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**The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.**  
(Mackenzie Delta)

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**Hon. Diane Archie**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)  
*Deputy Premier*  
*Minister of Infrastructure*  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation*

**Mr. Ronald Bonnetrouge**

(Deh Cho)

**Ms. Caitlin Cleveland**

(Kam Lake)

**Hon. Paulie Chinna**

(Sahtu)  
*Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for Homelessness*  
*Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board*  
*Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Hon. Caroline Cochrane**

(Range Lake)  
*Premier*  
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs*  
*Minister responsible for the COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat*

**Mr. Richard Edjericon**

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

**Hon. Julie Green**

(Yellowknife Centre)  
*Minister of Health and Social Services*  
*Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities*  
*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Mr. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

**Mr. Rylund Johnson**

(Yellowknife North)

**Ms. Frieda Martselos**

(Thebacha)

**Ms. Katrina Nokleby**

(Great Slave)

**Mr. Kevin O'Reilly**

(Frame Lake)

**Ms. Lesa Semmler**

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

**Mr. Rocky Simpson**

(Hay River South)

**Hon. R.J. Simpson**

(Hay River North)  
*Government House Leader*  
*Minister of Education, Culture & Employment*  
*Minister of Justice*

**Hon. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendeh)  
*Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*  
*Minister of Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Minister of Lands*  
*Minister responsible for Youth*

**Hon. Caroline Wawzonek**

(Yellowknife South)  
*Minister of Finance*  
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, including responsibility for the Business Development and Investment Corporation*  
*Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

**Ms. Jane Weyallon-Armstrong**

(Monfwi)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, March 1, 2022****Members Present**

Hon. Diane Archie, Hon. Frederick Blake Jr., Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Mr. Edjericon, Hon. Julie Green, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER: (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.):** Good afternoon, colleagues. I am pleased to announce that we are now able to reopen the legislative building to the public.

Effective today, we have reopened for tours, event bookings and, most importantly, the public gallery. As a place of the people, we look forward to welcoming back our residents and opening our services to the public. Try not to get too shy today.

Thank you, colleagues. Ministers' statements. Minister for Infrastructure.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 213-19(2):  
YELLOWKNIFE AIRPORT**

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Quanani. I would like to update Members and the public on some of the activities occurring at the Yellowknife Airport, or YZF. The airport has had an eventful year that included lucrative cold weather testing partnerships, responding to the challenges from COVID-19-related events and work to advance important infrastructure improvements.

Quanani, cold weather testing at YZF continues to generate economic growth in the Northwest Territories. After successfully hosting Bell Helicopters in 2019, we followed up by welcoming the Korean Aerospace Industries from December 2021 to February 2022. This partnership supported cold weather testing for their weaponless light-armed helicopter, with a total of 40 pilots, engineers and support staff travelling to Yellowknife. Over \$2 million was injected into the northern economy through spending on local hotels, car rentals, office spaces, and other local businesses. All travellers were required to comply with Northwest Territories health order.

Det'on Cho Logistics, the economic development arm of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation secured a contract with the Korean Aerospace and provided logistical support and gained valuable experience that will translate into future cold weather testing support opportunities.

As we now recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Yellowknife is in the unique position to provide both the ideal climate and the necessary amenities to support cold weather testing. Our government continues to seek partnership with international aviation leaders who are in need of suitable testing locations.

Mr. Speaker, It is no secret that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on airport traffic. At the lowest, we saw 91 percent decrease from previous pandemic numbers in passenger movements through YZF. There are signs of recovery in the travel sector which, when compared to 2020, saw nine straight months of increased in passenger traffic from the past April to December.

As passenger movement increased, airport staff and management worked to support the monitoring of passengers and the implementation of federal travel requirements that is related to COVID-19. As COVID protocols evolve, the airport will update and change procedures as required for staff and passengers. I am optimistic that with the opening of the borders to leisure travel on March 1st, today, we will see a marked increase in the number of travelers coming here to the North.

Mr. Speaker, YZF continues to improve and modernize its infrastructure. Upgrades to the runway airfield lighting were completed in October 2021. This included replacement of all cabling, lighting, airport signage, and improved approach lighting. These improvements provide increased reliability and safety for its users. Work scheduled for 2022 also includes rehabilitating the airfield drainage and replacing the public parking access control and management system.

Finally, the airport consolidated master plan is in the final stages of development and scheduled for completion by the end of this month. The re-instatement of the Economic Advisory Committee is also underway. The committee members will be

confirmed within this next month. And this month, the work is vital to support the continued improvements of YZF infrastructure in the years to come.

The GNWT and the YZF will continue to work with private and public stakeholders to secure new investments and federal funding to expand our local economy while also improving our infrastructure. Quanani.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 214-19(2):  
UPDATE ON HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to update to talk about steps being taken to address the recruitment and retention of Health and Social Services staff in the Northwest Territories. Members will remember we created a mandate priority to increase the number of resident healthcare professionals by at least 20 percent during this 19th Assembly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the need for Health and Social Services workers across Canada and within the Northwest Territories.

Staff in the Department of Health and Social Services and the health and social services authorities have been working hard to respond to the challenge of recruiting healthcare professionals and to retain them at health facilities across the NWT. We have talked with frontline staff and the Union of Northern Workers, as well as reviewing efforts undertaken in other jurisdictions. We want to be competitive within Canada and a destination of choice for healthcare professionals.

Mr. Speaker, to guide this work over the next three years, we are finalizing the 2021-2024 Health and Social Services Human Resource Plan which will be released in April. Looking ahead, several of the plan's initiatives are specifically designed to attract Indigenous and northern residents to careers in health and social services. Many of these initiatives will go live over the next few months, including a transition program to support new graduates moving into permanent positions within the health and social services system. We will also be launching a bursary program for Indigenous and northern students who choose to pursue an education in health and social services.

Mr. Speaker, we are also developing job shadowing and observer guidelines, along with an updated NWT Health and Social Services career guide. These tools are designed to inspire students and youth to consider a career in health and social services. These new initiatives will complement

outreach programs, such as Take Your Kids to Work events and promotional activities through PracticeNWT.

In the meantime, we are aware of concerns about staff morale within the healthcare system and work is underway to address them. We understand that staff are a most valuable asset. Ensuring they feel engaged, valued, and supported to build a career within the NWT Health and Social Services system is critical to us being able to provide sustainable services to residents.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada without a registered nurse recruitment bonus. There was a time when registered nurse salaries in the NWT were significantly higher than in most other Canadian jurisdictions, and this helped to attract staff. However, we are watching that gap narrow.

The Financial Management Board recently approved a Labour Market Supplement Policy to enhance our ability to recruit and retain positions identified as difficult to fill because of national shortages of skilled staff. The Department of Health and Social Services recently requested this policy provide a wage supplement for frontline registered nurse positions and medical laboratory technologists across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, our intention was to provide recognition of existing staff within the system and to demonstrate the value of their continued retention, while also encouraging new staff to work for us.

According to the collective agreement, to apply the Labour Market Supplement Policy the GNWT must first consult with the UNW on the terms being considered and unfortunately the approach proposed was not agreed to. While I am disappointed, I want the public and healthcare workers to know that we will continue to engage with the UNW on other ways to support the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.

Mr. Speaker, we are turning our attention to other efforts to address staff concerns. As part of an employee engagement survey, we are trying to understand why staff are leaving or changing positions within the organization. Exit interviews and staff movement surveys are being conducted with all staff who have left the organization and with those who have transferred to pursue another opportunity within the system. Using the data received from these survey results, we have drafted an action plan to address immediate issues and concerns.

In addition, the Registered Nurses Association of the NWT and Nunavut is now conducting a survey of all nurses to better understand their concerns and solicit ideas for possible solutions to staffing issues.

A report will be submitted to the department and recommendations to address concerns related to retention and recruitment will be provided to the health authorities.

In line with this work, retention strategies that address staffing shortages have been prioritized, particularly within the obstetrics unit at Stanton Territorial Hospital. The NTHSSA will be launching the specialized nursing transition program that will help RNs to expand their scope of practice into areas of specialized nursing, with a focus on orientation, mentorship, competency development, and financial support to obtain their certificate in obstetrics nursing. The long-term strategy for this initiative will be to expand the program to all areas of specialized nursing.

