federal funding declines. We need a sustainable rent scale and a public housing program that operates as efficiently as possible. We have to consider reducing our public housing stock and continue to concentrate on arrears and rent collection.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation is implementing many of the strategic priorities and actions set out in Building for the Future during 2012-13 but are also working on the additional actions. I will continue to keep the Assembly and the committee updated on the implementation of our strategic framework. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 13-17(3):  
 OIL AND GAS POTENTIAL  
 AND ACTIVITIES IN THE NWT

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, we want a territory where a strong, diversified economy provides opportunities and choices to all our residents. Socially responsible and environmentally sustainable development of our resources will be one of the keys to achieving that goal. The Northwest Territories is resource-rich and brimming with potential. Today I would like to speak about some exciting developments in the oil and gas sector and of the significant opportunities the development of resources can bring to our residents.

The Sahtu region is a prime example of potential in the petroleum industry. A 2011 call for bids resulted in the commitment by industry to invest \$534 million to test 11 parcels of land in the Canol shale formation for their petroleum potential. Industry experts believe that there is potentially one to two

billion barrels in this area just sitting there waiting to be tapped.

Work on these parcels began this past winter and we saw unprecedented levels of activity in the Sahtu. Major players in the international oil industry, including ConocoPhillips, Husky Oil Operations Limited, and Explor Geophysical, have signed access and benefit agreements with various local land corporations. These agreements result in jobs for residents as well as direct and indirect investment in the local community.

For example, in Norman Wells the increased petroleum activity translated to full occupancy of four hotels in the community for six months, a 100 percent increase in sales at grocery stores and vehicle rentals, and a tripling of aircraft takeoffs and landings. This is real on-the-ground-activity, and it is exciting.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is taking action to ensure that residents of the Sahtu make the most of the economic opportunities that this activity represents. The department has been working with the National Energy Board, the Northwest Territories Geoscience Office and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada – and supporting local initiatives such as assisting land corporations understand hydraulic fracturing – to ensure that communities have good information for making decisions about development.

Through our regional office, we are also supporting the Tulita and K'asho Go'tine districts in their efforts to obtain a rights issuance on their own settlement lands. Production of oil on settlement lands would result in employment and business opportunities, and royalties from production on their private lands would go directly to these beneficiary organizations.

The renewed interest in oil and gas exploration and development only strengthens the need to develop our transportation infrastructure. Permanent highways could bring down the cost of living in some NWT communities and help develop the region's oil and gas industry, not to mention the long-term jobs it will bring in road construction and maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, these are only examples of what is happening today. This activity will continue for the next few years and potentially for decades to come. Beyond that, the next frontier is offshore, beneath the waters of the Beaufort Sea. Within our territorial waters, the Northwest Territories has resources in the Beaufort Sea that extend to the North Pole and, according to the United States Geological Survey and our own advisors, oil potential to rival the Gulf of Mexico.

We are now seeing new activity in this area with Chevron gathering seismic data this summer and

Exxon making plans for exploration drilling in the next few years.

Also, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada issued two calls for bids this year. The first call for bids is for the two parcels in the central Mackenzie Valley, and the second call for bids consists of six parcels in the Beaufort Sea Mackenzie Delta.

Our challenge as a government is to ensure these resources are developed in a manner that brings economic benefits to our residents while ensuring the protection of our environment. We continue to pursue the authority to regulate development in the Northwest Territories through devolution. Once in place, Northerners will finally be able to make the decisions about how we develop our resources and protect our environment. Acquiring this authority, and the resource royalties that we would start collecting, will be our best opportunity for ensuring our residents benefit from development in the Northwest Territories.

In the meantime, the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to work with existing regulators to ensure northern interests are understood and respected. The National Energy Board recently completed an Arctic review to help us learn how best to regulate our offshore activity.

The GNWT participated fully in this review and we are pleased with the extensive engagement with Northerners that took place during this process. The Arctic offshore drilling review gave us insight about the challenges of Arctic exploration and development. It will help the National Energy Board ensure the correct safety and environment protection requirements are in place when considering future applications by companies who want to drill in the Arctic offshore.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident that with our continued efforts, as well as those of our industry partners, we will be able to ensure safe, sustainable development of this territory's resources and maximum benefits for our residents for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Premier, Mr. McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 14-17(3):  
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Tom Beaulieu will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the Council of the Federation Health Care Innovation Work Group in Victoria, British Columbia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LOCATION OF NEW HAY RIVER HEALTH CENTRE

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes we do interviews with the media and then we turn on the radio or open the newspapers and we are completely shocked to see what it was they decided to highlight from the conversation.

Mr. Speaker, I was sent a series of questions by the local Hub reporter about the new health centre. I said, well, send them in writing and I'll answer them all in writing. It was a whole gamut of questions, everything about will this attract new doctors to what services will be there. It was a very good list of questions, but she asked me what did I think of the new hospital location, to which I said I've never supported the current location of the new facility. I've had doubts about the readiness from a drainage perspective, I have concerns about the traintracks if the use of the train surface increases from economic activity, but the Town of Hay River really wanted the hospital development to be there as the anchor development that would bring services to that area, to which they are hoping to attract more development.

The Department of Health and Social Services was respectful of the Town of Hay River's desire to locate it at the plan site, and with the competition for so many capital infrastructure needs to drag out the location question any longer would have risked the commitment of the funding for the new facility, for a key piece of infrastructure such as this that would be around and serve us for so many years to come. I would have preferred the ENR forestry site on the east side of the highway, but that's not relevant now. But the headline still said that's all the article was about, was how I didn't like the location.

So what I wanted to do today to set the record straight is later I will table the questions and answers. I will table the article. What I want to say is we had due process on location. We had meetings with Public Works and Services. We did geotechnical on a number of sites. As a result, from the town's input, the MLAs' input, the current location where the new health centre is going to be built was decided up and agreed to, and my little, minority concerns were not going to be a deciding factor. Certainly, from my opinion, I didn't want them to delay the start of the project, and the funding has been committed.

Mr. Speaker, for the record today, I wanted to clarify that and I guess I'll have to figure out how to be more clear with the media in the future.

I thank the department, I thank the government on proceeding on this very important project to the people of Hay River. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FUNDING

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Early childhood development is an important aspect for Regular Members and if you don't think so, stay tuned for later today.

We are hoping that this sends a very strong and meaningful signal to the department that proper funding and planning and full collaboration with all northern stakeholders needs to be more than just the flavour of the month.

Recently, I had the honour of co-chairing with my colleagues Minister Lafferty and Minister Beaulieu with many participants from around the NWT as an advisor leading on the child and family resource centre issues.

This was fundamentally the first step towards improving early childhood development programming in the Northwest Territories. Together, it was very clear that we could not put too much emphasis on ensuring that our children are properly nurtured, encouraged and protected, especially during those early years, zero to three years of age, which serves as a critical foundation for lifelong development and success.

It was very evident that the stakeholder meeting did set the stage for asking the fundamental question are we, the government, doing this right. Before I answer such a question, it is imperative that the primary responsibility for raising children is with the family and that the government should only need to play a supportive role. However, the answer to my earlier question is no, we're not doing it right.

The current Early Childhood Development Framework is over 10 years old and we require the modernization of its content to reflect what Northerners need to succeed. We need new money for this to occur, but unfortunately we're seeing a current budget and a government that's not walking the talk. It's not, as the government has pointed out, as easy as delivering it differently, it's not only about collaboration or coordination or communication, it's about infrastructure. A better one, at that, for one-stop facilities. It's about having better tools. It's about engagement of our communities. More importantly, it's about best modern-day practices.

The Regular Members here are not experts but it's clear from Regular Members that northern society will continue to suffer from health problems, social issues such as homelessness, addictions, violence and especially lower levels of education. Knowing this, unless we provide all our children with the

support they need to develop potential and early childhood, we will lose this battle.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
BENEFITS OF EARLY INTERVENTION  
IN CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment in its 2012-2013 budget has a number of new initiatives, two of which are a new kindergarten curriculum and measuring children's development in kindergarten. Those are good, but it's not all of what is needed. If we wait to start early intervention until preschool or kindergarten, we've missed a huge opportunity to address any health or learning issues at an age when intervention can really make a difference.

As my colleague Mr. Bromley has often told us, brain development begins in the womb and continues at a rapid rate for the first three years of life. Research proves that early intervention from birth to three years can have huge, positive impacts on an individual's success in life. The evidence is compelling and overwhelming.

Well-funded, integrated child development and parenting programs improve the cognitive and social functioning of all children, especially when started early: at birth. The research also indicates that children attending high-quality early childhood programs have greater success in school. That's what we want for NWT students: success in school and in life. Isn't that the goal of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative?

Quality early learning programs are not only good for children and families, they're good for the bottom line. The report for an Ontario study done in 2010 states that focused public spending on young children provides returns that outstrip any other type of human capital investment. Pay a little early, gain a lot later.

The NWT Early Childhood Development Framework needs to reflect this research. It needs to include programs which begin at birth and before birth at the prenatal level. One of the identified goals in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly is to ensure a fair and sustainable health care system by investing in prevention, education and awareness, and early childhood development. We should listen to ourselves.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be speaking on the good merits and reasons why we should be doing more in early childhood education. Early childhood education is a term which refers to the education programs and strategies geared towards children from birth to the age of eight. This time period is widely considered the most vulnerable and certainly the most crucial stages of a young person's life.

A child's readiness to begin formal schooling is much more than just academic readiness. It's a matter of targeting the whole needs of the child. Quite typically you'll see that a lot of programs target children between the ages of three, four and five to help them get a good footing, a good start on their future. I can't imagine building a house without a solid foundation, so why would we treat our children any less without giving them a good foundation to their future.

A variety of childhood education programs exist. We have often heard them referred to as nursery schools, daycare centres, preschools, Head Start programs, pre-kindergarten, junior kindergarten and even kindergarten. I am telling you that there are many forms that early childhood education comes in.

There are five dimensions often referred to as early childhood learning and what they do is they target certain areas. You have physical well-being and motor skill development, social and emotional development, approaches towards learning, language development and cognition, and general learning. Each of these dimensions play such a critical role to a young person's beginnings as they prepare for school, they prepare for the future. This is the foundation of our commitment. Why aren't we throwing all resources to it?

Often these dimensions are also referred to as pillars of developmental learning. These five pillars are referred to quickly as social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional. Equally important on every stage. The fact is we shouldn't be missing out on every opportunity to make sure our young people are ready for the future.

Now, school readiness is important, but it doesn't just apply there. It also applies to the communities, families and our environment that we surround. This message is more for the McLeod government, that they need to act. Not just because MLAs say it's important, not just because our early educators who are the experts in this field say it's so important, because our constituents out there demand that we give our young people the rightful head start that they deserve. Mr. Speaker, it's time we invest in this initiative with full force and readiness. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INCREASED FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR  
OPEN DOOR SOCIETY IN FORT SIMPSON

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We know how important the first three years are in a child's life. That is when they build the foundation for their future learning and growth. Responsibility for early childhood development is shared between two GNWT departments and Health Canada. In fact, Health Canada is the main funder of one of the best early childhood programs in this territory. I refer to the Open Door Society in my home community. It was founded 17 years ago and is supported by a very dedicated volunteer board. The Open Door has five staff who run programs for children up to age 12, from nine in the morning until eight o'clock at night, all at no cost to the parents.

The Busy Bee program is for three year olds, focusing on social skills and large motor activity. There is a preschool program for four year olds and a playgroup. There is a toy lending library. The society runs the annual Easter egg hunt and many other activities for the children of the community.

The bad news, Mr. Speaker, is that Open Door runs on a shoestring budget. It is amazing what they do with so little. They can't afford employee benefits. Money for training is also hard to come by, but it's even harder to find well-trained staff. These are areas where our government could do better.

In addition, Open Door has to apply for money pretty well every year. The society does get supportive funding from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and a room at the Bompas School at a low cost. I should mention that in our government, ECE shares responsibility for early childhood development with Health and Social Services. That department is finally expanding the Healthy Family Program into Nahendeh this year and I am pleased that it is happening.

But support for early childhood programs is insufficient and too fragmented, especially for small communities that may want to start something like the Open Door Society. I would like to see that problem addressed. Mahsi cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
LACK OF ADEQUATE FACILITIES  
TO PROVIDE EARLY CHILDHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a lot of my colleagues have mentioned, the importance of early childhood in the ages zero to three. If we don't

put our services and our investments into this initiative, we're going to be failing our students as they progress in life, as they get into middle school, elementary school and as seniors. We don't have to look too far to see our graduation rates of the NWT as well as the money that we're going to be putting into inclusive schooling here.

I want to speak to a specific issue. We know that programs are needed just as much as space facilities for our children and our youth and our children. To have access to these programs, space is needed. In Inuvik we have a situation where both our schools are going to be closing in the fall and our new school is going to open. With the closing of the schools, two-thirds of our children that are currently accessing early childhood development programs are not going to have that opportunity to continue on in their lives.

We have a great committee in Inuvik that is working very hard fundraising, volunteering, getting in-kind contributions and donations to make sure this building is going to be available, the Inuvik Children's Development Centre is going to be available in the fall so that two-thirds of these children are not going to be left without these programs.

More importantly, in an economy where there's a downturn do to the high cost of living in our communities, double-income families – which is also essential just to make it by – are going to have to rely on single-income families if one parent has to stay home and take care of the child. This is not just a problem or an issue that is facing Inuvik but it is an issue that is facing all of the communities in the Northwest Territories. In order to achieve success within our youth and our economy and our families, we need to invest in infrastructure and have these spaces readily available so that our children can succeed and participate in these developmental programs.

We have to invest in our early childhood development for future benefits of this government, future benefits of our communities and the future benefits of our families so that every child has an opportunity to succeed in their life, and it starts in this House. It starts with the commitments, the programs and the funding to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SHARED APPROACH FOR  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our belief in the critical need for action on early childhood development has become well known to

this Assembly. It is good to see things getting underway, but we need to start off right.

The basis of ECD is brain and body development which begins before birth and is most critical through to the age of about six to eight. There are two stages. From prenatal to age three, the focus needs to be on establishment of physical and mental health and resilience through development of secure and consistent relationships with caring adults. Programs to support that development such as nutrition, healthy baby and family, recreation and play, parenting skills and parental understanding of the importance of ECD are shown to produce the greatest positive results. Once a solid foundation is laid in the early years, transition to an educational focus begins, again accompanied by continuing family and community support for the physical and mental health of the child.

Healthy development in the early years, especially birth to age three, depends on healthy relationships. All children from birth need at least one continuous caring relationship with an adult who will respond when the child is distressed and provide the security a child needs to explore her environment. It is critical to understand this connection between healthy relationships and healthy development, and to make sure policies and programs give families the support they need to provide children with stable, nurturing relationships in the first years of life.

In order to raise healthy children, we must help parents and caregivers to be healthy and free from undue stress. These need to fall within the services of our Health and Social Services department and with the family support side of ECE. From the very beginning of this work, we need to ensure a shared and cooperative approach across our Education and Health departments, with the leads at different stages clearly identified. We can't disconnect the zero to three years programming from the efforts starting at age four or leave school staff designing programs for the early years of childhood development.

We are blessed with the wealth of public expertise and the NGO sector with such experts as the NWT Literacy Council and at the community level where family support centres such as in Hay River, Tulita and Yellowknife and child centres such as in Tulita are already delivering an array of early years ECD services. Based on the experience of now so many other jurisdictions, opportunities are huge and exciting. Let's get all our best minds, government and public, to the table and begin cooperative work. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTING PARENTS TO ENABLE HEALTHY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been said by our elders that the weapons of our warriors today will be education; that our battles will be won in schools, colleges, universities and on our land. It also has been said that we will not win our battles in the bars or in the streets or in jails. We will actually stay stuck blaming others if we stay there.

I want to say that this early childhood development theme that we are having here, I support it so much that we should be looking at helping the parents. Usually it is the single mothers that stay home with the child for the first three years and strengthen that connection with the little child to the mother. The mother does a lot when they stay home with the child. They do the house management. They do counselling. They do multi-tasking. They do everything. They even cook our meals after we come home and they do everything. Our programs should be really looking at how we support the mothers in staying home and strengthening that strong relationship so they give that child that sense of security, respect and identity, so when that child goes out, that child carries the values of education to the schools. We are caught in a busy society where the mother has to also maybe find work, through no fault of her own, because of the situation we're in.

So the government really needs to see that the real education of a child is at home. Even as one of our Members said, before the child is born. My grandmother was in midwifery and she delivered a lot of babies in Tulita – they say over 250 babies – and each baby that she delivered she gave them a Dene name, and with that Dene name came that person's identity and character and strength. We haven't had that yet.

So we should be looking at some of these things that will give a future to a child of good. No matter which role they work in, they'll be good and strong and we can be proud of them. We have really good children in the Northwest Territories, but we need to support the mother first of all. So I hope this government will look at something like that and support the early childhood development of our people. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ACKNOWLEDGING TEACHERS,  
CHILD CARE WORKERS AND  
OTHER INSTRUCTORS  
WORKING WITH CHILDREN

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to acknowledge the early childhood programs that we offer to preschoolers in our communities. These programs are really important. The early stages of learning and support are continuing education for the rest of our lives. The teachers and instructors in these programs inspire the curiosity that children have when they are toddlers. It is a great thing to see the kids who are given an opportunity to explore and grow in a fun way.

I would like to acknowledge the teachers and the instructors in all the communities, but especially in the Mackenzie Delta. They are very clever in the techniques that they use. Training is important. We need to make sure that we offer good education and training for the people who dedicate their working lives to our youngest children.

That is one way our government can support early childhood programs. We need to support the community-based organizations. For example, if the child care workers were paid better, that would attract our younger people to that field of work.

The education that begins early in their lives will spur our children to challenge themselves and to get top marks later in life. That is how our territory will grow and prosper.

I want to encourage our communities to teach their traditional languages to children right from birth. I know that this is happening to some degree and I want to praise those centres where our languages are taught to our children.

Our government must pay close attention to early childhood development. I want to encourage the departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services. They should do as much as they can as soon as they can to improve the support for early childhood development programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
2012 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to attend the 2012 Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse this past March and first of all I want to thank the City of Whitehorse and the organizing committee for excellent games. I want to congratulate Nunavut for their being awarded the Stu Hodgson Award for best sportsmanship.

I was very impressed with our athletes in Whitehorse both on and off the field. On the field they gave it their all. Off the field they were great ambassadors for the Northwest Territories and had many positive comments from a lot of the other families that were there.

We had some really good results. Our speed skating and our ski biathlon teams could have almost chartered their own plane back with all their medals.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm wearing this jersey today is the gold medal game was held between the NWT and the Yukon and I had a friendly wager going with my counterpart in the Yukon, Minister Taylor, and I'm fulfilling the terms of our wager now. We had a very strong cheering section in Whitehorse. Mr. Speaker was there, Commissioner Tuccaro, MLA Hawkins, plus many parents that made the trip there. The boys gave a really good effort, but at the end of the day they lost the game 2 to 1 and the gold medal went to the home team. I think we were just being gracious visitors.

I appreciate the indulgence of the Speaker and the Members of the Assembly for allowing me this opportunity to fulfill my obligation. I do have to return the jersey back to Yukon. I will return it along with an NWT jersey that they can plan on wearing after Fairbanks 2014.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to recognize in the gallery a resident of Hay River South and my new constituency assistant for the Hay River office. Wendy Morgan continues to work in the Yellowknife office and Orlanda Patterson mans the Hay River office.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize a couple of constituents from Weledeh: Barb Hood, executive director of NWT Seniors' Society; and Amanda Mallon, city councillor.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of constituents here as well. I'd like to recognize Kathryn Paddock, who is with the NWT Literacy Council as the family literacy coordinator. With Kathryn is Patricia Ilgok, who is the family literacy trainee. Sitting just in front of them is my

wonderful assistant, Amanda Mallon. I, too, want to recognize the seniors who have graced us with their presence today: Barb Hood, Yvonne Quick, who is a resident of Frame Lake – Yahoo! – and Sandra Taylor.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to acknowledge those three wise ladies sitting at the top there. That would be Yvonne Quick, Barb Hood and Sandra Taylor. Most notably, Sandra Taylor, of course, is a constituent of Yellowknife Centre and she's also the president of the Yellowknife Seniors' Society and she does a great job there.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'd like to welcome all visitors here in the public gallery today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings today.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions.

---Interjection

Item 6, acknowledgements. Sorry, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 6, acknowledgements.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Yakeleya, you may continue.

### **Acknowledgements (Reversion)**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4-17(3):

BETTY BARNABY –

EDUCATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories held its Third Annual Education Hall of Fame in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly. The inductees were chosen by five judges and congratulate all the chosen inductees from their regions.

The Sahtu wishes to congratulate Ms. Betty Barnaby of Fort Good Hope, who has been teaching at the Chief T'Selehye School and recently graduated from the Teachers Education Program in Fort Smith; a double winner indeed. I, along with the Sahtu region, would like to congratulate Ms. Betty Barnaby for her prestigious recognition. Truly education is lifelong learning.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 3, Members' statements.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Nadli, you may continue.

### **Members' Statements (Reversion)**

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
INCREASED FUNDING FOR  
PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMING

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Often it's stated that children are special gifts in our future. I could not agree more to this strong statement. There's a statement in Dene culture: You become a child twice in your life – in the beginning and the latter part of your life. This is what I understand is the special relationship between children and elders.

Children are the spirit of our communities. Parents and extended families play a critical role in raising our children. In the northern communities we have some initiatives in preschools, daycares, playschools and kindergarten programs. I understand governments have frameworks outlining general principles for children, but do not go far enough for a goal that we agreed to in the fall.

We acknowledge that there are pressures on the labour force in the NWT for qualified and trained workers, particularly for the need for more women to enter the workforce. This government should be able to do more to make this happen. This government perhaps could maybe consider a legislation to ensure there are fiscal commitments to ensure that more efforts are directed towards preschool initiatives and ensuring that there are general initiatives in terms of recognizing the need for programs to happen in the beginning of life for children in terms of at least from when they were born, right to when they go to school. At the same time maybe there needs to be more research and analysis towards discussion and towards achieving at least a plan to implement programs immediately.

In the fall we all agreed that we wanted to work together. At the same time there was a goal to ensure that we develop preschool initiatives. I could not agree more. We pride ourselves in the Northwest Territories that we do things differently than mainstream Canada. This is an opportunity for us to establish a very unique program for the Northwest Territories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

### **Written Questions**

WRITTEN QUESTION 3-17(3):  
DIRECT APPOINTMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one written question today.

Would the Premier please provide a list of all direct appointments made by Cabinet since the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly? The Premier's response should specifically note the employing departments and reasons why competitions were not held for positions filled by direct appointment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 11-17(3):  
REPORT OF THE LEGAL SERVICES BOARD  
2009-2010

TABLED DOCUMENT 12-17(3):  
REPORT OF THE LEGAL SERVICES BOARD  
2010-2011

TABLED DOCUMENT 13-17(3):  
21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE NWT,  
PART 2, 2009-2010

TABLED DOCUMENT 14-17(3):  
21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE NWT,  
PART 2, 2010-2011

TABLED DOCUMENT 15-17(3):  
21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE NWT,  
PART 1, 2011-2012

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following five documents, entitled "2009-2010 Report of the Legal Services Board of the Northwest Territories," "2010-2011 Report of the Legal Services Board of the Northwest Territories," "21<sup>st</sup> Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the NWT – Part 2, 2009-2010," "22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the NWT – Part 2, 2010-2011," and "23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report of the Victims Assistance Committee of the Northwest Territories – Part 1, 2011-2012."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mrs. Groenewegen.

TABLED DOCUMENT 16-17(3):

HAY RIVER HUB ARTICLE DATED MAY 30, 2012,  
AND E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE FROM MRS.  
GROENEWEGEN AND HAY RIVER HUB EDITOR

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table an article from the May 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the Hay River Hub along with an e-mail correspondence between myself and a reporter from The Hub.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 16, notices of motion. Mr. Moses.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 5-17(3):  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, June 1, 2012, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Ministers of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services work together to bring forward proposals for new and comprehensive early childhood development programming to begin in the current fiscal year, including a plan and funding to assist communities with securing suitable space for early childhood development programs;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** You may proceed, Mr. Moses.

### Motions

MOTION 5-17(3):  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT,  
CARRIED

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS early childhood development is a priority of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the mandate letters issued by the Premier to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and to the Minister of Health and Social Services instruct them to work together to

develop and implement a comprehensive Early Childhood Development Framework;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has acknowledged that healthy childhoods are the best foundations to develop healthy, productive adults;

AND WHEREAS the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative recognized that fundamental prerequisite of improved early childhood development;

AND WHEREAS it is widely recognized among researchers and educators that the first three years of life are the critical period of laying the groundwork for language, cognitive and social development and lifelong mental and physical health;

AND WHEREAS the development of early childhood programs for the prenatal period and the first three years of life requires a Health and Social Services lead and the development of programs for later ages requires an Education, Culture and Employment lead;

AND WHEREAS the World Health Organization has stated that early childhood is the most important phase for overall development throughout the lifespan, that brain and biological development during the first years of life is highly influenced by an infant's environment, and that early experiences determine health, education and economic participation for the rest of the life;

AND WHEREAS a recent World Bank report concluded that no other development investment boasts a higher payoff for people and for the economies than early childhood development;

AND WHEREAS the government failed to bring forward recommendations for a new or enhanced early childhood development programming in the 2012-2013 budget;

AND WHEREAS each year of delays to the implementation of new early childhood initiatives deprives a year's cohort of children of programming that will help them to fulfil their potential throughout their lives;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Ministers of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services work together to bring forward proposals for new and comprehensive early childhood development programming to begin in the current fiscal year, including a plan and funding to assist communities with securing suitable space for early childhood development programs;

AND FURTHER, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive

response to this motion within 120 days. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the seconder of the motion, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is this the opportunity to speak to the motion?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion here, and appreciate my colleague bringing this forward. I would like to start by just noting that there has been an incredible amount of new research in the area of early childhood development that jurisdictions are drawing upon, and we're starting to realize that and it's quite an opportunity. I'd like to go over just a little bit of that here today.

Brain development occurs during the first few years of life. It really starts during the prenatal period and happens, really, the physical development, during the first three years, and then the full development, in terms of its capacity, during those first three years and a little bit beyond. The unfortunate part is if that development doesn't happen during that stage, it becomes much more challenging to get that development done later, and certainly more expensive, in terms of the government programs and so on.

However, if children do develop in a vigorous and healthy way, their brains and their bodies, they are at an incredible level of lifetime resilience and learning capacity. Development of pathways – and that's what this seems to depend on, the research is showing – is that there are pathways that develop in the brain with proper early childhood development and a healthy family approach. With that development, these pathways, first of all, require a caring relationship with a consistent care provider, as has been noted. Typically, these are the parents. Interactions with parents in a healthy way helps the child deal with stress it encounters – and it's natural to encounter stress on a regular basis – and this contributes to building resiliency. Without these trusting and caring relationships, however, when a child does encounter stress, the stress does not get resolved and the impacts of that stress build and become what the professionals call toxic forms of stress, and those inhibit the development of pathways in the brain itself and the resilience that that brings.

It's also been found that language development, for example, really it peaks within the first year of life and declines rapidly thereafter, the capacity for learning languages. That capacity is established during this early stage. That's so important to know about. The research also shows that genetics play a role. With these healthy and caring relationships from consistent care providers, genes that are part of our makeup get expressed and activated and

that hugely enhances our capacity as a human being throughout the rest of the child's life. Again, the opposite is without those caring relationships and proper early childhood development support, the probability of that genetic expression goes down. We want to encourage that for lifelong benefits.

I mentioned language, and that's an important one for the Northwest Territories where we have 11 official languages and we want to ensure the health of our languages over time.

I'd also like to note that the brain is considered plastic. That is, it does have a lot of ability to recover from stress and so on, and with effort, new wiring, these new pathways can be established, but getting it right the first time is optimal for government. If we wait until pre-kindergarten, for example, to intervene in a child's development, we are starting too late. People often assume that a child is a sponge or an empty vessel up to a certain development point. In fact, what happens very early in the foundation is that establishing this foundation through healthy pathways and development is the key to everything that follows.

I also want to note that brain development, based on the research, will, in fact, affect both learning, such as the acquisition of skills, ability to concentrate and adapt, and health. That's from cardiovascular health to stress susceptibility for the rest of the child's life. Again, all this is by way of saying we have a huge and exciting opportunity here to do some good work.

I think my colleague and others have mentioned where jurisdictions have focused in on this and are focusing today, they have found a huge impact, a positive impact on positive economic development, something that this House regularly talks about. We know that our social costs, two-thirds of our budget, are high and rising, and we, rather unfortunately, lead the country in many of our social statistics. It has been demonstrated, again, investments in early childhood development is the best single thing we can do to address those things, and this is including things like our educational achievements, corrections, and of course, physical and mental health.

All of this work depends, of course, as we've heard, on good family relationships. The child, first and foremost, is relying on its parents, and so we want good and healthy relationships there. We know that coming out of residential school and so on, there's still a lot of healing to be done in the North. I'm pleased to say that early childhood development can help break that cycle and help the children. It is also being found in studies in Harlem, New York, for example, where this is happening, that in fact it can also have great benefits to the parents through their learning about early childhood development and how to have healthy relationships with their

very small children. There are huge opportunities on all fronts there.

It's not surprising that other adults, the extended family, the friends of the family and ultimately as a community itself, community relationships and non-government organizations all provide critical roles, and along with those, of course, is government. That is what we are on about today. We would like to see government stepping up to the plate in a very knowledgeable way and working with experts in the field with the appropriate leads at the appropriate time, because this is a complex issue that extends right through from early childhood. We have been falling short on the earliest years, but it is a transitory thing that develops throughout the early life of a child through school. All aspects are important but the foundation is laid down in those early years, and we want to see that recognized and we want to begin programs being put in place and funded again in a coordinated and sophisticated way right this fiscal year.

We have been talking about this obviously for years now. I will leave it at that.

Again, I appreciate all of the notes from my colleagues today and they're speaking out on this. I look forward to good work with the Ministers of Education and Health to forward this work that we are calling for today. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I allowed Mr. Bromley to speak to this because he was a seconder, so the motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not too sure how much more I can add to Mr. Bromley's statement. I think he said it very well. It gave us all the information that we need to go ahead and make a decision on this.

Being new to the government, it is just something that I assumed that this government was working on and taking care of, and to be in here now and make these changes and be part of it, I am very honoured to help work on taking this initiative through.

Early childhood zero to three years old, Mr. Bromley hit it right on the head with the brain and biological developments, the language, the cognitive and social developments within that time frame which is very important. It allows our youth to have a chance to live a healthy lifestyle as they grow up to be prepared for when they go into the school system, a school system where we don't always see the positive impacts that come from this.

Positively with the early childhood development investment that this government goes to, we can positively impact the low language and speaking levels we have in K to 3 right now. We can positively impact the inclusive schooling and the

amount of dollars that this government spends on inclusive schooling. We can positively impact our graduation rates so students, when they get into the school system, are ready to learn, they have all the tools ready to take that on and be successful. Not only with the students but we are also looking at families and communities.

Just coming from the motion here, I just want to restate this. A recent World Bank report concluded that no other development investment hosts a higher pay-off for people and for economies than early childhood development. That alone should tell us that we should be putting some of our dollars into early childhood development which will impact our territory, our economy, our communities, our families and give our kids a chance to grow up successfully.

With that said, I will allow for other Members to speak to the motion. I thank everyone's comments today with their Member's statements. At the end of this motion, I will be asking for a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion. I very strongly support this motion. The sentiments towards the need for early childhood development programming have been expressed by pretty much all Members here. I totally agree with the sentiments that have been expressed by my colleagues. I appreciate the actions that are currently being undertaken by the departments of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment. I believe it is a start. I believe it is a slow start, but I'm very glad to see that they're doing some work and that they're working together. Collaboration between these two departments is absolutely necessary.

I believe one of my colleagues, in their statement, talked about the fact that zero to preschool or to the start of school tends to be with Health and from anything within school years tends to be with Education. I feel quite strongly that we need to go beyond two departments working together. I think we need to establish one place where this work is done. We need to establish a lead person or a lead area within one of those two departments to take on this job. We have to clearly establish who is leading the development of the framework and who is going to lead the development of the program that is being asked for in this motion. I don't think it's a difficult thing to do. I think it is quite possible we can second people from one department to another. We can transfer people from one department to another. It is relatively easily done, in my mind.

The other thing that I think is extremely important and that there is not enough focus on – and we spoke to this a bit yesterday in Committee of the Whole – is the need to train early childhood

education staff. We don't do enough of that. We don't highlight those programs enough. We don't market them. We don't promote them with our residents. As was mentioned, we certainly don't pay people enough for the jobs that they do. Many of them are committed and dedicated to their jobs, but we don't pay them enough. I think that we ought to put a higher focus on our programming at the college and that we ought to put a higher focus on early childhood education teachers.

I think if we put money and effort into this particular issue, and more so than what we are currently doing for sure, we are not going to be out in the wilderness. We are certainly not ahead of the pack on this, but we would be doing a national movement. I believe right now that there is a large focus on ECD. We need to get there. It is so well documented, as Mr. Bromley alluded, and as any report will tell you, early development of children has a huge impact on the effect of their life later on.

We have so many of our residents who struggle with addictions, with drugs and alcohol, any number of difficulties. We have a lot of them who are affected by mental illness. Many of those issues start from an early age. They are developed when children are very young. If we can nip that in the bud, so to speak, and get the right environment for kids between zero and when they start school or even just zero to three and then work from there upwards, I think it is going to have a huge impact on our residents as a whole, but it will also, as I mentioned, have an impact on our bottom line and our budget; positive impact, not negative.

I think if we really believe in our Assembly priorities – and I mentioned it in my statement – we would be putting money into it. I talked about prevention and I talked about early childhood development. We are not, I don't believe, in this budget, putting the emphasis on both of those two items that we should. We are speaking to the ECE budget today.

I fully support the motion and I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote in support as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand here before you today in strong support of the motion that we have before the House. As I mentioned in my Member's statement and also with the motion here, we need to send a very strong and meaningful message not just to the government here but to all those watching, all those departments out there who are collaborating to make sure that this is a high priority. The Assembly here has made that a priority. We are hoping that we are doing the same.

As mentioned earlier, in zero to three is really the target and focus of what we are trying to get across

and that requires a lot of paradigm shift in thinking. That also requires changes in our behaviour. That requires changes in what we have before us. What we have before us is a 10-year-old document. Things have changed. Technology has changed. Science has changed.

As the Minister mentioned earlier, there is lots at our disposal that proves beyond a reasonable doubt that we are actually in the wrong part of our budget dealing with the wrong part of this equation. We need to move that issue over, along with new money.

As I mentioned, without this new money and as we're seeing, as the Member for Frame Lake alluded, we'll be negotiating and debating our budget for ECE later and it's very, very displeasing to see that all these new initiatives and all this desire and bravado towards change shows no new money. I have grave concerns with that and I'm sure it will be debated later on in the House.

Our children need that support. We need this new money. We need new initiatives within the budget to help us push that first domino. That first domino creates a cascade. Anyone who's seen dominoes move one behind the other will see beyond a reasonable doubt that that cascade is very evident. We need to push that first domino, and that starts with a proper budget and that starts with a proper desire.

In essence, that old cliché that we need to put a little hustle behind the muscle is never more evident as we see here today. I ask that from the Minister and I ask that from the department and I will speak in favour of this motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be speaking in support of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Moses and Mr. Bromley, for bringing this to the floor. They're highlighting the importance of our youth, highlighting the importance of our workers, highlighting the importance of our families and the people that put these programs together in the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the government itself to continue to support the early childhood development.

I spoke earlier about supporting the most important teachers in the child's life are the parents. Usually above 90 percent it's the mother. Having support for the mother with the child. More importantly, how do we get the teachers and the child to work together for each other and get them support?

I want to say that in my nine years of being MLA I've travelled to the Sahtu, and at times I go to the preschools and I go to the places where they offer these programs. It's quite amazing to see the little kids with the teachers. Sometimes you ask the teachers or staff what they're doing to make it in the

school session or the years that they've been there. Sometimes they do some fundraising. Sometimes some of the oil companies or mining companies or the government themselves provides meals for the little kids that come to the preschools. It's quite amazing to sit amongst the little kids there. We have a place where it says something about the government, that they are supporting something like that that's good for the parents and also for training for the teachers that go and teach at these early childhood development programs.

We need to continue supporting their training, support them in what they're doing, because they are setting the foundation for our future. The language is one way of looking at it. We need to look at how we support these children in our communities.

I'd like to thank Mr. Moses and Mr. Bromley for bringing this motion to the floor.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be voting in favour of the motion. I think it's the timeliness of this issue and to highlight it in this House and to get all Members of the Legislative Assembly to move forward with this issue. It's been on the backburner for many, many years. Just how it impacts the smaller communities is my concern. It does have to be resourced and the resources are there currently, but it's few and far between. That's why I'll be supporting this motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on this occasion and I feel very strong about this motion. I think it's an opportunity for us to go forward together. I think the time and the circumstance and all the signs are out there that we need to go forward. This government needs to do more in terms of trying to at least broaden our foundation, and one of the pillars is education. The early start that we have in developing the advances of peoples' minds and at least these gifts that we call our children and working with them, the more investment that we're making for our future. Therefore, I will vote in favour of this motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement today, clearly there are a lot of examples of how early childhood education can be implemented and certainly it's a program that can start a phenomenal difference into a young person's life. If we build that foundation it means a lot.

I say to this McLeod government, don't just heed the warning from us. I mean, there are many parents and experts that will tell you this is such a critical part for the development of our children and the future of our children in our education system. We all know good education is the backbone of a solid foundation going forward in someone's future. There are a lot of researchers that have often pointed out about the fact that a good education gives people more opportunity which keeps them away from at risk.