Mr. Speaker, supporting and developing the health and social services workforce will help to ensure that residents of the Northwest Territories have access to top quality services and receive the best possible care.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff of the NWT Health and Social Services system. I, along with the entire health and social services leadership team, remain committed to making improvements that will lead to a better future for staff, clients, and residents throughout the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 215-19(2):  
TOURISM SUPPORTS ACROSS THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, today is the day that the Northwest Territories tourism sector has been anticipating for nearly two years. I am happy to finally say that as of today, the Northwest Territories is welcoming back friends and visitors from near and far.

We all know that the Northwest Territories is a growing destination of choice for travelers from across Canada and around the world. In fact, in the year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the territory had a record 120,000 visitors, contributing more than \$210 million to its economy.

Mr. Speaker, the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have been unprecedented, but so has the support provided by this government to ensure that this pandemic will not overpower our tourism industry. \$3 million was invested in tourism initiatives across the territory under the Growth and Recovery by Investing in Tourism Fund. Additionally, two key support programs were introduced to help Northwest Territories businesses cover their costs, maintain staff and keep infrastructure and investments intact:

The Pandemic Relief Extension Program for tourism operators; and,

The Supplement for Tourism Accommodation Relief Program for accommodation providers.

We have waived tourism insurance requirements and licensing fees. Further, we partnered with organizations including Northwest Territories Tourism Association and the Chambers of Commerce to encourage Northwest Territories residents to shop local and enjoy staycations within the territory. We also worked with NWT Tourism and the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer on the requests of qualified lodge owners to operate in the summer 2021 under special conditions. As well, we invested heavily in making our parks COVID-19 friendly for the extraordinary local use that we experienced from Northwest Territories residents and their families.

In total, we have injected more than \$17 million into the tourism and parks sector since March 2020, and we continue to support local suppliers, contractors, and employees as we improve our tourism product for the future.

As we prepare to celebrate the much-anticipated return of leisure travelers to our territory, our government will maintain its long-standing commitment to tourism.

We recently closed applications for the second intake of our Tourism Restart Investment Program, with funding of \$2 million, which will aid tourism operators in ramping up their workforce skill development and marketing to Canadian travelers.

In addition to supporting tourism operators and tourism-related businesses, the GNWT is also supporting Northwest Territories residents with the development of a Resident Readiness Strategy. This strategy includes actions to help the Northwest Territories residents welcome visitors and act as ambassadors in sharing their cultures and their way of life with people from around the world.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, the Tourism 2025 Strategy is in place and charts a path for the industry going forward.

Before the pandemic, we had committed to work with Indigenous and community governments to increase tourism and develop local tourism capacity and infrastructure. This remains a primary action of the Tourism 2025.

Mr. Speaker, behind our territories' world-renowned tourism product exists a community of dedicated and resilient individuals, many of whom have made it their lifework and passion to present and represent our land and its people to the world. One of these critical partners is Northwest Territories Tourism,

who has tirelessly advocated and represented their membership throughout the past two years. They have carefully and consistently continued to strategically market the Northwest Territories both domestically and internationally, positioning the territory as a spectacular destination.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling the Northwest Territories Tourism 2022-2023 Marketing Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 963-19(2): LIFTING OF PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 1st, Mr. Speaker - I don't think there's been a date in this territory that so many people have looked forward to, except perhaps the day the KFC reopened last year.

Today we see the easing of restrictions and the end of the dreaded "mandates" or "proof of vaccines". Whatever you may choose to call them, the semantics game is over. Today is the day that so many NWTers have been anticipating for almost two years; the day where we no longer need to know how far six feet is or ask probing questions about our friends' vaccination status or who they've been spending time with. I know I'm not the only one who wants to sing with joy and dance in the streets. It's almost hard to believe this day has finally come.

However, Mr. Speaker, as we welcome this day, like we do the sun after it returns each cold winter, I must admit I still feel some anxiety.

After years of the onslaught of conflicting and changing information, I'm not quite sure what my risk is anymore. I'm immunocompromised, do I still have to be extra cautious in avoiding people? If I do get sick, will I be okay since I hear omicron is supposed to be less fatal? What's going to happen if I require hospitalization; has our healthcare system recovered enough to properly take care of me?

Mr. Speaker these are just the worries I have around my health. In addition to medical concerns, I now worry about socializing again. It's been ages since I've made small talk in person and I've been operating in a COVID fog for so long will I even be able to speak properly without putting my foot in my mouth? Will people continue to respect my personal space and boundaries as I remain concerned about risk, or will I have to ask people to back off, causing me further feelings of awkwardness and social embarrassment?

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken a lot about the mental health toll I've seen COVID taking on our people. But we can't discount that this "reopening" brings with it a whole new set of concerns and issues, particularly for the vulnerable. People with chronic health conditions and seniors have expressed to me a lot of apprehension about what March 1st means for them. And, admittedly I don't have the answers. So, I urge my colleagues, and all the residents of our territory, to remember that while they may be excited to return to a life like that before COVID, for many it brings a whole new set of concerns and anxieties to deal with. So be kind, be respectful, and hopefully, Mr. Speaker, this is the beginning of a brighter time for our people. We all know they could use it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT 964-19(2): GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES REMOTE WORK POLICY

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks the GNWT launched its remote work policy. This policy sets out the rules and conditions for GNWT employees to work away from job sites potentially in a different community or even outside the territory. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that there is a clear need for a remote work policy. Over the past two years, many employees were forced to work from home. Some of these employees found that they prefer the flexibility of working remotely while still being able to do their jobs well. And if it's implemented properly, the policy holds possibility to make jobs at headquarters available to residents in the smaller communities without having to leave home. But I am concerned with that in practice the opposite will happen. Positions in smaller communities will be filled by people who already live in or will move to Yellowknife. And, more generally, GNWT positions will be filled by people who live in or who have moved to other provinces and territory.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister, when I ask the Minister about this later she'll probably say that the various rules, principles, guidelines, toolkits should stop this from happening, or at least minimize it. But I am not sure that the policy will have such a small effect.

According to a News North report, as of February 1st there were 29 employees working outside the territory. While some of these 29 were approved for reasons besides the remote work policy, it's still a big number, especially considering that these numbers were only two business days after the remote work policy was announced.

I am concerned that this is just the beginning and that over the next months and years, more GNWT jobs

will be done by people living in the south and community jobs done by people living in Yellowknife. Of course I hope that my fears are proven wrong but then I remember that GNWT already has problems with hiring local and with Indigenous recruitment and retention. I am worried that with all these policies and guidelines and checklists and community positions will be filled outside of Yellowknife and there aren't the right mechanisms to verify that employees actually live where they say they do. I will have more questions later for the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 965-19(2):  
LACK OF AFTER-CARE FACILITIES AND  
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when questioned last week about treatment centres for the NWT, the Minister of Health stated: "If there is a need for more bricks and mortars healing, then that needs to be a priority of this Assembly and it's something that we need to talk about together."

Mr. Speaker, one of this government's mandate items is to: "Increase the number and variety of culturally-respectful community-based mental health and addictions programs, including aftercare."

Mr. Speaker, this mandate item directs government to consider community-based mental health and addictions programs – programs that may go beyond community outreach for health, counselling, and support programs. Patients who have returned from southern treatment facilities, some, not all, are pleased with the service they receive. However, a critical issue raised has been the lack of acceptable aftercare or, more specifically, lack of aftercare facilities once returning home.

Mr. Speaker, if treatment centres are not on this government's radar, then I would like to talk about increased access to transitional housing for those returning from addictions treatment – an action item included as part of this government's mandate. It is important this government listens to solutions proposed by those who are suffering from addictions. Anything less may well result in setback or collapse of an individual's treatment progress.

Mr. Speaker, those returning from treatment in the south may require, in addition to counseling and support groups, those supports to avoid relapse. It may include removing oneself from a situation that requires a safe and immediate place to attend, whether it be for day, week, month, or months. To

accommodate this, government must consider providing half-way or residential aftercare facilities in regional centres and small communities. It would allow those with serious addiction problems an option while integrating themselves back into the communities upon returning to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, why is aftercare important? Statistics show that relapse can be as high as 60 percent, and it is those aftercare supports that stand between success and returning to substance abuse. It is up to us to change those odds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 966-19(2):  
OPENING OF THE SNOW CASTLE IN  
YELLOWKNIFE

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As noted by the Member from Great Slave, today, March 1st, is an important date for a number of reasons. Today, restrictions end, we are welcoming tourists back to our territory but, Mr. Speaker, all of these actions pale in comparison to one event that occurred today which is the opening of the snow castle, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to report that a special envoy of MLAs went down at lunchtime to the grand opening of the snow castle, and it is better than ever this year. The slide is in great working order, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage all of the residents of the Northwest Territories and all of the Members to get down there. And thanks to the contributions of Members of this House, it's free admission today at the snow castle.