It would be nice, of course, if we could develop a universal early childhood education program, but the fact is we know it won't be like that. The reality is we could stand up here today and get behind this type of initiative to say we're going to make sure we have some type of program that is invested and involved in every community. So our kids, just like the old American saying goes, no child left behind. We could take on that attitude, the positive attitude and can-do approach which says in the Northwest Territories we're going to try real hard and make sure that no child is left behind by serious intervention and investment by our territory.

Earlier today I also pointed out the fact that there are different domains or certainly different pillars recognized under early childhood development: social development, physical development, intellectual development, creative development, and certainly emotional development. Each in its own way is a pillar to the future that these kids are moving forward on. It's important that we invest in ways to recognize some kids need more help than others in certain areas. It's these early assessments that are so critical because let's invest at a time when we can truly make a difference on the longer term outcome of people. By sitting here ignoring this possibility or opportunity, if I may say, what we're doing is setting them up for a long-term failure. By all means, we're not just failing them, we're failing ourselves.

Children living in low-income households are sometimes those who need this most. I don't want to get down to the nitty-gritty of describing one household or the other, but there are certain elements of kids coming from homes that don't get the support that they need and this is where government needs to step in and help play the role. It doesn't mean if you're coming from a family that's well to do or not. Any kid could struggle with these types of burdens. Certainly this is our chance to invest. Our educators are asking for this and we need to make sure that we provide not only the stuff that I talked about, but we need to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment that helps reward and invest in these kids to bring out their best. We need a plan and a strategy that works on language development. We need to look at the uniqueness of these children through assessment

and say, you know what, they may need a little strength in certain areas.

Recently I was at a school board meeting with a couple of my other colleagues and they talked about one child which is one of many that showed up and couldn't speak for the longest time there when they entered school. That was only one example of several examples they had provided. This is the type of resource capacity that the schools need to make sure that our kids get the best start. If they show up in our education system, we can't expect kindergarten to solve all the problems going forward. Some of this early intervention is highlighted already by my colleagues here. It has to start at age three or even, in special cases, earlier.

There are so many elements to early childhood education and I'm sure I've said some of them. Certainly not all of them. My colleagues are doing certainly their best to highlight the importance of this particular program. The fact is we have to make a territorial program that's understood and implemented in all regions. Not just Yellowknife or the big centres such as Hay River and Inuvik, but into our communities because they're so critical.

That's all I really want to get down to on this particular subject today. It's a passionate subject not just of myself but all the other colleagues here. If we have recognized one important thing, it's about the value that we have recognized that we've placed on our youth and how important that particular issue is. There is no better investment than investing in our children. It doesn't come down to anything more complicated than that. We can hope all we want, but today we can make the right type of investments. A solid early childhood education program, as I talked about earlier today, is the type of investment that we need to do. That would be the foundation, truly a hallmark of our North.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government agrees that early childhood development is important and also it is one of the priorities of this government. I would like to thank the Members for raising the significance of the early childhood development, because Education, Culture and Employment has already made it a priority and is researching the best way to proceed.

ECE is working closely with the Department of Health and Social Services to revise and renew the existing Early Childhood Development Framework for Action. The chief medical health officer has recently been identified to lead the development of the revised draft framework. A working group has been struck for renewal of the framework with representatives from the Department of Health and

Social Services and Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The consultation will be an important part of the process and will be taken across the Northwest Territories in the fall of 2012.

Early learning and care is a component of the framework. Education, Culture and Employment is planning the following developments under the early learning and care component of the revised framework:

- The expansion of the early childhood education and care programs using the Aboriginal Head Start model and a new Northwest Territories-developed curriculum.
- Initiation of a two-year on-site early childhood development and care diploma through Fort Smith Campus of Aurora College. The transition year will be 2013-2014. The first graduates will be in May 2016.
- The development of trial territorial early learning framework through partnership with Yukon and Nunavut to be completed in April 2013.

Once this final stage of the review is completed, a renewal of the Early Childhood Development Framework will be put forward for consideration during the 2013-2014 planning cycle.

We have already begun working with the leaders of the Northwest Territories on this particular topic. On May 4, 2012, Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment hosted initial discussions with the stakeholders on the development of child and family resource centres. The departments are working on an action plan to develop two such centres in the current fiscal year.

On May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> I held my first annual meeting with the school boards and leaders of all major Aboriginal organizations in the Northwest Territories. The four pillars of Aboriginal Student Achievement were discussed at this high-level education and Aboriginal leadership meeting. Of course, early childhood education and child care is the first pillar of ASA. The regional leaders broke into regional groups and discussed and made recommendations on early childhood education and child care. The results of both meetings resulted in revamping the Early Childhood Development Framework for Action.

As this is a recommendation to our government, Cabinet members will abstain from voting.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I'll allow the mover of the motion for closing remarks. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've done a lot of work in my time in the communities within my governments. I've participated on the front line with a lot of community workers, teachers, parents, concerned Members, leaders in our communities. What it always comes down to is everybody sees it

in their communities. The social issues that impact our community can be addressed by putting money and investing into our early childhood development. Like I said when I was talking earlier, I thought this government was working on this already. I had the assumption and confidence that our government was working to make our communities and economy a lot healthier and safer. To come into this government as a new Member and to see that eight months into this Assembly we're actually asking the government to invest money into early childhood development that's going to our population and our residents for years to come. I'm very proud that on this side we get the chance to vote in favour of a motion to support our families back home, to support our constituents, to support our communities and our families, to support our educators, our health practitioners, the people in the justice system, all the departments that are affected by the lack of investment into this initiative, which is early childhood development.

It's stated that every dollar you invest in early childhood development, the returns are about \$6 to \$8. That alone should say that we should be investing more money in there. As we go through the budget, some of the line items that I've been seeing are very shocking to me and the lack of funding in some areas is even more shocking. As this government, we have the opportunity so that when we invest today, that in years to come we're going to start to see a healthier, more educated group of youth, a healthier, more educated generation of adults in our Northwest Territories and in our communities so that we can start to see the benefits of what we do today in years to come.

I thank all Members here for their comments, for their passion, their concern for our people of the Northwest Territories. I'd also like to give the Premier an opportunity to allow his Cabinet to vote freely on this, to allow their Members back home, their family, their communities, show them the support that they need for this early childhood development.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be asking for a recorded vote. Thank you.

#### RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Member is seeking a recorded vote. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

**DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte):** Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Blake, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

**DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte):** Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod - Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod - Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, colleagues. All those in favour, 11; all those opposed, zero; abstentions, six. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motion 3-17(3), Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd prefer to bring that motion forward tomorrow, with your permission. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. You have my permission. Item 19, first reading of bills. Mr. Abernethy.

### First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 2: MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012, be read for the first time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Bill 2 has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success; Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013; and Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, with Ms. Bisaro in the chair.

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

**MS. BISARO:** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have three items for consideration. Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success; Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013; and Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to resume consideration of Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, with Education, Culture and Employment, Transportation, and possibly Environment and Natural Resources.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We will resume after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are dealing with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Minister Lafferty, do you have witnesses to bring into the Chamber?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Does the committee agree to bring witnesses in?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses into the Chamber?

Mr. Lafferty, if you could introduce the witnesses for the record, please.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. To my left is acting deputy minister of ECE Gloria Iatridis, and to my right is Paul Devitt, director of business strategic services within ECE. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister. Committee, we are on page 10-17, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, operations expenditure summary, \$192.575 million. We have a list from yesterday. I will start with Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously we are discussing issues regarding page 17. Inclusive to this page is the line item under culture and heritage. I want to spend a few minutes here on that note, knowing full well that ECE and ITI work jointly with the arts.

The other day tabled in the House by the Minister of ITI was a supporting statement which basically talked in favour of supporting of the arts. Such statements as an NWT artisan make positive economic and cultural impact on our territory and others. I'm not denying the fact that the department or the Minister, obviously, support these areas.

Given the budget item that I see here, we are seeing a very small, modest increase in the delivery of cultural and heritage which would include promoting NWT arts. Can the Minister or his designate indicate what these extra monies are in the budget? Where is that money going to be allocated to?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Madam Chair, the culture and heritage, as the Members would know, there has been an increase over the years. We will continue to promote that within our department. This time around the difference is basically to offset

the costs of Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. There was a fire there, so it is a repair to the building, so approximately \$520,000 in that area. Mahsi.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, thanks to the Minister for clarifying where that overage is going to be spent.

Most recently an organization here in the Northwest Territories – and I refer to them as the Artists Run Community Centre, or ARCC for short – unfortunately lost their facility due to an expansion of a building or construction of a new government building in the downtown corridor. We know that, as I say, the statements that we have heard in the House with respect to supporting arts and the culture regarding arts is a priority. However, this organization, which really is a backbone or a facility that helps support and nurtures and fundamentally creates the baseline for art in the Northwest Territories, are now without a home. Can the Minister indicate to us why nothing in this budget – knowing full well that this has been an ask by this Member as well as Regular Members here on this – why given the fact that there is lots of support for the arts, that this organization who had lost their home due to one of our own expansion buildings and, again, nothing in this budget reflects that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Madam Chair, this is an area that we have been monitoring closely since it first came up. Currently we don't have capital funds to build or have an establishment for those types of facilities, but we do provide funding through the NWT Arts Council and working closely with ITI because they do have other sources of funds as well.

Within my department, we provide funds to various organizations. We can provide this organization through the Members as well. When it comes to capital, we haven't allocated funds to offset the costs for capital infrastructure on this specific topic.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, again I appreciate the fact that the Minister does have a list of supporting organizations that are recipients of funding. My specific question is for the Artists Run Community Centre. What does the Minister intend to tell this group of artists – and they are a fairly large group of artists – what kind of support can we provide them and facilitating and fostering their field so that really it goes in line with what this government is doing, trying to promote the work of artisans and yet there's no facility for them to be promoted in? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** At this point we can provide information to the Artist Run Community Centre and the programs that we currently have within ECE. Most of the applications and the proposals go through the NWT Arts Council as well. They make decisions based on the needs of those

arts and the performance in the Northwest Territories. So I can commit that within my department I'll be working closely with ITI to identify those programming dollars that they can potentially access, this organization that we're speaking of. Mahsi.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I appreciate the Minister's support. I will take the Minister up on his offering with the Minister of ITI. I will make that invitation out hopefully to other Members to hopefully be participants in that in order to support NWT art, specifically for the Artist Run Community Centre. So I'd like to thank the Minister for his indulgence. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Minister, did you wish to comment?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** No, I've already made a commitment. So I'll definitely do my part with the Minister of ITI and also the NWT Arts Council that we provide funding to. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Next on my list is Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to follow up a little bit on the questions about inclusive schooling. I know this is an area that's been evolving. I have two concerns. One is, as I understand it, we have hooked the amount of inclusive schooling funding to the total amount the school gets and it's a proportion. As budgets have soared, so has inclusive schooling. That does not allow the increase or the changes in inclusive schooling funding to be tied to actual need. So that's the first aspect of it.

The second is an expression of the need for change from school boards that recommend that there be a base provision of inclusive schooling funding provided and then an additional amount based on an assessment of the needs of the children in that school for special consideration. So as a result, our inclusive schooling obviously, according to the budget here, has soared and I'm wondering how are we going to be managing this in a more effective way and hopefully at the same time improve the effectiveness of our programs through the inclusive schooling needs. Thank you, Mr. Chair, two questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The inclusive schooling is tied similar to the school formula, based on enrollment of the school as well. The Member is asking if there needs to be a change using base formula based on a student assessment, the child assessment, the needs. So those are the areas that I already committed that I want my department to explore and to review the overall inclusive schooling.

There have been a lot of issues raised on this particular topic. So I'm looking to the Members, and I want to have an overall review of this particular topic and I'll definitely keep the Members in the loop as we move forward in our discussion. It will take some time, as you know, because it does involve the communities and the regional groups. It doesn't just sit here. We provide funding to all communities on this particular subject.

So, again, I'm committing to have an overall review on this particular subject and I will be considering, as well, the base provision on the student needs assessment that the Member is alluding to. That will be part of the discussion. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the Minister's commitment and reminder that he's already committed. I appreciate that. It is difficult, because obviously schools have to be funded ahead of time as to what they're doing and so on. So I appreciate that there's a bit of a need for some advance.

Obviously this has been under discussion before and I'd hoped that some thinking had been done on this, but I'll look forward to working with the Minister on this and seeing if we can increase our effectiveness, and perhaps with fewer dollars and it being done and tie the funding to real needs in each school. Obviously a formula doesn't work when the number of students with special needs is going to vary quite a bit from school to school and year to year. So I appreciate that commitment. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Would the Minister like to respond?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, I did commit to it. So I'll definitely follow through and work with the Members on this. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next on my list I believe I have Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just a follow-up on the theme of early childhood education. Today I've got several questions. I'm just wondering how Education, Culture and Employment would encourage and help communities to start early childhood programs like the Open Door in Fort Simpson, and if they answer yes, then how is that being done. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We do have program dollars set aside to deal with early childhood program delivery. There are areas that we sponsor, whether it be the child care centres. There are pots of funds that we sponsor, whether it be partial payments of their mortgage, start-up costs and supporting the child that's in the

system as well. So those are just some of the program dollars that we can clearly identify and pass on to Regular Members for their information. Just the detail of the breakdown of various pots of funds within early childhood development. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Sounds like there is funding available, probably a couple of different types of programming areas. There are a couple of things, I guess. How are they available to communities and is the current funding already subscribed to, which means I guess basically is all being taken up? Is there opportunity for other communities to get involved? Should they be planning it now or in the future?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Those individual organizations, if they want to start up a service, they can go through our regional representatives. We have various programs that are available to them. Our regional representative will be more than happy to sit down with those individuals or organizations that are interested in pursuing and providing services in the community, such as early childhood. So we do have a representative at the regional level and we can provide those names and contact information as well. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. Earlier the Minister had said that two communities will pilot family resource centres this year. How long is he planning to run that and also what is the long-range forecast? Is it to run them in all of our small and remote communities as well, Mr. Chair?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We are working on an action plan, as I stated in my report. We are pursuing two pilot projects in two communities. We haven't identified those two communities yet. We have to work with organizations, agencies, and they need to specify which communities they want us to pursue. We need to work with that. I will be tabling that document in the Legislative Assembly before session ends.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I certainly look forward to that document. Final question here is, as the Minister may have already answered it, the Early Child Development Framework for Action has not been revised since 2001, as was mentioned earlier in the Members' statements earlier this afternoon. That work is certainly behind schedule. When will that work be completed and when will the recommended actions be funded?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The Early Childhood Development Framework, as we stated in this House, is long overdue. We're going to be doing the consultation this fall, as I indicated in my Minister's statement as well. We want to complete the overall review by the end of this fiscal year and get ready for the next business planning cycle so we can identify funds to start implementing that. That is the overall plan.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. We'll be moving on to the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions here. I'd like to follow up first on the questions asked by Mr. Bromley with regard to inclusive schooling and funding for inclusive schooling. We talked a bit about it already. I've stated before, and I'll repeat it today, I believe we need a full-scale review of the manner in which we fund inclusive schooling in our schools. I think there needs to be an evaluation of those students who are special needs and the level of various students with special needs and that the funding needs to be based upon the needs of the students. Some students require an awful lot more than other students do and those that require a full-time aide certainly need to be funded differently from those who simply require half an hour a day with a math or English support teacher.

I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not, I think he's suggested that they're looking at this issue. I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not the department will consider a full-scale review. I know there was a review - at least the Minister called it a review - probably a year or two years ago now. In my mind, it wasn't the kind of review that I'm referencing. It was a review where boards and superintendents were asked to basically itemize the special needs within their board. In my mind, that's not a comprehensive review or evaluation of the program and funding. I'd like to ask the Minister if he's looking at this issue, will he consider a comprehensive review of how we fund special needs and how we determine the funding to go for particular students.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I did commit to look at this overall inclusive schooling. It could consist of a comprehensive overview of this inclusive schooling. Before I do that, as a department I want to share the terms of reference with the standing committee so that they can have their input as we move forward. We will be pursuing this. I'm committing to that. I will be sharing that information with the standing committee.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate the commitment. I look forward to seeing the terms of reference at committee. One other thing in regard to inclusive schooling, and I would suggest that if we're going to do a review of this program that the department offers, at the same time we should review the Inclusive Schooling Directive. We talked a bit about that yesterday. I believe it's on the schedule for the department to review the Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Directive, but I would like to ask the Minister if he

would consider either adding the Inclusive Schooling Directive to the review or to the ones that the department is reviewing, or if he would consider replacing the Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Directive with the Inclusive Schooling Directive for this particular fiscal year.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The directive on inclusive schooling will be considered as part of the comprehensive overall review. Once we develop the terms of reference, we will share it with our colleagues and we want to start at least late this summer or early fall and start initiating our discussion on this particular important piece of work.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate the indication of timing. It's good to hear that the directive would be included as part of the review.

I have another question with regard to schools, particularly high schools and high school curriculum and the supports for students in high school. I spoke to this earlier about the need for schools that are providing high school curriculum to students need to have somebody who does help those students with counselling, particularly counselling relative to courses and making sure they're taking the right courses and classes to get them where they want to go beyond high school.

I've learned since we originally talked about this, that in smaller schools quite often it's the principal who does take on the counselling duties. It's sort of one of the things that is added on to the principal's many other duties. I also want to say that it is quite a specialized job. If students are going into a post-secondary institution, there are extremely narrow requirements sometimes and I wonder whether or not the department provides any training for principals who happen to take on the role of a counsellor or if it's somebody else who is taking on the role of counsellor for the school in addition to their other duties. I suspect there's probably not money set aside for it, but I would like to know from the Minister if there is any thought given to the need to provide training for school counsellors, guidance counsellors, career counsellors within the department's thinking.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Guidance counsellor has been addressed before. We provide funding to the school boards and it's at their discretion if they're going to hire guidance counsellors, teachers, custodial, support staff. This will definitely be addressed with them when it comes to my meeting with them as board chairs.

The Member has spoken to principal training potentially providing guidance services. I'm fully aware that there is a principals' annual certification training that happens for principals that are coming into a new position or even existing principals. I have to find out if this is part of their training. I know they have a wide range of training that's required

for the principals. I will have to get back to the Members on the actual training component of the principal's certification program. At the same time, I will again be talking to my colleagues, the chairpersons of the school boards, to provide more emphasis on this particular subject. That's what we'll be doing.

There is also – I just got the information here – several rounds of training both career focusing, resulting in over 80 teachers. That information we can provide to the Members for their information as well.

**MS. BISARO:** I'll try and rephrase the question. I'm not wanting to know what training principals take. I think it's similar to the previous situation we had with homelessness where it was done off the corner of somebody's desk. I see that counselling within many small schools is something that's done off the corner of somebody's desk. They have other jobs and other priorities and this is one thing that gets added on to the many other jobs that they do. Sometimes it's a principal but sometimes it's another teacher. So to give the training only to principals will not solve the problem.