There are a number of events, and the snow castle is actually looking for performers so if anyone wants to perform at one-of-a-kind venue, please get in contact with all of the great staff at the snow castle.

I would like to thank the carvers, the builders, the board members, and all of the volunteers who make this happen. 27 years strong of the snow castle. Long live the monarchy, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 967-19(2):  
MACTUNG AND CANTUNG CONTAMINATED  
SITES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President, that's a tough act to follow.

Another day, another contaminated site mismanaged by our government. This time it is the Mactung exploration property in the former Cantung

Mine. Cantung and Mactung are mining properties in the Mackenzie Mountains. The Cantung Mine was a tungsten producer from 1962 until it closed in 2015. The owner, North American Tungsten, went into creditor protection on June 9th, 2015 after we agreed to take on this operation under the Devolution Agreement.

Somehow the federal government let that company put up the Mactung property as part of its financial security for its water license. When our government inherited the management of the Cantung site under devolution, nothing was done to change that arrangement even though GNWT had total discretion over the form of the security. That's another preventable liability that has cost our government millions of dollars. So much for Polluter-Pays Principle and the devolution promise of responsible resource development.

As part of the creditor protection proceeding, Cabinet ended up purchasing Mactung for \$2.5 million with a special warrant that bypassed the Legislative Assembly. In that way we were told GNWT could hand Cantung back to the federal government for remediation. When we acquired the Mactung property, a lot of junk and hazardous materials were on the site even though I had been told that there was nothing there. GNWT spent \$172,000 on a partial site cleanup of that property. Then GNWT hired a southern consultant to prepare and submit a land use application to the Yukon government for an imaginary exploration program in an attempt to hike the value of the property.

As far as I can tell, GNWT has owned Mactung now for seven years and all attempts to sell the Cantung and Mactung properties have failed. These two properties are 140 kilometres away from each other by air and 700 kilometres by road. It's not clear to me why we are marketing these properties with the federal government. There is little chance that some buyer will take on these mining properties that are now contaminated sites without significant concessions and subsidies. Needless to say I will have lots of questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment about these properties, our failure to manage them properly, and whether we can ever expect to recoup the money spent on them. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 968-19(2):  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE RCMP  
TERRITORIAL POLICE SERVICE AGREEMENT

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on November 29th, 2021, I had made a Member statement on the RCMP Territorial Police Service Agreement with the NWT. I asked questions

of the Minister of Justice about RCMP accountability in relation to the police service agreement and I did not receive any good answers to my questions. In fact, I walked away from that exchange with more questions than answers about the RCMP regarding transparency and accountability in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, according to the 2022-2023 Main Estimates, the Government of the Northwest Territories is paying over \$50 million for policing services in the NWT which is already nearly \$2 million than the 2021-2022 revised estimates. That's not even considering the additional \$3.5 million for increased RCMP salary costs for their new collective agreement. There's also an additional \$8 million that our Department of Infrastructure is paying to provide maintenance and utility services for the RCMP commercial and residential properties in the NWT.

All together that amounts to \$61.5 million that the Government of the Northwest Territories is paying to the RCMP. With costs like that, what are we getting from it? How are these increasing costs for policing making policing services better for the people of the NWT?

Mr. Speaker, there is much talk in numerous jurisdictions about cutting or reducing funding to the police yet here we are increasing those costs. Do these increased policing costs make people safer? Will they lead to a reduction in crime across the NWT? Are police doing more patrols throughout the communities? Are there ways to measure whether police are improving the quality or level of public safety within our communities? These are legitimate questions given the amount of money we are allocating here.

Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago Statistics Canada released two articles with detailed analysis of the perceptions and experiences of people in Canada, with particular focus on black and Indigenous people. Mr. Speaker, I speak unanimous consent to complete my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

According to these studies, black and Indigenous people are twice as likely than non-Indigenous non-visible minority people to report that they have little or no confidence in police. Additionally, the studies also state that one-third of Indigenous people reported experience in discrimination from people in the past five years.

Mr. Speaker, policing and police services is something that affects everyone in our society regardless of color, race, or background. Upholding and maintaining public safety is the core duty of policing. It is also a core duty of governments to ensure proper transparency and accountability is maintained in all police services in all jurisdictions. I

understand and I respect that policing in this country is done with an arm's length relationship between government and police services; however, as a public government we must provide proper oversight over the police to ensure public confidence and that peace, order, and good government is maintained. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 969-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING  
CORPORATION CUSTOMER SERVICE

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, mahsi. Mr. Speaker, today I am going to talk about the housing corporation customer service. I am speaking on behalf of my constituents, a couple, an elderly, who live in one of the communities. Their interaction with the housing corporation demonstrates how the bureaucracy of the corporation approach the communicate with our Indigenous homeowners.

Mr. Speaker, it is a total clash of culture.

Mr. Speaker, this couple has received at least eight formal letters from the housing corporation, three of which were formally served to them. But Mr. Speaker, the housing corporation does not realize this couple cannot read English. The corporation has not taken the time to get to know their clients to recognize they will never understand any letter that comes to them. The housing corporation can send 80 letters and the results will be the same. English is their second language and is a foreign language to them and they speak only broken English.

Mr. Speaker, they are also elderly and do not understand the world of administration and legal contracts. How the housing corporation administer their housing unit is totally alien to some people in the communities. This couple understands life in the bush - hunting, trapping, surviving the seasons, and speak Tlicho.

Mr. Speaker, this couple has no understanding of the information they have received from the housing corporation. What is the purpose of all these formal letters? To intimidate them? To advise my constituents to seek legal counsel? Mr. Speaker, they have no concept of the western legal system.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, the customer service standards for the NWT Housing Corporation need a dramatic overhaul. There needs to be an understanding between employees and clients. There needs to be communication and dialogue. If the housing corporation staff had made an effort to communicate or have a conversation with this

couple, they would have quickly understood that translation is required. Mr. Speaker, if this is happening to elders and others in my communities, what about all of the other elderly people in other communities? Mr. Speaker, can I have unanimous consent to conclude?

---Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker, there needs to be a better communication between the housing corporation and its clients and a triage support system for clients of both income support and the housing corporation. Regular communications between income assistance and the housing corporation is required with clients to ensure they feel secure in their homes with adequate financial support for all their needs. I will have questions for the Minister of Housing. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 970-19(2):  
SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE PARENTING WITH  
FASD

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, FASD is similar to trauma in that it changes the way a person responds to the world around them and how they fit within it. People with FASD require some of the same supports as a person who has experienced traumas.

Mr. Speaker, there is limited research available about FASD prevalence and even less research available on parenting with FASD. In studies I did find, less than 50 percent of children to parents with FASD were in the care of their parent. Parents with FASD are more likely to experience homelessness, domestic violence, and substance abuse.

FASD is a spectrum of disability and strengths, Mr. Speaker, and integrated service delivery, harm reduction programs, and mental health and wellness supports are prevention tools.

First, people need their basic needs met, like housing and food security. Second is a need for long-term individualized comprehensive supports like, for example, transportation to and from work, parenting mentorship programs or also respite, Mr. Speaker.

To achieve this, the GNWT needs two key things. First is pathfinder positions in the FASD diagnostic clinics to set up connections to FASD-informed and trauma-informed support services and to help people navigate the GNWT system. Second, a safe space to secure support without the fear of triggering a child and family services investigation.

In its first year, the adult FASD diagnostic clinic assessed 25 NWT adults, 20 of which were diagnosed with FASD. There are no statistics in the territory on the prevalence of FASD in our communities, Mr. Speaker, and no statistics on the prevalence of parents with FASD and to understand the magnitude of this issue, more research and data needs to be tracked.