What I'm suggesting is that we need training for whoever is providing the service in the school, whether it's the principal or the vice-principal or the phys. ed. teacher or the music teacher. It doesn't matter. Somebody needs to have some sort of education, some sort of backup, some sort of document, some sort of mentor who can assist them when they are trying to provide counselling services to the kids. I leave that as a comment.

I appreciate that the Minister is going to discuss it with board chairs, but I do feel that it's something that needs a department focus and that the department should mandate and ask the boards to do as opposed to... Sorry. They should tell the boards to do it as opposed to asking them. I think the department should facilitate getting the training that's required and certainly there are experienced persons within our schools in the NWT who can do the kind of training that I'm thinking of. It doesn't have to be a massive six-week course. Just a comment.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I agree with the Member. An initial thought the Member raised the issue about the principals, so I figured I would touch on the principals' annual certification program. At the same time it should be offered to other teachers and support staff as well. This falls in line of other organizations that we work with; NWTTA as well that deals with all the teachers. I'll get Ms. Iatridis to provide some background of other projects that are out there in the Northwest Territories.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Ms. Iatridis.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** ECE has a partnership with BHP Billiton to support a pilot project that focuses on career focusing. Within that pilot project we've identified master trainers to be able to provide career counselling in all of our schools. We've also expanded the pilot to include career development officers who work in our regional centres and can provide counselling to adults in adult education programs. The career focusing tool is something that we've adopted and received Train the Trainer program facilitation skills. It's part of a Queens University project. Over the last few years we've trained 80 teachers and 11 career development officers to implement this tool and to provide high school students with career focusing skills.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Iatridis. Next on my list I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Not at this time, Mr. Chairman. I think Mr. Bromley had some questions here.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. We'll move on to Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to start by making a quick comment on the early childhood and making note of many of the good programs that are happening, and obviously there are plans to expand the Head Start program, and partnerships with Yukon and so on are not addressing the early childhood part or the early years part of early childhood development. I just want to make clear that there is a difference there.

The other thing is that early childhood education and child care are, strictly speaking in terms of what we're talking about, not early childhood development. So when reference is made to that as early childhood development, I think there's starting to be a bit of a disconnect between what Members on this side of the House are saying and what the Minister is saying. I'm just wondering if the Minister could confirm his understanding that we see a difference in early childhood development and some of these other things that are early childhood education. They're obviously contributing to early childhood but they're not necessarily the focus. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I understand where the Member is coming from and I do agree that we need to focus on the very early stages in children's lives. That is what we're focusing on. Maybe it's different terminology that we're talking about here, but when we talk about the – and Member Bisaro also raised that issue – where having qualified people. That's why I addressed the two year on-site, the child development care diploma that deals with ages zero to three. Indirectly or directly, it does impact on these individuals in a positive way. This is just the beginning of what we're pursuing as part

of the framework and there will be more to come. I will be interested in hearing from Members, as well, because we've heard from them what they want included in the framework as well. But as we move forward, we'll be sharing that information with them.

There is a plan of action being developed, as well, from previous discussions that we've had with the agencies and organizations that deals directly with the ages zero to three and having parental involvement as well.

As a department, we cannot do it alone. Those are the areas that we'll continue to focus as a department, providing funds in that area, because it is a worthwhile investment. We will do what we can as a department to work towards that initiative. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'm happy to leave it at that. I do understand that we're not going to do everything at once here. I do understand that these things take some ramping up. I'm not a big fan of throwing a huge amount of money at something and then have the dollars slack off as we learn how to spend them most effectively. We need to be appropriately thorough and comprehensive as we develop these programs, and I'll look forward to having more discussions. But I appreciate the clarity that we are on the same wavelength there, and as I say, I will look forward to further discussions on this. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Moving on for comments on page 10-17, activity summary, we have Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 2-17(3):  
DEFERRAL OF CONSIDERATION OF  
ESTIMATES FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE,  
CARRIED

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity education and culture under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Main Estimates 2012-2013 on page 10-17 at this time. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. We'll just give it a second to circulate a copy of the motion.

The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. The motion is not debateable. The motion is carried.

---Carried

I'd like to thank the committee for consideration of activity summary under page 10-17 in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. This has been deferred. We'll carry on.

Page 10-18, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, education and culture, grants and contributions, grants, \$52,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Contributions, on pages 10-18, 10-19 and on 10-20. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just in regard to 10-19 and community library services, it's still the focus of the community of Fort Simpson to get back to a fully functioning library, and I continue to pursue this initiative. I was just wondering, since I last raised it, how far Education, Culture and Employment have explored and worked with the community organization in addressing this concern.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Ms. Iatridis.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** We would have to get more detail on that for you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** The community library in Fort Simpson was severely reduced two years ago and is now just a resource centre. The community of Fort Simpson residents were looking for assistance to upgrade, in fact, from a resource centre to a library where there are actual books. Right now there's just a series of four computers and older books from a library. Even though it works well for residents who are used to the system, the library, the previous library was still a central point for the community and for hosting author events, et cetera. It's central to any community. The large communities, of course, have benefited from it. I don't have to list the many, many benefits of having a fulltime library service in a community and it's central to the cultural importance of any community.

I've been raising it for a couple years and I was just wondering at what stage was ECE at with this initiative in Fort Simpson. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I believe it's been some time now since we last looked at this file. The Village of Fort Simpson is getting \$53,000 at this point, in 2010-2011 actuals. We continue to provide that funding to the list of libraries in the Northwest Territories.

There have been some options thrown around. As I recall, when the Member first addressed this with us as a department, looking at options of part of the school, the school system, to be part of the library, we worked closely with the town council, as well, in Simpson, especially with the mayor, and they provided some options for us to work with at that time. It did not pan out at that time, but I can commit to the Member that I will follow through with where it's at and where the talks have broken down, and we will revisit our discussions of the last time where we can take the next steps. I'll do that as my commitment. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I think it was last fall or last spring, I think, we lost one of our library proponents

that moved out of the community so I think that file did go silent for awhile, but it's certainly still important for Fort Simpson and I look forward to the Minister's commitment to continue to follow up and work to a better solution for Fort Simpson. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Contributions on, again, pages 10-18, 10-19, 10-20, total contributions. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am trying to understand on page 10-20 the difference between the contributions to the NWT Arts Council and the contribution to the new northern arts programs. They sound rather similar to me. I am just wondering why we don't lump them together under the Arts Council so the Arts Council has control of the whole \$750,000. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Minister.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, there is a separate pot of funds here, as has been identified. NWT Arts Council contributions to artists and cultural groups to support and encourage creative artistic projects in the visual, literary, performing and new media arts in the NWT; and other new northern arts programs, that is contributed for northern theatre arts, northern literary arts, northern film and media arts and arts mentorships. Those are the distinctions between those two pots of funds. We can certainly look at this area if there needs to be a combination. We need to find out why they are separated. Maybe there is a reason why there are separate pots of funds. I will definitely look into this further. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for the commitment to look into this. I guess I would like to ask either the Minister or his delegation if they can tell me what the distinction is, the difference between these two. I know the Minister read it out but he said that is the difference. Well, they don't sound very different to me except the titles are different. If he could give me any more information at this time, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty. Ms. Iatridis.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** Mr. Chair, the description in the document does sound very similar, but the guidelines may be very different for accessing the dollars. We can get more information for you on the specific guidelines and how the two pots of funding are administered.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for the information. I would look forward to that. I guess I would just, as the Minister stated, if these can be combined, it certainly is a more efficient way of doing business. The guidelines certainly probably could be combined to cover everything that is there. Just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Contributions, pages 10-18, 10-19, 10-20, total contributions, \$166,985, total grants and contributions, \$167,037.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, information item, education and culture, active positions. Any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note that there is an increase in positions in Yellowknife under education and culture. Could I be advised what two positions have been added? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, when this first came up I did ask the same question as well. It is an existing position but it is in Hay River for both positions, library order clerk and library technical services clerk for headquarters for libraries.

**MS. BISARO:** I'm sorry. I couldn't hear the Minister. Could he repeat that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. If I can get the Minister to just repeat that last part of that answer.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The two positions are based out of headquarters servicing Hay River library services such as the library order clerk and library technical services clerk. Two positions. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** That is all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Education, Culture and Employment, information item, education and culture, active positions. Any questions? There are none. Page 10-23, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, advanced education, operations expenditure summary, \$46.568 million. Agreed? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a few brief questions here. I note that the division provides immigration supports through the Canada-NWT Agreement on Territorial Nominees. I just wonder what activity we had on that file and how many Canada-NWT Agreement territorial nominees we have had in the past 12 years or whatever measure the department has handy. I guess associated with that, do we monitor what areas these immigrants work in, if they are associated with a particular field? If so, I would be interested in that breakdown, as well, if that is handy. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Minister.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, up to May 2012, ECE has approved 43 nominee

applications in critical impact worker category and also 13 nominee applications in skilled worker category. Those are just some of the numbers that we have had to date. Maybe I will just get Ms. Iatridis to elaborate more because she is more focused in this area.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Ms. Iatridis.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** Just to clarify, the critical impact worker category is below skilled and the focus is on the hospitality sector. In the skilled worker category, it is the professionals. It could be trades or other professional areas.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Iatridis. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's very good to have those stats. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So these people have become residents of the Northwest Territories. I am wondering if we know where roughly, by region or something like that, if we have that sort of information and are monitoring that. Thank you.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** The numbers of applicants that were approved were approved as a nominee, and through the nominee process their application for permanent residency is fast-tracked. We don't have knowledge of whether or not these individuals have gained their permanent residency. The process allows them to do that in a faster process.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I guess I would hope that we would be able to find out eventually. I would be interested in having that information reported back to committee, if that's possible. Thanks for that information.

I know the Minister is aware that, over a number of years now, I and committee have been interested in Aurora College programs, as many people are, and particularly seeing programs developed in the area of Sustainable Communities Administrator Program and in the area of Renewable Energy Technician Program. I was wondering if I can get an update on those.

Just for efficiency of time, I also know that there is work to put a new or revised early childhood development worker program in place. I am not quite sure that I got the timing on when that's going to be happening in a revised way.

Also associated with that, will we be graduating nationally people that meet at the national standard for qualifications for early childhood development workers? Thank you.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** In regard to the Early Childhood Diploma Program, currently the department is in discussions with Aurora College. We haven't finalized the details.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. Is that in terms of timing or whether they would be qualified on a national, meet the national standards for qualifications? Thank you.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** In terms of timing, we are still discussing what the program would look like and once that is determined whether or not it's affiliated with another university or college in another jurisdiction would determine whether or not it meets national standards.

One of the other areas that we've been having some discussion on with other leaders across the NWT is occupational standards, because there are early childhood workers now in the communities and many of them take the distance learning that is offered through Aurora College on a part-time basis, but there has been some interest by some of the local community groups for us to develop occupational standards as well. So one of the things that the department has done this past year is a review of the Aurora College certificate program and there have been a number of recommendations that were made through that review. So we're just at a discussion stage now of what the next steps will be, whether it's a diploma program, occupational standards or other opportunities for training.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate that information. Just as a follow-up to my other two on the Sustainable Communities Administrator Program and Renewable Energy Technician Program, if I can get an update on where we're at on those two programs. Thank you.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** I would have to get a more detailed update for you. The last time we had discussions with Aurora College, some research was being undertaken and so we would be able to get you an update on that.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's it for now. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll look forward to that update. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, advanced education, operations expenditures, \$46.568 million. Does committee agree? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of questions here, and my first question has to do with Aurora College. I mentioned in my opening remarks that I have some concerns about the college. I talked a bit about ALBE and I think I've kind of covered my concerns in that area, but I do have some concerns, major concerns with the reorganization that the college seems to have undergone in the last little while, and as a result of that reorg it's my understanding that it is a result of the reorg that we have a lot of people, long-term college staff who have left the employ of the college.

I guess I would like to first start by asking the Minister how often he reviews the college operations. What kind of oversight does he give to the college operations? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, I feel the same way as the Member does, especially when we're hearing things from the perspective of those individuals. Concerns have been brought to our attention as well. We do have a quarterly meeting with the board chairs and the college chairperson is part of that discussion, and any concerns or issues are brought to our attention and this will definitely be one of the case subjects when I'm meeting with the Board of Governors in June, I believe June 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> in Inuvik. It is a concern to us, so this will definitely be addressed at that time. We'll be closely monitoring the events that are happening now until then, and we are getting a lot of concerns that are being brought to our attention that will be shared with the board chairs as well. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** I'm glad to hear the Minister is concerned as well. I guess I would like to know if the Minister would agree to provide information to Regular Members after the meeting with the Board of Governors in June, whether it's a verbal report or a briefing note of some sort, but I know that I certainly would be interested in knowing where things stand after that meeting. I imagine, and I'm pretty sure, that there are other Members, as well, who've heard the same concerns from their constituents. So if he could do that, that would be much appreciated.

I also wanted to ask about minimum wage. I think it belongs on this page in terms of employment, I think. We have had a couple of increases in our minimum wage and I know I'm grateful and I believe there's a number of our residents who are, maybe not our businesses, but I think it's a good thing in general. At the time that we last raised minimum wage, there was some talk about setting in place a mechanism for automatic increases to minimum wage based on something and that was going to be investigated. I believe that that investigation was started. I haven't heard the results of it. So I'd like to ask the Minister, as well, whether or not the research that was required into an automatic increase to minimum wage has been done and, if not, when it would be done. So two questions there: a report on the board meeting and minimum wage increase. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Through our department we've been considering the information that we've gathered, as the Member alluded to, from other jurisdictions and providing some options for consideration this year. There's an options paper that will be discussed next week by deputy ministers. Ms. Iatridis is part of that discussion and she's kind of the driving force on this. It will be considered at that time and then brought forward to Cabinet. Once that happens, then I'll be sharing

that with the standing committees and the committee members. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** To my other question about reporting on the meeting with the Board of Governors?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Sorry about that. Yes, most definitely. Once I meet with the Board of Governors at the college in Inuvik, we'll provide a briefing or a memo to the Members of the outcome of our discussion. So Members can share with their constituencies those concerns that are brought forward and there will be basically a general discussion that we'll be having with them. At that time I guess we'll find out what kind of decisions need to be made. So I'll be working closely with the college on that and I'll keep the Members up to speed as we move forward on this particular subject. It is a concern to us as well. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, advanced education, operations expenditure summary, \$46.568 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, advanced education, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$34.133 million. Is committee agreed? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a quick question here under small community employment. I'm not questioning the contribution, but I am wondering why – I believe this existed in the previous budget year in '11-12 – it's showing up in '12-13 but it's not there for '11-12. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To respond we'll go to Mr. Devitt.

**MR. DEVITT:** Mr. Chair, the Member is correct; the funding was there in previous years, but it wasn't set up as a contribution. Because they're contributing to community groups this year, part of the money for that program has been identified as a contribution for the first time. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** So if this is only part of the funding for small community employment, what is the total amount? I presume the rest of it, whatever it is, is in another place in the budget. Is that correct?

**MR. DEVITT:** Yes, there's an additional \$841,000 budgeted in operations under career employment and development underneath this activity. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you. That's all, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, advanced education, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$34.133 million. Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 10-25, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, advanced education, active positions. Any questions? Seeing none, page 10-27, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$39.668 million. Does committee agree? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering if there are any plans for review of our income security programs specifically this fiscal year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The last review that was undertaken was back in 2007 and we made some changes to income security. We've increased in some areas. It's been five years now so if that is the wish of committee, then we can certainly look at those areas as well.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I think there certainly is interest in that, especially in association with development of our Anti-Poverty Strategy. I think there's a real opportunity there to have a good thorough review in the normal way plus other ways. I appreciate the Minister's expression of openness there. I think that's something we should do. I'm just wondering, is there a set time that we would normally review our income security programs.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I'm not sure if there's a set time on a review basis, but since we've done the review back in 2007, I just got word from my acting deputy that we are still making some changes since 2007 following through with the recommendations that are brought forward. It is at the somewhat early stages still, but we are going to look at what's out there now and what should be changed. I've already committed that we'll look at it and see where we can make some changes, if we need to consult with various organizations as we've done before.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Just drilling down a little bit, the Seniors Home Heating Subsidy, obviously fuel rates are up quite a bit. I think it's 54 percent, if I remember the number right – something like that – from 2007. Are there automatic adjustments? I suspect there are in that, but I'm wondering if there are automatic adjustments for those costs. Is it a number of litres as opposed to a value?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, it is based on quantity. We pay for the base price. If there are any changes in fuel costs, it's also adjusted into our subsidy. There is no impact on certain individual clientele. We continue delivering the program to those individuals, especially the seniors.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bromley. I have speaking to page 10-27 Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the outset I want to say that I support the comments of Mr. Bromley in terms of a review of income support. There have been some changes made and I'm glad to see them, but I think history shows that when you make changes piecemeal without looking at the whole and seeing things in a total that it doesn't necessarily create the best product. In my view, we need a review of the whole program and I think we particularly need to look at the policy of Productive Choices. I'm not so sure that is doing its job and that it really encourages people to get off income support. It's tied in with ALBE and it's a complex situation, but I'll just leave that as a comment.

I wanted to also ask a question about the Seniors Home Heating Subsidy and I think the Minister, in his opening remarks, made some reference to the fact that they're looking at seniors living with another person who has fairly high household income. Could I get an explanation from the Minister as to sort of whether or not I'm correct that the situation of seniors living with somebody else or somebody else living with a senior is being looked at and is the department contemplating an adjustment there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The Auditor General is doing an overall review of income support, more specifically to productive choices, whether it be home care, seniors' fuel subsidy area. That is happening over the summer or fall. By Christmas we should have a report from them. Based on that, we need to re-evaluate our programming. It is going to be happening. When it comes to seniors' subsidy, fuel subsidy, based on household income and I did instruct my department to look at some options. That is currently being developed as we speak. Once I review that and share it with my Cabinet colleagues, then I will definitely be sharing it with the committee members. It's been brought to our attention that we need to make those changes so there's not much impact on the seniors themselves. I've already committed that I'll be reviewing those options and bringing that forward.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for the update from the Minister. I wanted to ask a question on this page related to student financial assistance. There has been a review of SFA which has been done. I think it's completed. If I could get confirmation as to where that review is, if it is completed, and when Members could see the results.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll go to Ms. Iatridis.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** The review of the SFA program is complete. The department has been working on a management response to the recommendations of the review and the report will be available to share this summer.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the acting DM for that. I will look forward to reading that report. My last question has to do with indications in the budget that we're getting an increasing number of applications for income support. It's a trend that has been happening over the last several years and there are a number of reasons, I'm sure, why that's happening. I'm not so concerned with the reasons because I believe they're all valid, but I am concerned with whether or not the department has a strategy to deal with the fact that we have more and more people who seem to be needing income support and are asking us for income support. This is a huge dollar item in our budget. If we lived in a perfect world, nobody would be on income support and we wouldn't have to spend that money. I would like to know if the department has a strategy or has any kind of a plan to try and reduce the amount of money we spend on income support by reducing the number of people who need to access it.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** Since 2007 when we made changes to the Income Assistance Program, yes, the number of unique cases has risen right across the Northwest Territories. We have been monitoring the statistics NWT-wide, regionally and by community over the last five years and we've also been looking at the statistics by age ranges. About 30 percent of our clientele are between the age of 19 to 29. Part of our strategy over the last few years has been to connect the new Canada-NWT Labour Market Agreement which allows us to provide funding to people who are under-represented in the labour force. We've actually targeted a lot of our training to the income assistance clients. We do this through our regional service centres. Our career development officers work very closely with our client service officers through a referral process. We have had some specific projects that have taken place in some of the communities that targeted only income assistance clients. So we've removed them off of the Income Assistance Program, we've been able to provide them with some education and training and also a living allowance. We've seen, over the last five years, a difference in the number of youth between 19 and 29, the numbers have gone down slightly. We've been able to increase more support to seniors and persons with disabilities. So we're monitoring it closely and working closely with our labour market programs.

**MS. BISARO:** That's good to hear. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Speaking on page 10-27 we have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, just want to make the same comments as my colleagues here in regard to the income support. It's very disturbing to hear that the large clientele is between the ages of 19 and 29. That's very shocking and disappointing. Kind of contrary to Ms. Bisaro's comments, the line item for income assistance is down from last year's estimates by \$60,000. Is the department looking at, due to our economic downturn, the increase in our general rate application, the lack of jobs in the communities? Does the department see more applications for income assistance, and if so, how are they going to reflect it in their budget?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To respond we'll go to Mr. Devitt. We'll go to Ms. Iatridis for that one.

**MS. IATRIDIS:** Under the Income Assistance Program it is a statutory program and we do monitor the expenditures carefully each year. If we are not able to cover the costs, if they've gone up, then we do put forward forced growth submissions to cover the costs, given that it's a statutory requirement and we don't have a cap where we deny clients assistance when they're in need.

**MR. MOSES:** I really applaud the department for trying to get residents off of income support and anyone that's going through income support through their Productive Choices program. I just wanted to ask a question. Has this program ever been evaluated and have they ever seen the effectiveness of this program?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. We'll go to Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. We talked about the overall review back in 2007, made some changes, and now the Auditor General is going to make an actual review of our Income Assistance Program. More specifically on the Productive Choices program the Member is referring to, if it's working, what's working, what's not working. We have been exploring some areas, as well, within our department and of course we need some support from the communities and also Assembly Members. These are just options that we're throwing around.

We're individuals working in the community, especially for the elders, getting wood or firewood or fish nets and other activities that they've been adapted to in the community. Again, it's a liability issue that we have to be faced with. We have to deal with an axe and chainsaw and other equipment. Those are just some of the areas that we are exploring.

Our goal is, of course, to get people off income support. Every opportunity I get with my department, I'm always giving them a target that we need to get people off income support. I feel the

same as the Member does, and we'll do what we can to continue pushing that through Productive Choices and through labour market agreements. Individuals fall through the cracks. If they don't qualify for EI, then the funding is there for them. We're doing what we can to assist those individuals so they can pursue productive choices.

**MR. MOSES:** I just want to make a quick comment on the Productive Choices program. I do understand that when clients come and get funding, that the two choices they could possibly do is get some counselling or go do upgrading. In some instances what I've been hearing is that anyone who's going through income assistance will go get their counselling. It's not an effective counselling. They're going there to get, possibly, a document signed, and then they take it to the income support office to get their funding. So they're using up space which is really needed, because we have mental health issues in the communities. Those are where we need to find those instances and find better ways of dealing with it, because not all but we do have some people out there that know how to play the system, and when they're put into a program where they have to go to counselling, it takes away time for people who really need that counselling and who want to get that counselling. There's got to be a more effective way.

The same with the school system. Clients who are asked to go do their upgrading, they'll go to school, be there for the attendance, won't fully participate, and in some cases disrupt the other students who are trying to get the education. Those are two specific instances that I've heard about that really need to be addressed for people that aren't wanting to use these Productive Choices effectively, they're affecting other people's way of life and ones that really do want to succeed or get the help that they need.

I just wanted to make a comment on Productive Choices. In that regard, I'm really glad to see that the Auditor General is going to be reviewing this specific program and hopefully we can put actions to the recommendations that come out of that.

In regard to the four programs that are mentioned in this section here, would it be possible to get a breakdown of how many applications that we do get for the programs, for each specific program, and then how many are approved and at what percentage? Because in each program, I've talked to residents where they have been approved or have not gotten approved for certain programs like this that really do need it. At some point if the Minister would be willing to get that information to me, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I totally agree with the Member on the Productive Choices. We need to closely monitor what's working and what's not working. We realize that some individuals do take

advantage and some are legitimate individuals that want to succeed in life. We need to closely monitor that and make changes reflecting that. We'll continue to push that forward within our department.

And, yes, we'll provide more detailed information on the four program areas, a breakdown for the Member's review. We'll definitely do that. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Committee, were on page 10-27, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$39.668 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 10-28, Education, Culture and Employment, activity summary, income security, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$9.240 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 10-29, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, income security, active positions. Any questions? Page 10-30, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, Student Loan Revolving Fund. Any questions? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick question. I understand this revolving fund and I'm just wondering why the increase this year. I'm just trying to compare the two and, actually, I see the increase between '10-11 and '11-12 is roughly the same as between the most recent two years. I thought it was more, so I retract my question. No question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Education, Culture and Employment, information item, Student Loan Revolving Fund. Any questions? Being none, 10-32, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, education authority program and services. Any questions? Being none, 10-33. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With regard to the Dehcho Divisional Education Council, there's a reduction of four positions, as indicated in the details here. I'd just like an explanation from the Minister, please.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. There have been some slight changes in the funding to various district education authorities. It all comes down to formula funding. The enrolment's been down so that means some of the organizations are getting less money due to that fact. But we are closely monitoring that and working with the DEAs. Attendance is a big issue right now. It's a challenge how we can rectify that. We will

continue to work with that, but the explanation is due to enrolment.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Has the department been tracking why the student numbers have decreased at all? Is it the older age group? Is it the younger age group? What efforts are they taking to analyze this, and maybe if there are missing children from school, to perhaps get them back in school. What is the cause of these numbers and the reductions? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. For that we'll go to Mr. Devitt.

**MR. DEVITT:** Mr. Chair, enrolments have been decreasing in the Territories and, in fact, across the country because of declining birthrates. But in some communities, as well, as the Minister mentioned, it can be influenced by attendance, because we take that into account when doing enrolments as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Devitt. Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that our Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative also addresses attendance. First of all, I had asked for the breakdown if it was attendance or else reduction in enrolment. Was the department able to clearly answer that question? Because the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative was supposed to address attendance and getting our students back into the schools. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. For that question for the attendance, we'll go to Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, my understanding is that it is a combination, but at the same time, the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative is at the early stages. We've rolled out a couple programs. One is to deal with attendance. The other one is cultural orientation as mandatory. But others are coming along. It doesn't really reflect on this yet, but some of the schools have seen an increase just last year as well. We'll continue to work with this on ASA. All the parties are involved in these discussions as well. The DEAs are involved and are signatories to the ASA Initiative. Our goal is to improve and increase enrolment over the next few years. That is the overall plan. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'll certainly look to the ASA Initiative to track it properly and then do a good assessment, because I know that in our schools in the smaller communities, especially at the district, you see the loss of four positions, but a 0.5 position is a huge decrease in the very, very small communities at a time when we look to our education system and want to utilize as many teachers as we can. Having a reduction, even though it's based on formula, it still impacts our

school. I look forward to the progress of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. That is more of a comment. We will move on to Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note three here that the Yellowknife District No. 1 has been covering for K'alemi Dene School in my community of Ndilo in Weledeh. I know that that community is interested in activating their education authority which they have chosen in the past and they have covered by Yellowknife District No. 1. I would like to get an update from the Minister on whether or not that will be happening this year and where we are at in discussions on that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Minister Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, my understanding is that there have been discussions to that degree with the district education authority. There have been a lot of talks in making some changes when it comes to K'alemi Dene School in Ndilo having their own DEA. Those are discussions that we have been having. I believe there is a community survey that did occur that was provided to our attention. We consulted with other DEAs in Yellowknife, as well, especially with YK 1. We can provide more information to the Members. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate that information. Has there been a decision yet to reinstate that authority to Ndilo? Is it just a matter of when and figuring out the funding? Where are we at on that? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, I do remember signing a document, but I have to confirm that with the Members. I will be getting back to the Members on the actual status on our last discussions that we have had. We were getting close to the final stages of signing on, but I have to confirm that with the Members. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chair, I look forward to that update. Just more general backing off to a bigger picture here, are our educational authorities consistently within budget from year to year? I know, for example, in some of our health authorities there, they are very challenged and they end up with some annual deficits. Could I get a little update on how the education authorities work fiscally? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chair, we have been fortunate that we haven't seen much of a deficit within education district authorities. Yes, I realize that health and social services is a very challenging area and that they have been in deficit every now and then. Again, we have been fortunate that we haven't encountered a substantial deficit in this area. That is being closely monitored by my department, working closely with the district education authority and the district education

council as well. We will continue to address those matters. Every time we meet as board chairs, we discuss this. We will continue to do so. Mahsi.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chair, thank you for that information. That is good news, indeed. I am assuming that if there are deficits in one, they might be covered by another. I guess I am interested in this. I won't belabour it here, though, but I would like, from the Minister, a bit of an update, say for the last fiscal year, just as an example on how we handle evening out those things, dealing with the rare deficit that might occur, just to know there is a mechanism in place and how it works. That is all. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We can definitely provide the information on the process, if there is a deficit, how we balance that within the DEA and DEC. By all means, we will provide more information on that. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Committee, we are on page 10-33. Education, Culture and Employment, information item, details of funding allocated to education authorities. Are there any questions? Being none, page 10-34, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, education authorities, active positions. Are there any questions? Being none, page 10-36, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, Aurora College Program. Are there any questions? Being none, page 10-37, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, Aurora College funding allocation. Are there any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a question. There is an increase of it looks like \$200,000 or so. It is for buildings and works, from what I can tell. Could I get an explanation as to what that money is going to be used for? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Devitt.

**MR. DEVITT:** Mr. Chair, the money in buildings and works is largely for increases in leases that the college has. There is also a small increase in custodians associated with the Western Arctic Research Centre.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 10-37, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, Aurora College funding allocation. Any more further questions? Being none, page 10-38, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Are there any questions? Being none, page 10-39, Education, Culture and Employment. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question here in regard to the Nunavut-NWT agreement for museum and archives collection. We are spending, I presume from here, \$190,000. I

wondered where the revenue shows up. I presume Nunavut is paying us for this service. I didn't see it on the revenue page, I think page 9 of the document. It didn't show it to me. Could I find out where it is shown? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Devitt.

**MR. DEVITT:** Mr. Chair, work performed on behalf of others is not considered revenue. We have \$190,000. It comes in as payment for services that equal \$190,000 so it is all completely offsetting. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Education, Culture and Employment, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Are there any questions? Page 10-40, Education, Culture and Employment, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** We will return to page 10-7. Due to the deferred motion of 10-17, does the committee agree they will defer the final consideration of Department of Education, Culture and Employment?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I would like to thank Minister Lafferty. I would like to thank Mr. Devitt and Ms. Iatridis for their time today. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort them out of the Chamber. We will be continuing with the next department.

Okay, committee members, I'll just direct your attention to section 11, Transportation. I will be going to the Minister of Transportation. Does the Minister have any opening comments?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Then does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Go ahead, Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to present the 2012-2013 Main Estimates for the Department of Transportation. The main estimates itemize the department's requirements to carry out activities detailed in our annual business plan. This plan will continue to protect our transportation infrastructure as we work toward our primary mission for providing for the safe, secure, accessible and reliable movement of people and goods, while looking toward the future and responding to the needs of the communities and industry.

The department's main estimates propose an operations expenditures budget of \$120.4 million, which is an 8.7 percent increase from the 2011-12 Main Estimates. The increase is largely due to the debt service payment associated with the Deh Cho Bridge which will be part of the operations budget once the bridge is complete.

In 2012-13 the department will continue to champion partnerships with Aboriginal and northern governments toward improving the transportation system, such as the Mackenzie Valley all-weather highway. The partnerships we foster along the valley and to the Arctic Coast are instrumental in moving the project forward. As indicated in the Commissioner's opening address, this government is committed to doing things differently, which is evident by the Department of Transportation reaching out to involve Northerners in project development right from project inception. The project description reports for the southern portions of the highway, completed with Aboriginal groups along the valley, are being combined into one document that could be submitted to regulators for initial screening, pending future funding. The department is continuing to work on potential next steps, including seeking additional funding to advance this project through the environmental review process. The added bonus of the Mackenzie Valley Highway project is the common transportation corridor that may be shared with the Mackenzie Valley Gas Project and the Fibre Optic Link Project, supporting these two other strategic infrastructure priorities of this Assembly.

The department will continue working on required planning for the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway. The environmental review is underway and is currently in the technical review phase. The draft environmental impact statement has been subjected to detailed scrutiny by the review board and interested parties. The assessment examined the impact of the proposed development, the significance of those impacts, proposed mitigation measures, and follow-up and monitoring programs. This technical review identified a number of information gaps and commitments for additional follow-up work that will be addressed this summer. We will continue to keep Members informed as the department moves forward with project planning activities.

A sustainable future for our territory includes responsible stewardship of the land and environment. The Department of Transportation's O and M budget includes \$142,000 in incremental funding from the Building Canada Plan for continuing research to address infrastructure challenges due to climate change. Various best research initiatives related to climate change are currently underway and a Climate Change Adaptation Plan will be completed this summer. The Department of Transportation has also

partnered with Transport Canada to help lead two national networks of expertise on climate change, one focusing on permafrost and the other on Arctic waters. These networks bring together researchers, scientists and practitioners to develop adaptation strategies and technologies to help mitigate the impacts of climate change. These activities will return dividends with valuable information leading to best practices for mitigating and adapting infrastructure to a changing climate.

In 2012-13 the department will continue construction of the Deh Cho Bridge. The bridge is the largest piece of transportation infrastructure in the NWT and the first to span the Mackenzie River. The historic opening will herald a new era of all-season access for people and goods into the North Slave region while increasing the reliability of access into the Slave Geological Province, thereby supporting the NWT economy and communities. The bridge is now in the final phase of construction, with the installation of the second tower and cables nearing completion. The bridge decking, grouting, paving and abutments and approaches are planned to be completed during the warm weather this summer and fall. The construction schedule remains a critical risk factor and the contractor has deployed extra workers over this next period to help meet critical milestones. The department is monitoring construction progress and costs very closely and is working with the contractor toward achieving the fall completion date.

Forced growth accounts for \$1.198 million of the increase to the department's O and M budget. The additional funding covers increasing fixed costs to deliver programs in various NWT regions. Much of the department's forced growth is attributed to operation and maintenance contract increases in the airport, highway and marine activities, as well as additional operational pressures related to a more rigorous regulatory environment. Such investments are critical to maintain public safety and the integrity of the NWT highway system.

To increase employment opportunities where they are needed most, the department will continue in delivering the Marine Training Program, the Aviation Career Development Program and apprenticeship positions, with the goal of increasing the number of Northerners training and working in transportation-related fields.

The department has also made significant gains in the area of prevention. The Northwest Territories has been fatality-free on our roads, trails and waterways for more than 15 months and counting. I sincerely hope this unprecedented safety streak continues. Drive Alive, the department's education awareness program, continues to advocate for individuals to make safer choices, including wearing seatbelts, helmets and personal flotation devices. Recent legislative changes that prohibit the use of

hand-held devices are now in effect and should help to reduce incidents of distracted driving and help keep our roads safer.

As a department which provides a broad range of services to the public, I also wanted to note that the main estimates are forecasting an increase in general revenues for the 2012-13 year of approximately \$500,000. The revenue increase is representative of the modest traffic increase projected on our highway and air systems and the resulting revenues related to user fees such as landing fees and commercial vehicle registrations. The department is currently conducting a rigorous review of all service fees to ensure they are fair, equitable and reasonable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a short update on the Department of Transportation's main estimates. I look forward to discussing them with you in detail. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Does the Minister have witnesses you wish to bring into the House?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Yes, I do.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Can I get the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring the witnesses into the House, please?

Thank you. Minister Ramsay, would you like to introduce your witnesses to the committee here?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right I've got the deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, Mr. Russell Neudorf and to my left the assistant deputy minister, Department of Transportation, Mr. Daniel Auger. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'd like to welcome the witnesses into the House. I hope you've caught your breath. I saw you racing in here on your bike, so that's good. We're going to be opening up the floor here to general comments. What we've been doing here is opening comments to the Members, and the Minister will have an opportunity for reply at the end. We'd ask that the Minister take notes and hope to address the individual Members if there are specific questions in the opening comments. With that, I will open up the floor to general comments on Transportation starting with Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I won't go on too long. I look forward to deliberation as we go through line by line. I press the case for most particularly Highway No. 7. I've been leading that charge for some time now. I look forward to, I'm going to have to agree with government, I guess, and look forward to the fall deliberations to get some capital funding and hope

that we do get our fair share to address highway concerns on Highway No. 7.

Just with that, it's just around the corner and I'm pleased that the Minister of Transportation will be travelling with me down Highway No. 7 this coming Friday and I look forward to that. The constituents are anticipating that visit as well. That's something that I think is important for any Minister, is to see and feel the issues that are out there in the constituencies.

I'm still dismayed that there's no money in this year's capital budget, but I do look forward to maximizing the capital carryovers that will happen. I think about \$1.3 million. We'll make our best use of them this year.

I think earlier in the year, too, I think the January-February session, I got the commitment from the Minister to expend all these funds before August-September when we run into rain issues. I just, once again, would like the Minister to reiterate that, that he will convey to his department that they'll complete the work that's scheduled for the Nahendeh riding. I think there's also some chipsealing around Checkpoint towards Fort Simpson that's got to be completed when the weather's good, not when it's bad.

Constituents have always raised with me that due to the wet roads, the chipseal falls apart quickly. There's probably no need for that. Once again, it would be timely to capitalize the early time this season to complete our construction work. There should be no issue and I think that we would look forward to that. That was one of the commitments and I've conveyed that to my constituents, as well, that the commitment is there and I certainly look forward to the early work being done.

There are other concerns, as well, out there, especially driving up to the continuation of the highway up to Wrigley. It's gravel. In some places it's very thin. I think in the past I've actually identified those kilometre areas for upgrades or widening. I'm not too sure if it's on the books either, but the residents of Wrigley want to see completion of their projects there as well. I know there's some maintenance issues scheduled there. I'm not too sure if there are any culverts at all, but the culverts that were being worked on last year really improved the highway system up towards Wrigley and we certainly look forward to more work on that section of the highway as well.

With that, I just wanted to raise those few issues here in the opening comments and I look forward to further deliberation as we move into the budget.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. On general comments we have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Transportation department is going to be a very

important department in the next five to 10 years from now. I see that there's an 8.7 percent increase from 2011-2012 Main Estimates and I'm hoping that the increase will be higher and larger in the coming years.