We are on the tails of a pandemic that saw increased trauma, increased alcohol consumption, and increased family violence during isolation, Mr. Speaker. We need to talk more about FASD and continue to peel away the stigma. We need to change the narrative and we need to continue these conversations in this House and in our communities. But most of all, Mr. Speaker, we need clear paths to person centre supports for all Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 971-19(2):  
USE OF BIOMASS ENERGY IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mr. Speaker, I rise again to talk about the biomass energy in the Northwest Territories and the use of it, specifically to the NWT Housing Corporation, because the corporation itself has about 2600 units up and down the Valley and their fuel budget every year is \$9 million. Other departments have started on the biomass wood pellet boiler systems, specifically infrastructure, at that time it was Public Works and Services. We started incorporating them into their buildings and into the schools and I am familiar with the school in Fort Providence, I think that I voiced that many times here.

And, you know, I am concerned with the housing corporation because many of my people live in those units, about 80 or 90 percent in my community. And when we are talking about the year 2038 when O and M funding from CMHC will no longer be available, that is really concerning because it is the future of our people of the Northwest Territories and where they're going to live, what's the strategy for leading up to that date. I have asked before and we've never really got any answers related to that. And also, too, over a year ago I recall asking for a biomass energy plan from the NWT Housing Corporation and they basically said in 2021 that they would have one out by the spring. I think I mentioned it this past week, and so far there has been no report whatsoever. So it really makes me, you know, wonder about the sincerity of the department to come up with such a document. And I think, you know, many of us understand that savings is a big thing with this government since we are not gaining in revenue and all departments there probably should help the

corporation to realize some of these goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions because climate change is a real thing. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time, mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Recognition of the visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce today, I have got my auntie, Ms. Celine Proctor. She is a government service officer and works for the Department of Executive. I also have my cousin Ms. Tammy Proctor from Fort Good Hope, and also my brother Mr. Randy Kakfwi as well. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to acknowledge my wife Betty who is here. I think she is very excited to be here today because she told me this morning that it's very exciting that she gets to come and watch her son R.J. today. And she asked us to be nice to him. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to recognize respected elder from our community of Fort Resolution. I want to recognize Terry Villeneuve. I can't see her, but she's a former president of the Native Women's Association of the NWT. She also served on the Dene Nation Elder Council. She served as a chairperson on the AFN Women's Council at the national level. Ms. Villeneuve is retired and lives in Fort Resolution with her daughter Cindy Villeneuve.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** I also have another Member from the community of the N'dilo. I want to recognize Shirley Tsetta. She served on the Yellowknives Dene First Nation for three terms. She was a YKDFN community negotiator. She's also served as a secretary-treasurer of the Native Women's Association of the NWT. She also worked with all three mines - Ekati, Diavik, De Beers - to help implement the socio-economic agreement. And she's my C.A. Please welcome Shirley Tsetta.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

**MR. EDJERICON:** This is, I mean March 1st, COVID free and, this is great. I just want to also recognize a translator from our community as well. She's not up there but I just want to recognize Mary Rose Sundberg from our community from Dettah. She's also a translator here, mahsi. Tom Unka, also from Fort Resolution, and he's also a translator here as well. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Welcome. Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome, if we've anybody in the gallery today welcome to the Chamber and I hope you enjoy the proceedings. It is always nice to have an audience in the Chamber, especially after two years. Mahsi.

Replies to budget address, day 6 of 7. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements.

Colleagues, before we begin oral questions, our rules are generous regarding oral questions. We do not have hard time limits for questions or answers as you would see in some other jurisdictions. This allows Members to ask questions of importance to their constituents and for Ministers to provide meaningful responses.

Although we do not have time limits, our rules are clear regarding oral questions. Rule 7.2(1), oral questions must be concise and any preamble must be short. Similarly, when a Minister is answering, Rule 7.2(2) provides that the answer should be clear and concise.

Recently, I have noticed that many oral questions have included long preambles. Similarly, many responses have not been clear and concise.

Our rules permit all Regular Members to ask oral questions on each sitting day, which is not common in many other legislatures. In fact, if we use our time effectively, we can often see Members have the opportunity to ask multiple questions. However, when questions include long preambles and answers are not clear and concise, we can easily see situations where all Members may be unable to ask questions.

Colleagues, I remind you to follow our rules when asking and answering questions. This will ensure that all Members wishing to ask questions are able to do so and will help us make efficient use of our time in this House. Thank you, colleagues.

Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

## Oral Questions

### QUESTION 953-19(2): COSTS AND SERVICES RELATED TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health confirm what is the purpose and cost attributed to substance abuse and what does it comprise of? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to a government news release from November of 2020, the NWT spends \$2,329 per person on substance abuse treatment and aftercare versus the Canadian average of about half that amount.

I want to say that the total budget for facility-based treatment, aftercare, and related supports is \$20 million a year, and that accommodates in the facility-based treatment a high of 270 people in the 2018-2019 year and a low of 73 people in this fiscal year, obviously lower because of COVID.

And I also just want to note in closing, there is no limit on the amount of money we'll spend on southern-based treatment. The more people apply and who are accepted into the program, the more we'll pay for. Thank you.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm what aftercare supports for substance abuse are available for those returning from treatment in southern Canada? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. The process of welcoming someone home from southern-based treatment begins with a discharge plan that's created collaboratively with the person receiving treatment and with his or her supports in the NWT. So that person would be connected with community counselling for ongoing support. And there are, of course, a number of AA groups that are available in the larger centres. We have been working on aftercare support in the smaller communities by offering a peer support fund which communities can apply for specifically to assist people who are returning from treatment. Thank you.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm if her department has considered the need for transitional housing supports to those clients returning home after receiving treatment in the South? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. Yes, indeed, we have considered that and, in December, we

issued an expression of interest to Indigenous governments seeking communities who would be interested in operating a transitional housing program, which would be safe and sober housing closer to home for people who are returning from treatment. We got an uptake of four organizations who submitted an expression of interest, and the department is now working with them on the development of their applications. The budget for this fiscal year was \$750,000, and for next year is just over \$1 million. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pleased to hear that. You know, it's time that we move ahead and we try and provide the support to those that are, you know, battling and fighting addictions.

So I'd ask the Minister what strategies and action plans are in place to address how this government will support those returning from treatment in the south as we go forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. I mentioned the peer support program. There's also an addictions aftercare fund which communities are using to hire counsellors to provide ongoing support for people who are coming back and establishing themselves in a new and sober lifestyle.

We have an app for those who have the tools and the connectivity called Wagon, which was developed by Edgewood Institution in Nanaimo, and that's another possibility for people. Of course, we have the community counselling program for which no appointment is necessary. People can access on the same day. So we have a variety of ways of reaching out to people to help them with their journey to stay sober. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, I'm aware from my own life that staying sober, having invested the 30 days or 60 days in the program, is the biggest challenge, and we're here for people who are trying to do that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 954-19(2):  
INCREASING COSTS OF POLICING SERVICES  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Justice at all concerned with the increasing cost of policing services in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister responsible for Justice.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it's my job to be concerned about the budget of the Department of Justice and so, of course, I am concerned about these increasing costs.

The increasing costs are due to increasing demands, service demands on the RCMP, and I hear requests all the time from communities, from Indigenous governments, that they want more RCMP. I've never once heard in the territory that someone wants less RCMP.

There is an acknowledgement that perhaps RCMP aren't best suited to do everything, and they would agree with that, and so where we can we need to find ways to supplement those services so that the RCMP aren't focused on doing things that other entities or organizations could be. So because of that, we are piloting a community safety officer program and the hope is that that can expand and then reduce the demands on the RCMP.

Here in Yellowknife, there's been a number of services that have started up over the past number of years, primarily through non-profits, which have reduced the demand on the RCMP. So we are taking steps to address the rising costs.

Each year, the Minister of Justice provides policing priorities to the RCMP. There's four of them. And innovation, fiscal, and -- operational and fiscal innovation is one of those priorities that I put forward to the RCMP this year. Thank you.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if he believes policing in the NWT is conducted with the highest levels of transparency and accountability? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's varying levels of accountability. I know in jurisdictions in the United States, they elect their sheriffs and you could say that's the ultimate accountability. So we don't have a system like that but we are focusing on ensuring that the RCMP are taking steps to become more transparent and accountable to the public. And I mentioned my policing priorities. One of the other four is accountability and transparency. So I am focusing on this in response to, you know, concerns I've been hearing from people like the Member. Thank you.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if he believes policing transparency and accountability should be improved in the NWT; and if so, are there any specific tools at the Minister's disposal that he can utilize to do so? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And you can always get better at being more accountable and more transparent. I think that's true for every entity.

One of the tools that I have are those policing priorities which I mentioned. In addition, there are new initiatives that are likely rolling out in the coming year, such as body-worn cameras. And of course, and I mentioned this before, the Territorial Police Service Agreement has a number of checks and balances and a number of ways to ensure that the RCMP are accountable to the department. And as well, there's countless working groups, meetings, local-level meetings, national-regional meetings, that the government is involved with with the RCMP to ensure that we know what the RCMP is doing and that they are accountable to us and their operations are transparent. But there's the other aspect where the RCMP need to be more transparent to the public, just like we all do. And so to that end, I've had discussions with the commanding officer about taking steps to ensure that the public is more aware of what the RCMP are doing. That said, the RCMP are busy, and I think that, you know, that's reflected in the concerns I hear from around the territory, that they want -- the communities want more RCMP. So while I would like for the RCMP to go out and do a lot more community engagement and meet with people and, you know, hold meetings, the fact is they're busy doing what we pay them to do. So yes, we are working on it, and yes, there are tools, and yes, we are utilizing them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if he has had any significant discussions with the federal minister of public safety about potential solutions to improve transparency and accountability of the RCMP and policing services in general? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have significant concerns about the transparency and accountability of the RCMP so I haven't had those types of conversations. That said, I do have regular conversations with the commanding officer of G-division; the department has regular conversations as well. So those conversations are ongoing. And noting the -- your comments earlier, I will keep this last remark brief. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

QUESTION 955-19(2):

GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES REMOTE WORK POLICY

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions, as I said, are for the Minister of Finance for whom human resources I guess falls underneath her.

How many GNWTs are working outside of the territory? Because according to my Member's statement, in the news article there were 29, and I just want to know if the Minister can confirm if this is accurate? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister responsible for Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as of January 31st, there are 31 employees on active duty working outside of the territory. That represents about .4 percent of the total work force. The majority -- the vast majority of those, of course, would have been approved by their supervisors prior to this policy taking effect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the concerns that I brought forward in my Member's statement is that if these positions are, you know, outside the territory, they could be taking away from residents that are in the Northwest Territories. So of these now 31 positions, can the Minister confirm have they moved away or are they just temporarily away, or is this a precedent that we're setting that could potentially lead to more people leaving the Northwest Territories to work remotely and become residents in other territories and provinces? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the ability to work outside of the territory is meant to be for exceptional purposes only, and "exceptional" is really just that. It's, for example, if you have a child who has to get medical care, specialized medical care for a period of time that is not available here and you need to go care for your child, well, that's pretty exceptional. It is not for people who simply prefer to live somewhere else, who might have family that they'd like to see. It's not a matter of convenience. It is for exceptional purposes only.

And you know, I don't want to pre-empt where the Member might be going, Mr. Speaker, but I would also note that with respect to being outside of a community other than Yellowknife, the policy's actually quite express that this is not a -- that people are not being authorized to have a worm out work arrangement if they live -- if they want to live in Yellowknife and their position is located outside of Yellowknife, that is not authorized under this policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So thank you to the Minister for her answer and yes, she's reading my mind because she has my questions, but. So I know the intent of this is not to fill GNWT positions with non-NWT residents. It was pretty -- predominantly, you know, a recommendation made by the government OPs

committee too to establish this remote work policy for instances of a pandemic where everybody gets sent home, because we didn't have it.

But what steps are being taken to put in place that, you know -- that people aren't moving out of the territory and that employees that are in positions and getting approval that they haven't taken up residence and they actually live and their primary residence is the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, the Member's quite right. This certainly speaks to the experience we've all had during COVID-19. But this was something that was considered even before that. It's a direction that a lot of the public service -- sorry, the human resources experts are starting to look at across Canada. We want to be a workplace that is keeping up with the direction of human resources approaches. We want to be a workplace that is considered attractive to bring people here and not so that people will leave and want to have that flexibility for folks who may be outside of a headquarters region or a regional position and who can now work in their home positions. It's the policy and the guidelines that go with it are structured to do just that. People have to be providing their addresses of where they're going to be living, providing photographs of their work site for as much to ensure that they're in a safe position to work with in that position, and that is going to be monitored. If anything, by putting the policy in place like this now, now there actually is some guidelines. It's not a matter of one person or another who prefers to work down south might get a one-off approval. That's not going to fly anymore because now you have to actually be applying whether or not you fit within this policy as being directed from human resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

**MS. SEMMLER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the potential impacts of this policy, I believe there needs to be more transparency and oversight.

Will the Minister commit to publishing statistics on remote work policy in the public service annual reports? I'd like to see the reporting on the number of jobs done in a different community and the reasons for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the public service annual report certainly is one place that we might be able to report on this. I have no concern in saying that we will definitely be able to report back, just as we are today, about the total number of residents who might be working either outside of the territory or who are working in some sort of remote arrangement and whether that is in the public service report or whether

somewhere on our website. I will see that it does get published somewhere and inform the Members when we've made that decision as to what's the best place to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 956-19(2):  
PEOPLE PARENTING WITH FASD

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Sorry, I'm not operating off of paper today.

My first question for the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is what type of data about the prevalence of FASD in the NWT and people parenting with FASD does Health and Social Services collect? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's question. FASD is a common concern in the NWT, unfortunately.

We have the statistics that she quoted about people who have been to the diagnostic clinics. But for the population as a whole, we don't have data that tells us what the incidence of FASD is per thousand population. It's been estimated by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health that it's eight per one thousand population. But it is more prevalent in some populations than others. So we don't really have a firm grip of the number of people who have FASD at any age. Much of the difficulty here has to do with diagnosis. Sometimes people choose not to be diagnosed, or the parents choose not to have their children diagnosed, and so this is really a self-reporting metric. And for reasons that have to do with shame and fear of intervention by child and family services, people may choose not to go that route. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The NWT is definitely not alone in that. When looking for data and research worldwide, it's definitely -- the stigma around FASD is definitely shared and by having these conversations, I think we can do our part to try and strip away that stigma.

I'm wondering if part of the adult FASD clinic identifies whether or not the person taking part in the clinic is a parent? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. That's a very interesting question, whether that is something that's acknowledged, and I don't have that information off the top of my head. I know that they -- they're concerned with the person himself or herself, but I'm not sure if they take their family circumstances into

consideration but, of course, it would be useful to know that. So I appreciate the question. Thank you.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that the Minister said is absolutely true, is that it's a self-reporting mechanism. But part of being able to have the opportunity to self-report is having access to that clinic. And so I'm wondering how many communities will the adult diagnostic clinic travel to in 2022 and how many NWT residents do they plan to assess? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the difficulty here is that the FASD -- the adult FASD clinic was launched in 2020 which was not a year in which there was a lot of travelling around. That said, last year the program was able to visit Behchoko and Fort Providence, and I think that generally they committed to travelling to four different locations a year.

So based on what's happened to date, 25 people have been to the adult FASD diagnostic clinic, and 133 children and youth went to the FASD diagnostic and support program. So we would want to see those numbers as good or better in the year to come if the COVID restrictions remain the way they are; that is to say, it's much easier to travel. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final short supplementary, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if Health and Social Services will commit to establishing navigator or case worker positions within the adult diagnostic clinic to provide that individualized personal and centered supports that their clients need? Thank you.