I do want to take this time here to let the Transportation Minister know that we really need to get specific down to some of the highway strategies for the upcoming years. We have put some money aside already for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Specifically, the federal government's contribution to the Tuk-Inuvik highway. That highway is on the books, there's commitment, and that's a fact.

The other fact is that the Minister of Transportation and this afternoon the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment talked about the oil and gas potential activity in the Northwest Territories. He talked about the potential that may happen in the Sahtu. We need to look at our infrastructure priorities and nailing down some specific infrastructure priorities in transportation in the Sahtu. That will be our next priority. I think that needs to be discussed.

Ottawa needs to know that we have our priorities set here in infrastructure and that we would like to see that part of the highway that's been planned through the PDR and the other good work being a priority of this government and this Transportation Minister possibly looking at a road from Norman Wells south. Start working to be supported by industry or government. We need to see that this is going to take some effort from this department and put this into a new highway or from Wrigley south. Either way, we need to get the portion of that highway system on the go and up and running.

That is sort of the hard statement I'm making here. We're here for three years. We have limited time here. We need to get these on the books. Mr. Miltenberger said there's a surplus of \$74 million and that the GNWT has plans for the surplus in this year's and next year's budget. They need to start focusing on expanding roads, schools, airports and other public service facilities. I'd like to see the government's priorities for infrastructure. He's talking about starting focusing on expanding roads. For me, expanding roads means building new roads. The one, Tuk-Inuvik, that's already on the books. We can start with other priorities. Ottawa needs to know what our other priorities are. What infrastructure priorities. We don't have the means to take out the resources. We're lacking, surely lacking the infrastructure and support from this government to support this Northwest Territories economy. We need roads and marine services support. We need to look at that.

On the Northwest Territories/Yukon border there is a project going up there called the Selwyn-Chihong Resources. They're putting permits in place to extract the lead-zinc. It's one of the world's largest

deposits of lead-zinc. Mind you, there's about 85 to 90 percent of the mine on the Yukon border, but they're using the Northwest Territories section to move the lead-zinc out down to the southern markets. They're putting in the plan to build an all-weather road on the Northwest Territories side. They are downsizing because of the world market, just like the Mackenzie Gas Project is downsizing because of the natural gas prices. APG has downsized their office and one company has pulled out of the project and Imperial Oil has downsized their project. Selwyn Resources is going to use that section of the road. It's going to hook to the North Canol Road going to the Yukon. We need to know if this government is going to put a few graders or a CAT or a truck to maintain that small section of the road. In our books it's still our road. As much as you say no, no, this and that, it's still on our books. In our books it's still our road. Unless you take it right off and say it's no longer our road, then I believe you. Right now you're minimizing it by telling me it's not going to be used much. Once Selwyn puts that road in and they start taking out that lead-zinc, that's going to be a busy road.

I think you have a lot of surplus. You've got a lot of old dump trucks. I've seen them in some of your garages. Some of the old vehicles are still being used by them. You have good mechanics because they keep running and working well. You have a good staff there, Mr. Minister. They work hard. Kudos to them.

I'm looking at putting some of that old surplus there. I keep getting lots of reasons why we aren't able or can't and just won't do it. We need to support that. It is a private road. Selwyn has a private road but they are going to go onto our road and there are going to be a lot of tourists coming through there to get to the Canol. That's the Promised Land. I'd like him to see the work in that area.

The resources in the North are very rich. Yellowknife is very rich, very fortunate. They have a lot of things going for them. Very good for them. The department is doing some pretty good work. I support the Minister and staff. Get some good contractors doing the winter road. They do a good job on those roads.

We have good Aboriginal contractors who have negotiated good contracts with the department to build capacity in our regions. The principles of the negotiated contract are working. I want to support that with our contractors. I have seen where contractors have come from outside of the Sahtu that try to get into the Sahtu with low prices that just about drove our companies to their graves. Our boys stay there. Our women stay there. We pay the taxes, we pay the fuel and we live there. Thank God that negotiated contracts keep our companies alive. I want to say to the Minister we support – the other side is making me laugh. I want to say to the

Minister that the principles of the negotiated contract have worked for us. That's what I wanted to say. I have seen it in my nine years. I want to say, continue working with the contractors in the Sahtu and other communities.

I have other questions for the Minister as we go page by page.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. On general comments I have Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Department of Transportation is one of the larger budgets and one of the most interesting, and one of the ones that I probably get the most calls about.

One of the first issues I want to bring up with the department in the processes that they have, I know the department has reviewed and tried to deliberate on how to implement their contracts, their tenders and their projects. I've been getting a lot of complaints on the fact that a lot of the projects are getting overwhelmingly large and being bundled together. Whether it's the culvert projects or whether it's signage or whether it's some of the drainage work that's being done, it's all being lumped into one big contract. Some of the smaller contractors and some of the manufacturers aren't able to bid on the department's contracts as they stand. I'd like them to spend more attention to allowing northern content to be maximized.

Along the same line of thought in the maximization of northern content are the negotiated contracts. I understand the department's concept of trying to keep the work in the North and often to the Aboriginal companies or northern companies, but we also have to make sure that those companies go forward and maximize their expenditures in the North, in the region.

Some of the issues that the department is working with is the Tuk to Inuvik highway, and I look forward to the information that the department is going to spend on getting what those costs will be, the future debate and discussions with the federal government on this 75/25 split, and is that 75/25 split the same amount if that budget goes way up above our estimated costs right now.

I'm also looking forward to, like my colleague from the Sahtu, the continued discussion and the future plans for the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the future plans for that project.

The Deh Cho Bridge, obviously, one of the big issues for the incoming Minister, I would think, as he was a big advocate of getting this bridge done as quickly as possible so we can mitigate some of the high costs that are already there. Along with that bridge, I have some concerns on how the toll system will be set up in the future here, what the costs are going to be to the general public, and how

that's going to affect contractors and shipping companies.

One of the other areas that I have concern with is the safety programs. The Drive Alive, I think it's going well, but I think we need to work on some of the highways that are of concern. I will give a plug for Highway No. 7. I think it's a key factor for tourism in the south and also Yellowknife. I think we have a big group of people that travel the Alaska Highway that are looking for ways to come back or visit another territory, and that's one avenue. One of the issues out there is that Highway No. 7 is passable most of the time in the summertime, but lots of time you have to put it with the disclosure if it's not raining, if it hasn't been raining, it's fine to go down. But if it isn't, then there are a lot of people that are not recommending to travel it. That's part of the year.

I'd like to give the department a little bit of a compliment. This is one of the rare departments where the jobs are out in the regions. I think it's natural just because of the business they do, the grader work, the work out on the roads has to be done regionally, so I commend them on that. That's one of the rare departments that I see that we actually have a decentralized department.

From Hay River's perspective, we'd like to see some additional dredging being done in Hay River, dock maintenance, some dollars spent in that area. We're seeing more and more difficulties with ships, whether it be large ships such as NTCL's boats or the fishing industry having difficulty, even recreational vehicles having difficulty getting in and out of the waterways easily. We need to look at finding dollars to do some of that maintenance.

One of the areas that the department has just newly introduced is the new motor vehicle system. I've heard lots of complaints about the system. I think it was launched a little early and it needs to be updated. I think, again, the regions need some control and they're not given those controls to change the system. The system is closed in and is being controlled by Yellowknife and is being handled by Yellowknife. That's fine if Yellowknife is available immediately, but if Yellowknife is backlogged with complaints, then the system in the region is backlogged and those customers are backlogged. We need to get that system working better.

One of the other areas of concern in this department is the large carryovers. It is a large budget, and I understand it's been a large budget in the last few years, even larger, but we have large percentages of the budget that are being carried over. I think we need to make sure that those numbers go down and we get those dollars out to the region, especially when we have an economic downturn right now in the territory. I think we need to put that money out to the territory and let the

contractors have that work, and like I indicated earlier, make sure that we're maximizing northern economy and making sure that the money is staying in the North. I think this department is a large economic driver and I hope that we get all the carryovers completed this year.

I'll have more questions in the detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Speaking to general comments, I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll keep them brief here. I know that the department is doing some work in the fuel efficiency area, particularly in the marine transportation and in some of the greening of the transportation facilities. This is good work that needs to continue and, in fact, needs to be government-wide. For the Department of Transportation, the potential gains compared to the emissions of greenhouse gases, for example, are pretty modest. So, much more serious is the greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts from transportation activity itself.

I'd like to know what this department is doing to ensure net emissions from transportation decline over time as per our goals of the greenhouse strategy, the goals of this government and hopefully all governments around the world, and particularly what programs of support does this department have for businesses and residents. What sorts of standards are they providing? What education and what legislation is being considered ultimately to achieve this?

Just sort of related to that, I want to comment briefly on one part of the Minister's opening remarks where he refers a couple times to mitigating the impacts of climate change. It's presented almost as a positive thing, and to some degree it is, because we need to adapt to the problems that climate change is bringing to us, but the basic message cannot be confused here that climate change has impacts. When we have to mitigate those impacts, those are costly and those are costing us more and more every year. What we really want to do is focus. We need to mitigate the impacts of climate change, but more important than that, according to all the science, we need to mitigate climate change itself. As with all of our programs, prevention is the rule.

I'm going to leave it at that. Thanks for this opportunity.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Speaking to general comments, I have Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to the budget for Transportation, a few things that I'm concerned that aren't in the budget. One of the big issues for the people of Aklavik is the access road to Willow River. I was hoping to see that in this

budget but, hopefully, within the fall, during business plans next time, we could try to find some sort of funds to allocate to the community to proceed with that project.

Also, one thing that's not in the budget this year is the funds to allocate to maintain the receiver on the Rat Pass. That's only \$10,000 that we're talking about. Many people in the Mackenzie Delta rely on the Rat Pass channel for communications. It's a major safety issue. And not only in the Mackenzie Delta, but we have people in the Inuvik riding, as well, that make use of that channel.

Also, under the marine operations, in the past it's been always a practice to hire locally when working near a community. I'll just use Tsiigehtchic as an example. At the moment, whenever we are either taking the ferry out of the water or launching the ferry, we bring people in from other communities. The community is dead set against that. They want to see their people working during those many jobs in the smaller communities that are seasonal. They would like to see their people work in there.

At the moment, the department is doing a very good job on the Dempster Highway, I must say, compared to the highway on the Yukon side. Our highway, I believe, is much better quality. It is a lot safer for our residents. They are doing a good job in that field. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Are there any further general comments? Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will just provide a couple of quick ones. First of all, I see there is no mention about the work being done on Highway No. 4, unless I missed it. I will also say that I don't notice much being planned. I know this is not a capital budget, but there is no mention of Highway No. 7 at this time either. I think these are two major projects that seem to be put on the backburner. As I realize, this is not a capital budget, but the fact is that these are major initiatives. There is one all left off the table and one is being worked on behind the scenes. You would think that Highway No. 4 would get a little mention in the Minister's opening comments considering it was being hailed as a triumph of opportunity a few weeks ago.

The other thing is I am surprised how little discussion about the Deh Cho Bridge is on these particular opening comments. I see that they highlighted the decking, the grouting and whatnot. One of the things that needs to be heard in the public is the fact is the milestone of it going to open this fall going to be met. I think that is a critical question that needs to be asked.

The Minister, when he was a Member, that is, asked a lot of good questions about scour rock and a hole in the pier, and I think those questions still

remain outstanding. If the Minister's replying to my opening comments would update his... Are they fishing off the scour rock in Norman Wells by now? Will they be talked about regularly?

As far as the Inuvik-Tuk highway goes, I am glad it is certainly mentioned here, because I think that preliminary work needs to be done. I stand by that. I will be steadfast on that initiative, that that work needs to be done, but repeatedly, I know I asked and committee had asked for milestones in our own sense the matrix of opportunities where we start seeing milestones passed and certainly voted on. That still remains outstanding, that request that was made in February that the project would have some identified milestones so that we would know what the project looked like in advance of being told, oh, by the way, we have passed too much. We have reached the halfway point. We have to keep going. I think that is only fair to the taxpayer that we know those things. That was at least as I understood it, that was the commitment made by the Minister in the committee. It still remains outstanding. It is a bit of an important point not to miss, because how often we heard about the Deh Cho Bridge, that we have reached a certain point, we couldn't go back. The fear is this is our second time around on these particular projects, and I would certainly like to see well in advance where these primary points are that, when we are voting on them, we know what we are voting for and we see and realize what risk we have put in front of us and certainly what we will be putting behind us at the particular time.

Mr. Chair, it is all I have to say on this particular topic of transportation at this particular time. I certainly look forward to hearing a future development about that potential partnership up the valley. Still, not a lot of details have come forward. Even for myself, I would like to request something formal, whether it is a briefing note or a package of some sort that addresses the issue that is being worked on up there. I often hear just little pokes, something is being looked at, some discussions happening, but I wouldn't mind getting a sense of what is happening. If I could be provided some information on that particular subject about this so-called development of a partnership to build the highway, that would be quite helpful. I would be surprised if committee members didn't want that type of information as well. When I say committee in this context, I refer to all 11 Members on the Members' side.

At this particular time I have nothing further. I shall and probably will in some cases have comments on specific pages, more maybe on some, less on others. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Continuing on general comments, we will turn back to Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to ask the Minister... In his opening comments, he talked about the activity. This is an O and M operational budget. I want to take the opportunity for the Minister if there is somewhere later on in the detail that would speak to looking at having some Transportation permanent positions in the Sahtu, somewhere down the line that the Minister can come back to this House or through some briefings. They are Transportation for highways. It does come out of Fort Simpson's operation and our airport's Transportation comes out of Inuvik. I think we have arrived at a place where we should be able to, could be able to, and can't have the ability to have our own operations in the Sahtu and manage our own affairs, so to speak. I look forward to some type of discussion or initiative on the operation plans. When do you think it could be done in stages? It can be done over time. We need to see some movement. I look forward to that.

The other one is I want to ask – I wonder if the Minister could help me here – how did we arrive at 75/25 split with the territorial government? Is there a policy that we have or is there a policy within the federal government that says definitely we would pay the 75 percent on projects like the Inuvik-Tuk highway, the territorial government would pay 25 percent? Can the Minister show me a policy or is there just a letter or indication from the federal government saying this is what we stick to, because if I am reading in the papers and if the numbers are going up on the northern portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, then it brings me some concern. Of course we want to support, but when the numbers are starting to fall apart and there are new numbers coming up just like the Deh Cho Bridge, we have some concerns here. We need to ask those hard questions to the Minister to satisfy our need for if things are changing, if things are not going to stay the same all the time, because those numbers affect our own needs for our own infrastructure in our own communities.

I think the federal government also needs to know that we are moving ahead on these projects. I am looking forward to when the Minister opens the Deh Cho Bridge. It is a good thing. It went through a lot of turmoil like a washing machine because of all the stuff. That is part of learning. That is part of growth. We are doing the same thing with the Inuvik-Tuk highway. We do probably other major projects like that too. Not to shy away from it, that says a lot. We are a young territory. It makes things a little difficult to construct sometimes in the Northwest Territories. So I would ask the Minister about the 25/75 split and if Ottawa is solid on that. Do we know that the federal government is solid saying yes, they are going to cut a deal with 75 and you guys take care of the 25, that's it? So when the project begins, the Tuk-Inuvik road that we're not 26 percent and

they're not 74 percent. We stay at 25 and they stay at 75. Can we hold their feet to the fire on that ratio? How strong are we? So that's what I wanted to ask the Minister and it's a fair question, I think. At the end of the day, if the numbers are not there for us, will the Deh Cho Bridge go over the \$200 million mark? Right now we're just about there. If I'm going to go into that saga, I want to see that construction piece finished.

So for me, Mr. Chair, those are my general comments until we go to detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Returning to general comments, I have Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was just one more thing I had forgotten to mention and I could be mistaken on this particular situation and I have no energy to run upstairs to go research it quickly, but I'm sure I read in the newspaper an advertisement, a position for some type of project officer or manager on the Inuvik-Tuk highway to be posted in Inuvik, and I did think that that was a little advanced in full consideration that the project hasn't been approved yet.

Again, as I said earlier, I certainly supported the project description and sort of some of the environmental work that needs to be done in advance. That work needs to be done, it has to be done and that work is critical in order to make the types of assessments in budgets and decisions for us to plan to go forward. So that's why I don't have any particular issue with that work being done. But it did seem a little odd, from my perspective, and I have to admit I'm sure I wasn't the only one that noticed it that looking for a project officer or manager. That may not be the right phraseology and I would hope we wouldn't get stuck on that type of problem, but the fact is that it seems like there was one position being sought after in Transportation.

I think, ironically, Mr. Chairman, wouldn't it be funny if we ran out and hired somebody and the project was delayed another year or two? So I guess the assumption is, has the department decided that the project is going ahead before Assembly approval, and if they could also confirm about that particular position that's being sought after at this particular time in advance of an approved project. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. That appears to conclude general comments. We'll give the opportunity to the Minister to respond. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll start at the end. It's better for my memory that way. The first issue that Mr. Hawkins had, I just wanted to clarify. There is a tremendous amount of work that the department is putting into the Inuvik-Tuk highway. That was a director-level

position. It was advertised, it was subsequently cancelled and we're managing internally for now with a gentleman in that position. So that's that part.

Also, I wanted to mention, if I could, the Deh Cho Bridge, and Member Hawkins had brought this up as well. What we're trying to do right now is put together the most comprehensive, up-to-date package on the status of the project, and it's my belief that we will be able to get before committee during this sitting of the House so that we can provide committee and Regular Members with an up-to-date, factual, comprehensive report on the Deh Cho Bridge. That is before we go to our summer assemblies and the House recesses for the summer. It's important that Members get that level of detail and we will be discussing the Deh Cho Bridge much more during this sitting.

Also, Member Hawkins talked about Highway No. 7 and I know a couple of other Members had talked about Highway No. 7 as well. Again, this is an O and M budget. Going forward we'd made a commitment to the Member for Nahendeh that we will take a serious look at Highway No. 7 and we will be doing that. I'm looking forward to travelling with MLA Menicoche to Nahendeh on Friday to have a firsthand look at Highway No. 7 and I look forward to the meetings that we have set up there with community leaders as well.

Moving on to, I guess I'll go to Mr. Yakeleya. I'll answer Mr. Yakeleya's comments. I know Mr. Yakeleya has often wanted to have an office, a Transportation office set up in the Sahtu. I think the best way we can get that accomplished is to have a highway run right through the Sahtu, an all-weather road down the Mackenzie Valley. I think that would be the impetus to really take a good look at staffing positions in the Sahtu when we do have an all-weather road going through there. That's not to say that we shouldn't be looking at opportunities. Again, that's going to be an exercise the government is going through on positions and where things are located. That could be an opportunity, as well, but certainly as we go forward here I think that's probably where that's at.