**HON. JULIE GREEN:** Yes, thank you. I was under the impression that that was in fact being done now by people who work at the FASD clinic, who provide services to people who have a confirmed diagnosis, that there was some pathway navigation going on in that situation. But I can certainly confirm that and provide the Member with that detail. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 957-19(2):  
LABOUR MARKET SUPPLEMENT FOR HEALTH  
CARE WORKERS

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the Minister of Health and Social Services Minister's statement today, she mentioned that the gap between what we pay our nurses and what other jurisdictions are paying is closing, and we are one of the only jurisdictions in Canada that, during

COVID-19, did not give recruitment and retention bonuses. But one line jumped out at me is that we -- she went to FMB and got approval to give those bonuses and then in consultation with the union there was not agreement to provide that money.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, who is responsible for that relationship, can I just get an explanation of what is going on here; why we can't pay our nurses more money? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Finance.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So Mr. Speaker, the labour market supplement was something that we didn't have before. It does provide a tool. Given that the collective agreement is the bargaining document on which all of the salaries are based, all the recruitment -- any recruitment bonuses would be based, the total package of salary is based. So to go outside of that to offer something extra, we had to create this labour market supplement that would give us that proper tool or that basis on which to do that. In that policy, it does state that, of course, still the UNW remains the representative for all of our employees. And so before going ahead and doing something such as a labour market supplement, we would consult with them. The policy itself speaks quite clearly to the conditions under which one group of employees would be offered an enhancement to their salary. There's some fairly specific parameters that it's for certain conditions, particularly when there are shortages, particularly when there's great need. For instance, also that it would be the kind of a position that goes to health and safety of the people of the Northwest Territories. So when we apply that policy and we get to a certain point, we then go to the UNW and unfortunately we weren't able to come to an agreement. They took a different view as to what might be appropriate or needed in the circumstances. And again, you know, Mr. Speaker, they're there to represent their people and we are doing our best to maintain that relationship. We'll continue to do so. And as the Minister of Health detailed today, there are many other avenues by which we are going to continue to pursue an improvement for the morale of the staff over in the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the Minister, you know, probably there was some negotiations maybe going on, or still ongoing in this matter, but I am still looking for a bit of an explanation of how this did not happen.

I hear that we got a labour market supplement. Somehow we got money out of cabinet, never an easy task, and we wanted to pay nurses more money and the union said we will not let our members have

more money, is what I am hearing. Can I just get a clarification from the Minister as to why they said that? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I am not here to speak on behalf of the union. That would not be appropriate. It's a relationship that I have a great deal of respect for. So I'm not going to combat out and detail what their own reasons would be and be certainly seen to be speaking on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where in the course of a pandemic, we have held firm on not having cutbacks to our services and not having cuts to the public service. But to do that, we are running a lean operation. And so to be able to be offering any kind of additional bonuses and salary on top of the existing collective agreement, which does have increases in it unlike some jurisdictions during the last pandemic -- during this pandemic, in order to do that we're running a lean operation, Mr. Speaker, and there's only so much we can do and it's going to have to be narrow and targeted, and that was the position we were attempting to take here. As I said again, Mr. Speaker, we're not done looking for ways to continue to improve the system for nursing staff but we're just going to have to do that in a different way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 958-19(2):  
MACTUNG AND CANTUNG MINE SITES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism, and Investment, who seems to have the lead on the management of the Cantung and Mactung properties.

When I look at the list of creditors, I see that GNWT's owed \$5.528 million from this operation. Can the Minister tell us how much North American Tungsten actually owes us, for what, and when we expect to recover that money? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism, and Investment.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can go and look into the specific number the Member is quoting. My understanding is that when the GNWT purchased the Mactung asset, we did so and that became our asset. Canada, of course, owns the Cantung property. And at this point, the two parties toher are agreeing to market those assets as one and as such, as we go forward, there's nothing more owed to the GNWT by North American Tungsten. So again, I'll double check to confirm if there's some

misunderstanding on what's on there, Mr. Speaker. At this point, we're proceeding with a process that's well underway and, in fact fairly advanced, in order to see that the Mactung and Cantung properties are sold and benefits are accrued to the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'll be happy to send her the list of creditors from the court-appointed receivers website, so.

But as I understand it, GNWT has decided to try to market the Mactung property and the Cantung mine site with the feds but there has been little to no interest over seven years. Can the Minister explain what is going on with proposed sale of the Mactung property and when the taxpayers of the NWT can expect to recover their so-called "investment"? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, these two properties were, of course, jointly owned previously by North American Tungsten. So not particularly unusual that we'd be looking to have them sold together now. What made it a bit more unusual is that you're involving multiple layers of governments. We've got the Government of Canada and the GNWT and even the Yukon government's involved to a certain degree in terms of this being -- the Cantung property being in the Yukon. All three, we're all coming together. There's governments in the region have come together. Much discussion has taken place.

I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, there's been an RFP out to some shortlisted proponents as of March of 2021. It closed only just last month. And we are right now actually in the midst of reviewing those bids. A due diligence process needs to take place. But, Mr. Speaker, you might note that there's a bit of a delay between those two dates but that was entirely for the purpose of engaging further with some of the Indigenous governments in that region, and I'm very hopeful that we'll be in a position to report back positively in short order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister again for that.

The Mactung-Cantung properties are 140 kilometres away from each other by air, 700 kilometres by road. It's unlikely that some buyer's going to take these on as some sort of viable mining operation without significant concessions and subsidies.

Can the minister explain why GNWT's attempting to sell these properties together and whether we will offer further concessions and subsidies? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my last answer, Mr. Speaker, these two properties were jointly owned previously so having them as one unit under one owner is not particularly unusual. They are both highgrade Tungsten properties. Tungsten, of course, is one of the 31 critical minerals and metals on Canada's critical metals list, and under current geopolitical circumstances that may well help make these properties particularly in greater value and incentivize a private owner.

Mr. Speaker, again, we are working with Canada on this; Canada having the ownership of Cantung and us having Mactung. So we're working together to see that the two properties are sold together. And to do so, Mr. Speaker, there's no intention to start offering subsidies. That's not generally been the way that things happen in the Northwest Territories. We do have incentive programs, such as the mining incentive program, and that might help leverage some investment on the Mactung property in particular, which is an exploration property. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister again for her response.

The Cantung and Mactung saga is another example of post-devolution mismanagement of our resources. Can the Minister explain what lessons have been learned from our mismanagement of the Cantung and Mactung properties? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I would accept or agree with the characterization of "mismanagement" on this. I think the story has yet to be finished and is yet to be written. Indeed, as I've said, staff from the Department of ITI are quite active right now in terms of doing their due diligence and hoping for a positive outcome on the sale. In fact, if anything, Mr. Speaker, this has been an example where although at the time of the sale there was some disagreements perhaps between Canada and the GNWT about how to proceed, we were able to set aside what differences there were, sign an MOU, and are working together to market the properties and share in the costs of doing so and now work together with the Indigenous governments of the region as we proceed to a point where there is hopefully a final and solid proponent who could take over and move this forward.

So again, there's no doubt going to be some lessons to learn but it may well be that they're all positive outcomes in the end, and I'm sure we will be able to -- once I'll be able to share that, have more

dialogue in the House about that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 959-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING  
CORPORATION CUSTOMER SERVICE

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How many Housing Corporation staff have completed the Living Well Together training that supports cultural awareness and sensitivity among GNWT employees? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Housing.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With our staff and our client service staff at the local housing authority and within the corporation itself, it is important that we improve our services as well and looking at the Living Well Together and providing those numbers, I don't have that on hand with me right now. But government employees and specifically for the housing -- the Department of the Housing Corporation, they are supposed to be completing this program and really emphasizing on working in Indigenous communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** I am concerned, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation staff in this particular case, as I stated in my Member's statement, continue to communicate with my constituents in a way that is not recognized, understood, or acknowledged, when it is the responsibility put back on staff to confirm clients understand the message.

Does the Housing Corporation have guidelines or standards to provide customer service expectation to staff? Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Member for raising such an important question, and it's something that the Housing Corporation has included with our review of our policies and programming as well too. And coming from a small community as well, this is quite important for me because I do understand the language barriers that are real situations at the ground level and also the interpretation of our contracts and our documents as well too, that they need to be simplified and they need to be properly communicated. This is something I will take back to the Housing Corporation to improve our client service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** What expectation are put on regional housing authorities to ensure that

clients with English as a second language are given fair and equitable support? Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's very important for me to making sure that our programs and services are fairly communicated. I just want to inform the Member as well too that we do have the local housing authorities which are -- the percentage of that representation is -- the majority is Indigenous. And looking at how we could better improve those services, communicating and language, I will bring that back to the corporation and I will -- making sure that we do have an emphasis on those communication and those interpretation of those legal documents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Housing Corporation use interpreters to communicate with clients whose first language is not English? Thank you.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is something that I will improve with the corporation. And just, you know, I need to recognize as well too that we do have elders in the smaller communities. We do have just single languages that are spoken that are first before English and I will make sure that we do have those services available as well too, and not only at the local housing authority level but also at the district level as well too. It's very important to be having those options at the local community level. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 960-19(2):  
THREE-YEAR ENERGY PLAN

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question from March 29th, 2021, in which the Minister stated that they're currently developing their own three-year energy action plan to be released in the spring. The plan would include, you know, cost-effective residential biomass system investments in other NWT communities.

Mr. Speaker, I've grown cobwebs waiting for the report. This is really -- I'm just wondering from the Minister, because they were working on it and currently developing, it said at that time, why nothing was progressed on this file at all? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Member's comments as well too

that, you know, the Housing Corporation building and energy efficiency is quite important and we look at those new builds going forward and making sure that the areas where we could see improvement. The energy -- the energy plan is to be -- just a second, I have a -- our energy plan is to be presented to the standing committee in the spring of this year, 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at that time we were specifically talking about wood pellet boiler systems for Housing Corporation units in the outlying communities as a possible way for savings through the fuel bills and the bottom line for the budget of the GNWT. And I really hope this energy plan, as I stated before housing is always referencing repairs for efficiencies, like sealing doors and fixing broken windows, but this one here I wanted it to be a wood pellet boiler energy action plan. I'm wondering if the Minister would commit to that. Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Member as well too because he's putting a lot of emphasis on the wood pellet boiler system as well. But like I had said before is that I'm not too sure for the supply, that I need to bring this back to the department. The question was asked earlier this week, and looking at where we would be able to provide this service and also looking at education and training, maintenance of that system as well too.

One of the things that the corporation has looked at was the biomass projects as well too, and to date we have 53 units that we had advanced here in Yellowknife and looking forward to be working in partnership with the Department of Infrastructure on completing those projects. Correction, they were actually -- they were actually completed this year. It's eight units at Sissons Court here in Yellowknife, and that was a project that was completed with the Department of Infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As I stated too last week that I was very impressed with the values and vision of the corporation and where they got innovation, and I was kind of excited about that, because they continue to -- you know, they strive to improve. They're creative, adaptable, and flexible. Some of that stuff is leading well to the energy -- the wood pellet boiler energy plan. And I also stated about the contract services, Mr. Speaker. We can -- to encourage these contract services to the LHOs, you know, the department could consider contracting out these services so the contractor would purchase, install, and maintain those wood pellet boiler systems, which relieves the NWT Housing Corporation of any maintenance issues there except to tie in their house. And also it stimulates the local economy and --

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ask the question, please.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Will the Minister consider this contract services for the future? Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to bring this back to my department to look at further analysis as well too. And I'm not too much of a huge fan for contract services, that, you know, we could look at local training and emphasizing and investing into the local community level, but I'm not familiar with the wood pellet system.

And the other thing I just wanted to emphasize on is the biomass investment, that the Housing Corporation does have currently a federal application to support these projects going forward. But I can follow up with the Member for further information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final short supplementary, Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I note the time was 18 minutes and we only got -- we're done with all the other speakers.

But I noted the Minister mentioned there was a project here in Yellowknife that they were completing, and she also mentioned previously that Aklavik has a system that the corporation is utilizing from a local contractor or a local organization that's heating one of their buildings. I'm just wondering if the Minister could share information in terms of savings through the corporation since that incorporation of that arrangement. Mahsi.

**HON. PAULIE CHINNA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have those energy savings numbers at my fingertips right now, and looking at those comparisons I can provide those numbers to the Member as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Great Slave.

QUESTION 961-19(2):  
PROHIBITION CREEK ACCESS ROAD

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to deviate a little bit from my Member's statement and ask the Minister of Infrastructure some questions.

I'm wondering if the Minister could please provide us an update on the Prohibition Creek access road. It's my understanding that the bid came in too high and has not been accepted so I'm just curious to know where we're at. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Prohibition Creek access road is one of our priorities of this Assembly and therefore it's something that we need to advance.

We did receive some funding from the federal government, ICIP funding that brings us -- you know, the ICIP program goes until 2028. We're still in process of phase 1. The project's broken up into two phases. The first phase includes the seven kilometre portion from Canyon Creek to the Christina Creek. The second phase is to include the remaining six kilometres of Christina Creek to Prohibition Creek. So right now, we're still in the procurement for the construction of the first phase. So we're still in that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me whether the department plans to re-tender the first phase, or will there be a sole source contract going out? What is the plan now that the first tender didn't result in a successful bid? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So right now, as I mentioned, we're still looking at some of the procurement options. We've gone back to the contractor and trying to look at ways to be able to get some of the work started. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. I hope that there's an opportunity to at least break down the contract a bit then to get the work started if need be. I guess my next question is that because there is a bit of a delay now in this project, and I'm guessing because the Minister answered that we're going until 2028 with the funding that we're not in any sort of danger of losing that federal funding if we're a little bit slower with the project than planned? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the last thing we want is to be able to lose some of these projects going forward, especially if that's our priority to advance. However, we still need to work through some of the procurement processes to be able to work with the contractor, our Department of Finance, perhaps go back to the feds and have a relook at some of the funding options. We'll also be chatting with Canada because we feel like this is important, it is a priority, so. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that road or a portion of that road opens in this Assembly, will the Minister commit to taking me for the opening? Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely. I mean, this is a big advancement and

we're hoping to also proceed on to some of the other projects up the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 578-19(2):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,  
2021-2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 579-19(2):  
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS  
EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2021-2022

TABLED DOCUMENT 580-19(2):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM –  
WELCOMING VISITORS – 2022-2023  
MARKETING PLAN

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents: Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2021-2022; Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2021-2022; and the Northwest Territories Tourism 2022-2023 Marketing Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Member for Thebacha.

TABLED DOCUMENT 581-19(2):  
ARTICLE FROM THE DAILY DATED FEBRUARY  
16, 2022 – "BLACK AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S  
CONFIDENCE IN POLICE AND EXPERIENCES  
OF DISCRIMINATION IN THEIR DAILY LIVES"

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table an article from The Daily dated February 16th, 2022 entitled "Black and Indigenous people's confidence in the police and experiences of discrimination in their daily lives". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 23, Bill 29, Bill 38; Member's Statement 202-19(2); Tabled Document 561-19(2); Tabled Document 567-19(2).

Colleagues, by the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize to sit beyond

the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

---SHORT RECESS

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Madam la Presidente. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023, with Infrastructure and Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I'll now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we've agreed to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023, and we are doing the Department of Infrastructure. Does the Minister of Infrastructure have any opening remarks?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Yes, I do, and someone took them off my desk so I'll just find my set here.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm here to present the 20 -- that's not off to a good start, I apologize. We're here until 8.

I'm here today to present the 2022-2023 Main Estimates for the Department of Infrastructure. Overall, the department's estimates propose a consistent budget of the 2021-2022 Main Estimates of \$278.8 million. These estimates support the mandate objectives for the Department of Infrastructure while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include:

- Forced growth increase of \$2.3 million. This includes \$1.1 million in leases, \$370,000 in community airport contracts, \$478,000 in winter salt, and two new positions: \$163,000 for occupational health and safety in South Slave region, and \$135,000 for the new highway transportation officer for North Slave, including the new Tlicho Highway.

- Also included are sunsets of \$7.9 million. This amount consists of a \$7.6 million cash flow adjustment for the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, \$175,000 of lease associated with the Stanton physiotherapy space, and \$165,000 for the department climate change specialist position that is related to the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework.
- Other adjustments include a net increase of \$6.5 million, which includes a \$4.7 million adjustment to the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, when netted against the related sunset, which is a \$2.9 million dollar decrease in 2022-2023 to adjust funds into later years. It also includes a \$1.8 million for collective agreement increases, and a reduction of funding for travel of \$304,000.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 19th Assembly and support the vision of the Budget 2020 by investing in and modernizing strategic and NWT airport infrastructure, which connects our communities, promoting energy efficiency and sustainability, all while continuing to prioritize and responsible spending.