On the 75/25 split, we've heard that from federal officials. It's based on a precedent from the Building Canada Plan and the \$150 million commitment. That's where the 75/25 split would come in. If the costs of the Inuvik-Tuk highway are more, 25 percent, if we have to look at putting in more than \$75 million or \$80 million, then we would have to discuss with the federal government what our belief where the split was and we were of the belief that it was 75/25. So that's the premise that we're working off of. We're still doing the geotechnical work, the environmental assessment is still underway, it's gone through the technical review. We will get a clear indication and determination on what the final costs will be. We'd be just guessing right now. We

could throw many different numbers out there, but I think until we go through that EA process and find where the aggregate is, and that of course is the biggest cost in constructing a road, then we'll get a better determination on what the costs are.

Mr. Yakeleya also talked about the statement I made earlier today on the petroleum resource in the Sahtu, and again, I know the Member was listening closely to that statement. We did put a plug in there for all-weather roads in the Sahtu and how integral they are to the economic growth and prosperity in the Northwest Territories and in the Sahtu specifically. I do believe that with resource development we will see a push toward the development of our transportation infrastructure – the two go hand in hand – at the earliest opportunity. I've had discussions with both deputies with Transportation and ITI on trying to get in front of the Sahtu Explorer Group at the earliest possible time and begin some preliminary discussions on the future of transportation infrastructure in the Sahtu. As the resource there, the Canol shale formation is proven up. I do believe we have some very, very good upside to discussions with industry on the development of transportation infrastructure in the Sahtu. I look forward to those discussions. I know the Member is excited about that possibility, as well, so we'll continue to work toward that.

In the meantime, we're getting some positive indications from CanNor on funding to continue with the work up and down the valley. That's an important next step.

I'll go now to... Mr. Menicoche had talked about Highway No. 7 and I think I've responded that we are interested in seeing some capital funding for Highway No. 7. We're going to have to put our minds around how we get a sizeable capital program in there. The highway itself needs a complete rehabilitation that could cost upwards of \$200 million. We need to make sure that we have money on a go-forward basis that's going to address the concerns there on an annual basis. I'm looking forward to discussions on that again this fall.

We have been blessed recently with some warm, dry weather and that hopefully is going to allow us to get, as soon as that road dries out, the \$1.3 million in carryover funding for Highway No. 7. We'll be able to get that to work as soon as we possibly can. Again, if the weather holds out and the road continues to dry, I know there was a big snowstorm and a lot of precipitation there a couple weeks ago. We're hoping that the weather does stay well.

On the Wrigley portion of the road we do not have any capital today for improvements on that road. We did see some improvements with the Enbridge spill. There was some money that went into improvements on the road. That highway obviously has a very low traffic volume. If it does become a

bigger issue, I think again through the capital planning process we could try to identify funds for that section of the highway.

I'll move now to, I believe it was Mr. Bouchard, talking about larger projects and how smaller companies are having a hard time getting in the door and how we need to maximize northern content. I agree with the Member. We do have to take a look at this. I think going forward there have been changes to the Business Incentive Policy recently that will take a look at where subcontractors are coming from. I think that's going to help. Speaking just for the Department of Transportation's contracts, 91.5 percent of our contracts in value – and this is in the fiscal year 2011-2012 – went to northern and local companies. I believe the department is doing a very good job on trying to keep money in the Northwest Territories. That to me is a primary goal and objective, is to keep money circulating in the northern economy. By spending 91.5 percent in 2011-2012, I think that's a good indication that DOT is doing just that.

Mr. Bouchard also talked about the Deh Cho Bridge. Obviously the expectation is that it will be open in November. We're optimistic again that that is going to happen. We will, as I mentioned in response to Mr. Hawkins, have a full and thorough presentation to Regular Members during this session and I look forward to discussing that project much more in depth when we get that opportunity.

Also, we are trying to help organize some dredging in the port of Hay River. I know how important that work is to the town of Hay River and to the marine operations in that town. We're looking forward to doing that. Eventually we are going to need a sizable amount of capital dollars and we're going to continue to press the federal government on the requirement for money to dredge the port of Hay River and we'll continue to work towards that.

On the motor vehicle information system, we did receive some complaints early on in the rollout of the new system. The Member raised it again today and that was the first time I've heard it in some time. With any new system there are going to be a few growing pains and we're going to need to work through those growing pains. I believe we will get there. We'll see those concerns decline over time and I believe they have.

I agree with the Member and I believe maybe another one of the Members had mentioned the amount of carryovers. We really need to address that and I agree with the Member. We need to figure out a way to ensure that the capital dollars that we have and the projects that we have are going to be delivered in a timely fashion. I hope that going forward, and as Minister I take this very seriously and I want to see the amount that the department's carrying over on an annual basis reduced. I think once we get over the hurdle of

opening the Deh Cho Bridge this fall, I think we'll see some more push on getting the projects that we have completed and I look forward to doing that.

Mr. Blake talked about the access road to Willow River. Again, we have supplied some money through the Community Access Road Program over the past two years. I believe it's in the second year of funding on the PDR, the development of that for the access road to Willow River. This is similar to the road to Source 177 in Tuktoyaktuk. It's going to be about 18 to 19 million dollars. If it's determined to be a real need in the Mackenzie Delta for the town of Aklavik, that is something that we will have to look at down the road.

Also we're looking at options with some contractors on maintaining the receiver at Rat Pass open.

I'll take the Member's comments about seeing the people from the community doing the work on the ferries. He didn't get into specifics but I will look at that and maybe I can talk to the Member and see if there are some specifics that he has. Maybe we can go from there.

I wanted to thank Mr. Blake for his comments on the work that's done on the NWT side of the Dempster. That is a very nice thing for him to say and we appreciate that. I've also had discussions with my counterpart in the Yukon talking about the discrepancy between the NWT side and the Yukon side in terms of maintenance. I brought that to his attention. We'll see if Yukon is going to put some more effort and impetus on their section of the Dempster across the NWT border.

Mr. Bromley talked about climate change and if we don't mitigate it's going to cost us more and more. I agree with the Member. I think we are doing the best that we can. I know it's a big issue but it's one that the department takes seriously. The federal government regulates fuel efficiency. Our job, I believe, with all the equipment and operations that the department has, is to educate not only our staff but the public. That's where I see our role and I think with some of the initiatives that the department has taken I think we are taking a lead role across government in doing some of this work. I'm excited about the fact that we're involved in some of these national organized efforts on looking at climate change and the impact on infrastructure. Again, I think that is going to help us as we continue to look at the impact climate change has on us. I agree with the Member, we need to look at the cause of climate change not just how we react to it.

I do think I've covered everybody that provided opening comments. If I missed anything, if Members wanted to get to that during the detail, I'd be more than happy to expand on anything at that time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Committee Members, noting the clock I will now rise and report progress. We'd like to thank the witnesses here for your time today and we'll be continuing... We'll be seeing you shortly after the break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Welcome back, committee. Mr. Minister, you have witnesses to return to the House?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Welcome back, Mr. Neudorf and Mr. Auger. Committee, are there any other opening general comments? Are we agreed general comments are concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Okay, we will move on to detail. We will turn to page 11-7, which is deferred until we've considered the rest of the budget. We'll move to 11-8, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Seeing no questions, we'll move on to page 11-9, information item, revenue summary. Seeing no questions, we will move on to page 11-9, information item, revenue summary. No questions. We will move on to page 11-10, information item, active position summary. Any questions on this page? We'll move on, committee. Page 11-13, activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$10.228 million. Are we agreed? Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to ask the department, any monies left over from the Building Canada Plan, any of those monies left, what projects are being used during this fiscal budget year? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Neudorf.

**MR. NEUDORF:** The majority of the Building Canada Plan is capital and we have three projects that are with new funding underneath the Building Canada Plan, Highway No. 4 project, Highway No. 3, and I believe some more money on Highway No. 1. In the O and M budget there's just the one project that's funded underneath the Building Canada and that's the research and development related to climate change. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** According to calculations, there's \$142,000 remaining in research and development funding from Building Canada Plan. Can the

department indicate what they're going to be doing with those funds?

**MR. NEUDORF:** The \$142,000 is the incremental funding that we're getting this year. We already would have had \$256,000 in the base, so the two make about \$400,000 that we have in the Building Canada Plan for research and development related to climate change. We have a number of projects that are underway already that will get funded from that including preparation of a climate change adaptation plan, which is the big project that we have. Then there's a little bit of monitoring, beginning to do some baseline information gathering related to the Inuvik-Tuk highway. We want to get a good baseline of information on that so that if that project does go ahead we can monitor. Then, of course, we're also involved with some other initiatives that are national level including a couple of networks of expertise.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Keeping in the theme of this page under corporate services, the recent ban on the use of hand-held devices under the new distraction driving law, can the Minister or designate indicate some of the results of these findings, and if so, when will these results be made public for people to view?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's still very early. It's only been almost six months. To date, there have been 30 charges laid under the distracted driving legislation to date in the territory. For a further breakdown, I suppose we could find out by community for the Member if he likes.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** The other question that I asked was when will these numbers be made available to the public. Is this going to be a website broadcast or something that DOT will have on their website to continuously update residents of the Northwest Territories?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We don't do that for other offences under the Motor Vehicles Act, so I can't see us doing that for this amendment to the Motor Vehicles Act. It's just not something we've done in the past and I don't see us doing that in the future.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Given the fact that you may not do that with other initiatives, this is obviously more of an initiative in which I think safety is critical. If the Department of Transportation is not willing to use that as a public relations opportunity to promote good driving, would the Minister or the department agree to sharing information on a quarterly basis to Regular Members?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We had received that information from the RCMP and if the question comes up down the road from Members, we can certainly try to find that detailed information through the RCMP. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. We are on page 11-13. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering if the vehicle licensing is in corporate services or is that in highways. That sounds like it might be in highways so I'll save that one.

The other thing, in terms of planning, again, I'm wondering where the division is between the divisions and planning, but I'm wondering where... I'd like to talk a little bit about the maintenance of our highway systems versus decisions to put resources into new road infrastructure, if that would be, again, under planning and policy here or whether that would be in highways.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** I think, Mr. Bromley, your question about vehicle licensing would be under the activity summary for road licensing and safety, which is page 11-33. We will defer your question until we get there. To your other question, Mr. Neudorf, please.

**MR. NEUDORF:** The planning comes underneath this activity. We have a planning, policy and environment division. They undertake our capital planning for the department. Of course, we're part of the GNWT capital planning process, and that's where we seek the capital funding for various projects. That division is also responsible for our development of strategic plans.

Our Highway Strategy would have been prepared by that division. Those strategic plans are what guides as we determine priorities. Those plans would always note that maintaining existing infrastructure and finding resources to support existing infrastructures are the top priority, but we always look for opportunities to expand our system.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway has always been a priority as well in those documents. Inuvik-Tuk highway and the works that's underway now would have been noted in those documents as well. Of course, with the federal government announcement, the lobbying that we've been doing for the funding for any number of years has come to fruition, so we're working on that as well. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'd like to pose my question now that I've got confirmation that that's where that is. The maintenance of the existing network of highways is purportedly, according to the department presentations, priority number one, and I think most of my colleagues would agree that that's an appropriate policy, a correct approach. Unfortunately, we have fallen far behind on maintenance of our highway systems and abandoned that responsibility to a large degree, especially in this budget this year, in favour of accelerating new projects and at an unwarranted pace, as was referenced by the deputy minister.

These are, unfortunately, projects that are both expensive and still unknown as to what their costs are, although each estimate we come up with seems to be greater than the one before. Some immediate examples come to mind. Highway No. 7 we've heard a lot about. The Dehah road is certainly one in my riding, and the Ingraham Trail, massive work being put into that and already we can see the impacts there. Highway No. 3 and so on. Additionally, though, the new projects are proposed in the most problematic terrain we have and thus these new projects are committing us to yet greater annual maintenance requirements and subsequently greater deficits. I don't know how we're going to catch up here if we don't look after the highways, which is our current situation.

These do cost our residents both in terms of their vehicles and so on, and communities' vehicles, business vehicles, et cetera, and they are starting to get into the area of increasing safety risks. Clearly, that sort of approach is sustainable. The department would be the first to say that. The Minister would say, and the deputy minister had already said, that a balance of old and new projects' maintenance and new projects is what they are striving for. Clearly – and even this has come out from the staff – they are not doing the maintenance that is required. How can the Minister justify this? Is this the sort of thinking that have got us in this situation, and so many other areas of government, including other areas of Transportation?

The Deh Cho Bridge has cost hundreds of millions of dollars of options and services that government could have delivered and could be delivering over the next 35 years. This is not a light one to me. This can't be put aside as, oh, we need a balance and we will go for these new projects and catch up later. This government has already experienced deficits in our infrastructure maintenance and so on. I would like a more in-depth explanation both how this can be justified and how we are going to get out of it, given that the cost will only get worse, particularly given the impacts of climate change and any new development activities we enjoy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the Member's concerns. However, we got the marching orders from this Legislative Assembly to pursue new opportunities and that is something that the department is doing. I believe wholeheartedly that we can balance the demands on maintaining the system that we have while pursuing new objectives. We have a ready, willing and able partner in the federal government.

In looking at the construction of the Inuvik-Tuk highway, we are going through the environmental

assessment currently. We are going to determine what the cost of that highway is going to be. We have not got there yet, so anybody that is throwing numbers around, that is all it is, just throwing numbers around. We will determine what the cost is going to be.

We take safety on our road system as of paramount importance to the department and to this government. We take that seriously. We try to balance all of those demands, and I do believe the department is doing a good job in balancing the demands that are out there. We can't just sit back and rest on our laurels. I think we need to pursue new projects. We need to grow this territory. We need to grow the economy here. By building new pieces of infrastructure in this territory, that is how we are going to build the territory. That is how we are going to grow the economy. That is how we are going to lower the cost of living to some of our residents in the isolated communities. That is something the government takes seriously. We are going to pursue that. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the Minister's response. I guess I have a couple of points on that. The Minister referring to the marching orders of the Legislative Assembly and I don't debate him on that. The only thing is I don't think he would suggest that we park our brain outside the door. When the economic analysis for that highway was built entirely on the Mackenzie Gas Project, when that was temporarily shelved for five or 10 years as it has been, then I would think that this body of representatives would likely bring that into consideration and adjust our plans accordingly. It might buy us a window of opportunity to catch up on some of our debts and prevent other debts such as the maintenance problem. That is with reference to the marching orders.

With reference to the belief that we can handle this, typically we try and make decisions on more than belief when it comes to spending the taxpayers' dollars. I wonder if the Minister would commit to having his department provide us with a report on the status of our network of highways and the maintenance, where we are at with maintenance of that infrastructure. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Again, I do appreciate the Member's comments and concerns. We heard some other Members, many other Members during their opening comments on how well contractors around the Northwest Territories and our staff have been maintaining the road system here in the Northwest Territories. I thank the Members that provided those comments.

Again, as we go forward here, I don't want people to think that this highway, the Inuvik-Tuk highway between Inuvik and Tuk was solely premised on the Mackenzie Gas Project. Again, we are still optimistic that the Mackenzie Gas Project will go

ahead, but there are a number of other reasons why this highway is of paramount importance to the Mackenzie Delta and to this territory.

Today there is hardly any economic activity in the Mackenzie Delta. They desperately need work. If you look at the future of both onshore and offshore in the area of petroleum development in the Mackenzie Delta, this road will be an integral part of the development of the resources that are there. I have mentioned this before, too, and as a government it is important for us to keep all of our options open. By not building this road, I think we are closing the door on opportunities. We are going to not allow the economic activity and development of the Mackenzie Delta, and I think that should be front and centre. I think we are pursuing the Inuvik-Tuk highway for all of the right reasons. I think we should continue to pursue that highway. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you. Is there anybody else who wishes to speak to page 11-13? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Minister Ramsay, for those comments. I don't think I have said the words we shouldn't build the Inuvik-Tuk highway. I am talking about maintenance of our highways here and balancing it with going aggressively after large, uncosted new projects. The Minister is on record as saying that he would like construction to start this spring or this fall, which I am all for enthusiasm and stuff. I am hoping the Minister won't try and put words in my mouth and didn't mean to do that, because I have not ever said that. Thanks for that discussion. I think the Minister knows my thinking on those and that of my colleagues.

My second topic is I know the department has put together a progressive green plan with their facilities and so on. I can't remember the name of it. It has a catchy name. There we go. If I could just get an update on how we are doing and implementation of that. I believe that came out a year or two ago. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Neudorf.

**MR. NEUDORF:** Madam Chair, Green Light is our action plan or strategy that shows what we intend to do to minimize the impact of our activities on the environment. We are working at implementing the actions in there. Some of the things we have talked about already have been highlighted in the Green Light, including the work on climate change. That is kind of one of the front and centre concerns and areas that we need to be paying attention to and conducting research to. I am sure that we have good adaptation plans. We are also working on our own greenhouse gas emission reduction mitigation plan that is in the early stages, but the work on that has begun.

I would note that we have had various initiatives in the past to try to minimize our fossil fuel consumption and production of greenhouse gases. The most recent thing that was done is we just put in new engines on the Lafferty. That's the ferry at Fort Simpson. They are much more efficient than the older engines were and we're looking forward to the benefits of that.

We continue, as well, to remediate our contaminated sites. There are a number, about two or three of those projects a year that we try to undertake. Fort Resolution Airport was completed last year, Checkpoint is still underway and James Creek Camp is the next on our priority agenda. James Creek up on the Dempster Highway.

There are a number of other specific smaller things, including a Green Team within DOT looking at internal office programs and we also work with Public Works and Services and their Capital Asset Retrofit Fund. They are maintaining our buildings and implanting the various energy initiatives as part of that. The most recent project there is to install a wood pellet boiler at our combined services building at Yellowknife Airport. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's all I had on this page. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. To page 11-13, activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$10.228 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We'll move to page 11-14, an information item, corporate services, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** No questions? Page 11-17, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$28.677 million. Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Transport Canada is in the process of reviewing all runway lengths throughout Canada and NWT is no different. Can the Minister or delegate team give us an update on some of the outcomes based on those reviews, and how does that affect the runways that we have currently throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Neudorf.

**MR. NEUDORF:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Transport Canada is looking at changing regulations around requiring the establishment of runway end safety areas, RESAs they're called. That initiative or that regulation, if it goes forward, would impact our runways because we would need to construct these runway end safety areas and if that's not possible, then you have to actually work

to shorten the length of the runway. So the required safety area can be provided at either end of the runway.

Transport Canada has come out with proposed regulations. They've done quite a number of different consultations on that. They've received quite a few concerns on that particularly from northern jurisdictions. We were one of those departments that expressed concern on that regulation and the changes, with the feeling that it might actually work to make it less safe than more safe, which is what they were trying to do.