- The department will work towards our goals outlined in the 2030 Energy Strategy and will again provide \$2.74 million in core funding to the Arctic Energy Alliance.
- The NWT-wide energy programs, include those that are delivered by Arctic Energy continue to be supplemented through the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, which was extended for an additional two years, to March of 2024.
- The Yellowknife Airport Revolving Fund has withstood recent challenges and continues to support the development of a 20-year master plan to guide short, medium, and long-term planning in support of economic growth and sustainability.
- The department will also maintain its annual investment of \$1.5 million of financial contributions to communities through the community access program. This helps support improvements to local transportation infrastructure such as access and winter roads, marine facilities, trails, while providing communities with direct employment, skill development opportunities, and economic and capacity-building benefits.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. And we will be going in the order as it is in the main estimates. So do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, will you please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today, I have Mr. Steve Loutitt, deputy minister of Infrastructure closest to me. And Mr. Gary Brennan, the ADM of regional operations. When we get to the energy and strategic initiatives activity, Madam Chair, if we can switch out Mr. Loutitt.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Just remind me when we get there if I forget, okay. Thank you.

Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does committee agree to proceed to the detailed contained in the tabled document? Committee, we'll defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary beginning with the asset management starting on page 239 with information items on page 242. Questions. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm looking on page 240 under transportation, and during the 2020-2021 actuals, there was quite a significant increase to the cost associated with transportation. And then that number has now come down again for the main estimates for 2022-2023. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what caused that large jump in the actuals for last year. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. The travel had a variance. The surplus is due to less travelling that occurred as per our COVID-19 restrictions, and the decrease is the reduction in the supplementary appropriation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My next question is in regards to utilities found on the same page. I notice that utilities is not seeing an increase in the 2022-2023 Main Estimates. And given the increase that we have seen in all costs, especially utility costs, I'm wondering why there's no increase to that line item for the 2022-2023 Main Estimates? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'll get Mr. Brennan to speak to the details.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, so there's no increase here. This utilities is for our mobile equipment. The utilities budget actually sits in regional operations under the main estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm going to move on to the next page, to page 241, which has Deh Cho Bridge opportunities at \$200,000. And it's described as a grant for the purpose of creating community benefits and economic opportunities related to the Deh Cho Bridge. And so I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what that 200,000 affords the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Deh Cho Bridge opportunities grant was a 35-year annual grant that started in April 1st of 2013 under what was called the Community Operations and Involvement Agreement. So the agreement was signed in 2010, and Infrastructure has an agreement with the Fort Providence Deh Gah Bridge Limited for a payment of 200,000 annually. There is no funding criteria, rather a set payment. So the organization provides Infrastructure with annual financial and operation reports, and this funding is used by the organization for cultural well-being, education, training, economic development, and a small portion goes to admin.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any other Members who wish to ask questions under the infrastructure asset management? Seeing none, please turn to page 240, Infrastructure, asset management, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$16,593,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We'll now turn -- hello? We'll now turn to corporate management beginning on page 243, with information items on page 245. Questions from Members under this section?

Seeing none, please turn to page 244, Infrastructure, corporate management, operation expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$7,989,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. We will move now to energy and strategic initiatives. Sergeant-at-Arms, please, can you switch out the witnesses.

All right. So energy and strategic initiatives beginning on page 246, with information items on page 250. Oh, Minister, did you want to introduce your witness.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'd like to introduce Robert Jenkins. He's ADM for energy and strategic initiatives.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, and welcome. Are there any questions from Members on the energy and strategic initiatives? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is an area with a lot of money going out to different organizations, which I think is great. I'm just looking at the -- sorry, I just wanted to ask some questions around the biomass energy and just where we're at in looking at diversifying our dependence on diesel, and could the Minister or the department speak a little bit more to perhaps if we would be seeing more money needed there, or there's not a change from last year to this year's? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Since 2006, the GNWT has installed more than 40 more biomass boiler systems in all regions in the Northwest Territories. Our biomass program consumed approximately 8600 tonnes of wood pellets at GNWT assets during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, which results in displacement of approximately 4.38 million litres of fuel oil, which is equivalent to offset about 11,750 tonnes of GHG emissions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My next question is around the Arctic Energy Alliance. We're not seeing any changes there for the amount of funding that's being provided. Is the alliance on track to spend all their money this year, will they be overprescribed or undersubscribed? I think this is a great program so, you know, if there's opportunities to put more money there to help our residents, that'd be great. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister for Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Arctic Energy Alliance receives about \$2.74 million in core ongoing funding from the GNWT. So the funding supports alternative energy and efficiency programs as well as for our six regional

offices, which is Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Whati, and Fort Simpson.

So last year, the GNWT provided over \$5.2 million. So, I mean, core funding for this year, for 2021-2022, is about -- including LSAP is \$6.6 million. I understand where the Member's coming from in terms of, you know, perhaps the projects, given the uptake in the amount of assistance that we're giving, that this is something that we're able to work with Canada on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just also looking at these in the same area, the energy efficiency incentive program. It's at a hundred thousand. At one point, we had given \$200,000 there. I'm just wondering if that's a COVID spike, or if we're looking to put more money here in coming years. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is the Member speaking about our CAP program? No.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Did you want to clarify, Member for Great Slave?

**MS. NOKLEBY:** The energy efficiency incentive program. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to see if Mr. Jenkins can speak a little bit more about it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Yes, thank you Madam Chair. This is one we're allowed to go back and probably provide followup in terms of the \$200,000 there on that program.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you for that. So funding will be provided to be able to align with an update on that program as needed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Does that mean that the department would be looking to come back for more money from us, or would be looking to find that money internally? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Madam Chair, no.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I asked an either/or question, not a yes or no. So will you be coming back for more money from us?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Madam Chair, so we'll find that capacity internally. So we'll look within our department. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And since the Minister brought it up, I'll ask around the CAP program, the community access program. I see that there is more money here than there was in the 2020-2021 Actuals, which is a great. Do we expect that this program will be fully subscribed. And if it is and there's more asks, will we be finding more money for it? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the CAP program provides about \$1.5 million in financial contributions and technical assistance, and I don't need to remind the Member what areas of assistance we provide. So the upcoming year, a total of 18 projects in 15 communities across the territory have been approved for about \$1.45 million. The project proposals are accepted twice a year. Again, it's proposed so we encourage communities to be able to submit proposals. And the sooner the better. I mean, we try and ensure that a lot of these programs are done equally across the territories. It is application on annual. And, you know, some of the things that we look at, and just I think this is good information for the communities, are things like the merit of the project proposal, the level of community support that's included in the proposal, and whether sufficient funds are remaining in the budget. Right now, I do want to say that this program is fully subscribed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad to hear that it's fully subscribed and the Minister's support of it.

How much does the department work with the communities to help them prepare those proposals?

You know, we often hear about the capacity issues. So it's one thing if they're having to write the federal government for money but then we're even making them write proposals to us. So I just want to know how much the department helps with that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to ask Mr. Jenkins to be able to speak on -- I mean, he's in charge of the department and knows what the capacity is and be able to see how our department assists, because I think that's a very important question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So we do have a staff person who works with communities in terms of applications. Also obviously we have regional superintendents, you know, across the territory that talk to communities, really to make sure that they're aware of sort of the deadlines, the application process. You know, and we were pretty successful this year. We had 18 projects in 15 communities in the summer and we had 12 projects in 12 communities in the winter. So again, it's roughly around \$1.5 million. You know, the projects are approved for a certain amount. Sometimes money comes back because not all the funds are expended. But it's been a very successful program. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And, yeah, I think I've said it often that I support getting as much money into the communities to do their projects as possible and at their direction.

I guess my last question's just around the Tulita Solar Project. Well, I understand why there's no money there now; the project is complete. I'm just curious to know if the department is looking at another community in order to expand or create this type of program somewhere else. And I do believe there was also community training that was involved with this program with technicians. So it's another great way to increase community employment while reducing emissions and hydrocarbon impacts. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to -- my understanding is that we're not, but I just want to get clarification from

the department to ensure that what I'm saying is, indeed, correct. So Mr. Brennan.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so the Tulita project is obviously finished, and at this time the department is not really looking at the program, although we do have some federal funding under the ICIP program, which we've went into communities for some calls on. There was some discussions with I do believe it was the community of Fort Good Hope and then they went and sought some funding on their own, and I think right now they're working on it by themselves. So at this time while we don't have any projects or programs in place, there is some ICIP funding that could be utilized if a community was interested there. So, yeah, thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I did say that that was my last question but I did spur something that I thought of.

I'm just wondering, I've heard about the thermal anomaly around the Deh Cho area, and I'm just wondering if the department is looking at that potentially for any sort of heating or power source in that region. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I've not heard about that. You know, and I know in the