Transport Canada has heard the comments that were received back, and the last update that I received, which was about two months ago, is they were taking a step back on the regulation. They were going to conduct a whole cost-benefit analysis of it and make sure that it would be meeting its stated objective, which was to make airport runways safer. So we are waiting to see the results of that review. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** In 2005 the cost of runway expansion for the Yellowknife Airport was estimated at around \$35 million. The premise back then was to enhance or increase the opportunity for tourism, opening the corridor to opportunity. Knowing full well that this is not a capital budget, but the philosophy, obviously while we're talking about airports, is something near and dear to a lot of Yellowknifers and people in the tourism sector. The question to the Minister is: Do we have any, is there any appetite out there that this is something that's going to appear sometime in the near future in terms of the runway expansion for Yellowknife Airport?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank the Member for the question. This is an issue that has been around for some time. It is directly related to tourism as well. The length of the runway here in Yellowknife has been an issue. It's something we continue to look at. There is, perhaps, an opportunity working through the Department of National Defence at expanding the runway length in Inuvik and Yellowknife. Inuvik is more advanced in discussions with DND on expansion there. Costs have gone up tremendously. I believe the project in Inuvik is somewhere between \$60 million and \$90 million. So it's a big expense. Of course, with our airport here in Yellowknife, we'd need some assurances that construction on an extension is not going to disrupt the traffic that we have at the airport today. I think that's a big factor in all this as well. So we continue to look at that. On the tourism side, there may be some other opportunities with smaller aircraft and landing here and then taking off empty and dropping people off here. So there are other

opportunities that might play themselves out as it relates to tourism. Thanks.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** So I guess the question I have for the Minister is: Is there a plan of action or a formal review in the works for the department in looking at runway expansions, not necessarily only in the Yellowknife area but an opportunity to put up corridors for opportunity for future business, be it tourism, be it working with the Department of National Defence? When was the last time a review of this nature was done for thorough analysis, Madam Chair?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Yes, we will be updating our Transportation Strategy and issues like that will certainly be a part of that.

The extension here in Yellowknife is probably closer to \$20 million. Again, if the need is just so that we can land some jets from Europe and Asia, then we have to gauge that expense against what we are going to receive out of it as an economic benefit. Maybe it's time we took another look at what the opportunity is there and what that investment would mean. It's a capital investment of upwards of \$20 million to expand the runway here in Yellowknife. I don't think we can give up hope on talking to the federal government and that's something we should continue to do. That's where that project is at today. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I appreciate the Minister's comments. I know the businesses in Range Lake, the aviation industry in Range Lake and my residents of Range Lake would be happy to hear that a development of that nature is potentially in the works to enhance the current offering. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to ask a different one. I'm sure the Minister is aware of Discovery Air's plans of acquisition of aircraft. I'm wondering what work the department is doing to prepare for the operational safety and reliability issues associated with airstrips. We've got about a year and a half, according to the last news release, on the Discovery Air plans. Maybe there have been changes and updates. About a year and a half/two years from now, we are expecting to have airships occupying the airspace in the Northwest Territories and using our facilities, I presume. I'm wondering what sort of work the department is doing to ensure that we have operational safety and reliability issues figured out. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Indications are that program initially would be a pilot-type program, so the department's monitoring the advancement of the use of dirigibles in the

Northwest Territories. That's where we're at today. We're monitoring the situation.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I think that's a wise place to start. Obviously, a year and a half is the announced schedule. We'll see whether they stick with that.

First of all, these are not small pieces of equipment and they're very unique and I assume would have implications. I wonder if the Minister would commit to starting to give some thought to that and maybe let us know. No rush, but I think some assurance the department is starting to consider those sorts of things so we're not caught flat footed. That's all I had on that.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I appreciate the Member's comments. We will continue to monitor this. Those type of airships, it may be that they don't even need to use the airport, the type of aircraft that they are. We will continue to monitor and I know the department is aware of the plans there. If we need to act and work with that company, we will do that.

**MR. BROMLEY:** The Minister could be dead on there. The other possibility that I've heard is I've heard them called hybrid air vehicles. So they do use runways and so on. It could be either one alright. That's the last comment I have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just with regard to airports, I know that we've made some significant headway with some of the small communities in my riding in terms of infrastructure and some runway lighting issues. I'd certainly like to continue to ensure that they are followed up. Begging the committee's indulgence, I do want to speak about the Trout Lake Airport construction. It's a capital issue but it's kind of stalled right now. I believe the government's going to be taking over controlling the contract. The concern from the community is that they don't lose out. The concern for me as MLA is that they don't try to do a plan like they did the first time when they tried to run it with bringing in contractors from outside my region without giving due process or opportunities to proximity communities like Fort Simpson and/or Fort Liard to provide for the contracting services of hauling gravel or whatever has to be done there. That's a significant concern and I just wanted to advise the Minister that as MLA for Nahendeh I will not stand for it and I will be closely monitoring the progress of the construction of the airport this coming fall and winter. Just with that concern, I'd like the Minister to address that that's not on their plan at all.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's concerns related to the Trout Lake Airport construction. There have been

some issues there. We've been working through the issues with the community. The community has requested the department and agreed that the negotiated contract be set aside and that DOT take over the management of the project. That's what we intend to do. Construction, again, should start sometime soon, with an eye to maximizing opportunities at the community level. That's something that we will be keeping a close eye on as well. I think we were there before and there were a number of concerns over the management of that contract by the community. We take those concerns seriously. This time around we want to ensure that construction is complete and the project gets finished with the greatest extent of local involvement as possible.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I know that it's in everybody's best interest to have a good-news story as we work towards the completion of the Trout Lake Airport. Regretfully, it was delayed almost by a year. Everybody wants to see it done, and done properly.

My concern again is, like many of our other regions, we're kind of like a have-not and it hurts the community and it hurts the region when our government is offering contracting opportunities to other regions before they even work with the contractors in the Nahendeh riding. That's my initial concern and I just want to advise the Minister that the community wants to be involved and as soon as they're not involved or see other people who are, if outside contractors are allowed in, they're the first ones to know and they contact me immediately. That's not something I think we should be going forward with, and I just want the department to be aware that all best efforts need to be done to utilize local contractors and/or proximity community contractors to get that work done and they can be easily managed and smoothly and in a win-win situation for the community and for the region.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We will endeavour to do that. At the end of the day we want to see the airport construction in Trout Lake concluded for the benefit of the residents in Trout Lake. We do feel that they have to benefit from that construction as well. We will do our utmost to ensure that happens.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to tag along with Mr. Menicoche on the question of the small community airports. I'm talking specifically about Colville Lake and that project. I know that community has advanced somewhat to the stage of near completion and I wanted to look at continuing to work with the department to design/build a terminal. I know that's in the books. There's still work yet to be done to complete the new airport. They went through the learning process and they came out pretty well. I wish the best to the people in Trout Lake to work out similar

situations as we have done in Colville Lake. I wanted to ask the Minister when does he anticipate, under the operations and maintenance of this budget, the Colville Lake Airport will be in use and we'll have everything there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's our expectation that will be in operation late this fall.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I want just to again relay to the Minister and to the government that the experience up in Colville Lake has been quite good. They did quite well. I think the department did good in this process here. Congratulations to working well with my people.

I want to ask the Minister my second question about the commercial lands at the airports are becoming increasingly scarce in terms of the development of lands. I want to ask the Minister what type of plans he has on the books for advancing the airport commercial lots. People are asking now because things are getting busy in Inuvik here and in different communities and a lot is becoming valuable all over. What are the Minister's new plans for looking at how we deal with these commercial land developments?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** The Member is correct; as we develop resources in the Sahtu, there's going to be increasing demand for commercial space at our airports, not just here in Yellowknife but in Norman Wells and other airports in the territory. We need to work at finding money to enable us to have those lands available for commercial development. That is going to take advantage of the resource development that's happening in our territory and other developments that are happening. That's an important step as we move forward. Perhaps I can go to the deputy minister for more detail on that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Neudorf.

**MR. NEUDORF:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the first objective when we operate an airport system is to ensure there is adequate land on the airport. So in Yellowknife, for example, in order for that airport to address the needs for the next 20 or 50 years, we recently expanded the boundaries of the airport so that there was enough land there to meet the needs over that period of time. The second thing we need to do is make sure that we've got lots available so that when economic developments arise and opportunities come, that the airport can be a facilitator of that economic development. Sometimes it takes some capital funding in order to construct the taxiways or land development. That's where it can be a challenge at times to find the capital funding, but we continue to promote the opportunities and look for creative

ways to work with industry and those that want to locate on our airport to partner with us to provide that needed infrastructure.

Norman Wells and what may be happening over the next little while with the Sahtu oil exploration there, we've certainly got our eye on that. There is adequate land at the airport. We are getting more requests for developments on the airport and we are more than willing to work with potential tenants and those that want to develop on our airport to ensure that the land, the use of the airport can help meet their needs.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The deputy minister and the Minister are correct that some of our airports are going to become more valuable space lots and that. I do look forward to their advanced airport commercial land development to see where things are at.

I want to ask the Minister, at one time I know that the fee structures within our airport were not fair and consistent. I know the department is doing some work to look at where fairness and consistency right across the board on our fee structures and landing fees. Sometimes I think we could be making more money. I know my constituent in Norman Wells, North-Wright Aviation, has a huge number of terminal fees and leases that we get off the Department of Transportation. I want to know if the department is going to review their fee structures and be fair across the board and see if we need to increase, or are we losing the revenue out of here.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. During my opening comments I alluded to the fact that we are going through a review of fees and the structure of those to ensure their fairness and if they are in fact at market rates. We will continue to move that effort along. When we do have some detailed information on what we want to propose, we will certainly be coming back to the Members with those fee schedules and what we anticipate or want to see happen. That should be happening. I would imagine by the end of this year I would hope we could have that work concluded. We could have the information in front of Members so that we could make a decision together on how we move forward with the fee structure.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I have three follow-up questions so I will ask them all at once here. The first one I asked earlier about the airport position in the Sahtu. We have it now. Our office is up in Inuvik. I'd like to certainly see where it would be more advantageous to have it in the Sahtu. I hope the Minister would give some consideration and thoughts to future

business plans or something within the next couple months to say yes, that's something that we can look at. Mr. Minister did give me a little response, but I'm going to ask in this area.

The second one is that the community airports, our airports are pretty busy in Norman Wells and maybe in our smaller communities also. Because of the amount of activity that's going to happen with the oil and gas, when you start looking at how we start planning for emergency response teams at the community level where the Department of MACA and DOT and Health and Social Services, the RCMP, everybody gets together and looks at how do we respond to emergency situations. We start looking at those types of things. I'd like to see where there's a little more concentration in those areas and that Norman Wells also gets looked at from a tourism point of view where we would like to see also planes coming into that airport and that the department looks at facilitating some type of process.

My last question. I do want to thank the Minister for that place that we have in Norman Wells where the elders can sit, but I also ask the Minister if he would look at the grizzly bear that's standing in the airport terminal. There's a statue of a grizzly bear that one of the fingers is broken off. I would ask if they would look at that and fix that, ITI or Environment, that statue. Get that statue fixed. It's disrespectful to that grizzly bear. People walking by and...(inaudible)...I don't like that. I ask if he would fix that for us, please.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We wouldn't want to disrespect a grizzly. That would be trouble. We're not sure if that is our bear or maybe ITI's bear or another government department's bear, but we will find out and we will get that remedied.

On the emergency planning, that is part of the regulatory requirements when we're operating an airport. We meet with the RCMP and other emergency agencies and there are full-blown exercises that take place in a variety of communities across the Northwest Territories. Norman Wells is one of them where they go through a full exercise on emergency preparedness and response.

Also, the Member talked about the increased activity at Norman Wells. The activity in a six-month period tripled at the Norman Wells Airport in the area of takeoffs and landings. That's something we certainly, from an operational perspective, have to keep an eye on and we will continue to keep an eye on that and ensure we have the resources there that are going to address that increased activity in that area. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Next on my list, Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had one question in regard to the incident that happened in Inuvik this year. We had that windstorm that blew the roof off the airport. I was just wondering if the department allocated funds for the repair of that roof and whether or not there was a study into the structure of the building to see if there was any more damage that was done from that storm. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's questions. Yes, there was some damage sustained to the Inuvik terminal building this past winter. Public Works and Services was responsible for the repairs that took place to the terminal building. They ran in the order of about \$100,000 on the repairs to the terminal building. There is no long-term structural damage to the building itself. It didn't require repairs and it won't require any further repairs. However, that building is getting older and at some point in time we will need to look at replacing the air terminal building in Inuvik. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Does the Minister know how old the building is in terms of building years and when it does need to be replaced in terms of our policies within our government? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Are you looking for a capital project, Mr. Moses? Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe the original structure there dates back to when Inuvik was first moved over, the late '60s. There were a number of additions added to the existing structure to get us to where we're at today, but certainly the main component of that building dates back to the late '60s. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** No further questions, Madam Chair, but duly noted on the structure of the building, and thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Next on my list, Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to begin, I have one of the communities in my riding, which is Tsiigehtchic, who I'm sure would really enjoy having an airport. They're one of the very few communities in the Northwest Territories that don't have that luxury. Hopefully, within the next couple of years we could see that in the budget.

We do have the community of Aklavik who is hoping to, in the near future, have an extension on the airport, on the airstrip there. I know it was planned, I think, a year or two ago. I'm not sure what happened there, but I'm hoping that we could get that into the budget, hopefully, in the fall. I know it was done in Fort McPherson. I know the

community of Aklavik would really appreciate if we could extend that airstrip.

Also, in Inuvik this past winter we've had a number of planes that couldn't land due to the conditions of the airstrip. I'm hoping that we could increase the funding going to that community so we could ensure the safety of our residents. One thing I've noticed while flying during the winter is we don't have any current technology that does de-icing of the planes. It's mostly done manually. Within the near future here I'd like to see us getting with 2012 here and getting the proper technology to de-ice our planes. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was a runway length study conducted a number of years ago in the Northwest Territories on runway lengths and communities were looked at. The community of Aklavik was not deemed to be a priority at that time for a runway extension. If the Member feels that maybe that's changed or something's changed in the community that would make that more of a priority, we would be willing to listen to that.

On the other item on de-icing and the equipment for de-icing, that's an air carrier issue, so if the air carrier is providing service into a community, it's their responsibility to provide the de-icing equipment for their equipment on the ground in the various communities around the territory. Thank you.

**MR. BLAKE:** The other concern was the condition of the actual landing in the community of Inuvik. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Mr. Neudorf, please.

**MR. NEUDORF:** Madam Chair, we do have an own-force operation at the Inuvik Airport that provides maintenance service there. Like any airport in any part of the world, you do get challenges by weather and have to deal with unexpected weather conditions. I know not the past winter but the one before in particular, we were having some big fluctuations in the temperatures at the Inuvik Airport that caused frost to occur on the runway. It took our crews quite some time in order to get the runway back to a condition. We are studying those challenges. We do need to stay ahead of them so that we can ensure the airport is open the maximum time possible. Any airport will have periods where it is shut down because of weather. Of course, we want to minimize those. We do continue to look at it. It is part of the research we are doing around climate change as we are seeing more variability in the weather and more of these extreme events. We are trying to be proactive to

identify those and to put in our adaptation plans required to address the needs there. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Madam Chair, just to add to Deputy Minister Neudorf's comments, we have had some success at the Norman Wells Airport when it comes to the surface. We had it grooved. It decreases the amount of friction. When you are talking to people in Inuvik – and it wasn't as much of an issue last winter, it was the winter before – what would seem like a nice day, the weather wasn't that bad, but the friction on the runway was such that planes couldn't land and take off and it becomes a safety issue. That is something that we are monitoring closely and perhaps at some point in time we may need to look at the possibility of grooving the runway in Inuvik as well. That could be a possibility as we go forward. We are looking at those types of opportunities. We are watching what is happening in Norman Wells. According to the aviation folks I have talked to, the grooving of the runway in Norman Wells has been a big help in that regard. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Mr. Blake has no further questions. Who is next on my list? Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I heard Mr. Moses' discussion regarding the Inuvik Airport terminal and how it was being repaired. The contract has been put out. I know the contract has been awarded at least a couple of months ago. I am just wondering the cost of that particular contract on that repair. Let's start with that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Madam Chair, that was a few months back. It was around \$100,000. It was through Public Works and Services that the repairs were conducted on the Inuvik terminal building. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** On that particular repair, has it been finished yet? I didn't catch that part, the dialogue earlier, but has it been finished yet? Has the scope remained the same from the original tender?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Yes, the repairs have been concluded at the Inuvik air terminal building. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Is there any change to the scope, as I was asking just a minute ago? Did it still remain the same? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** It would have stayed the same. It was just a repair. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** I have nobody else on my list. Does committee agree on page 11-17, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$28.677 million?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 11-18, activity summary, airports, grants and contributions, contributions, \$30,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 11-19, information item, airports, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 11-21, activity summary, highways, operations expenditure summary, \$67.844 million. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is a very simple one here. I hope we get a simple answer. The amortization number from 2011-12 to 2012-13 seems to be a substantial jump. Can the Minister indicate as to what exactly constituted that change in amortization calculations? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Minister.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Over the past five years the Government of the Northwest Territories has spent close to \$1 billion in capital infrastructure around the territory. This is just a case of the Department of Transportation putting more assets into service around the Northwest Territories and that is why you see the increase in amortization. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Can the Minister be more specific as to what large pieces of infrastructure that would have constituted the calculation to be that high?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** It would be whatever our capital spending has taken place. Highway No. 3, Highway No. 4, just to name a couple. We can get the list for the Member if he likes. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Yes, I will take the Minister up on his offering and hopefully he may be able to provide that to all the Members here.

When you see a shift like that in terms of amortization numbers, it is usually a large amount of depreciative assets and having that information definitely helps the Members here understand the calculations that are being used. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I think once we get the projects out there, we can make that correlation on the increased amortization that you see and the number of capital projects that the department has

been involved in over the last little while here. We can make that clear. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you for that commitment. Next on the list is Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to follow up on some discussion about vehicle registration, an issue that my constituents and many others in the Northwest Territories have raised from time to time when there are people like me who have been fined twice for their vehicles not being registered. In both cases, I was returning from months away. People are not getting notices. It is the same sort of thing in our health care system where people are missing appointments and it is costing the system, obviously, as well. I did have a constituent that sent an example of a digital mechanism, no PYs involved, to actually make this automatic. I am wondering if perhaps the Minister has considered that sort of thing as a way to help out our residents and those feeble-minded such as myself to register their vehicles in a timely way. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** If it makes the Member feel any better, it has happened to me as well. It happens. I think reminders are certainly a good thing. Under the new motor vehicle information system that we have, reminders are a part of that system. We are looking at utilizing that. With driver's licence, it is a letter. It is every five years, but with registrations, if we can get a reminder out there through the MBIS to folks, that would be good.

At the end of the day, the onus is on the driver of the vehicle to know when your registration has expired. That is where the buck stops, but we will do our best to provide reminders for the public through the new MBIS.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the comments from the Minister. I feel like he and I have been obviously contributing strongly to the system and perhaps helping out with the costs here and perhaps we can get that service going. I appreciate the Minister's interest in doing so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I think that was a comment. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have several O and M questions that I just wanted to note. Given the time, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** I will now rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort our witnesses from the Chamber? Thank you, witnesses. See you tomorrow.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte):** Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, May 31, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Replies to Budget Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
  - Motion 3-17(3), Increased Support for Renewable Energy
  - Motion 4-17(3), Extended Adjournment of the House to June 4, 2012
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012

21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013
- Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success
- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 31, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

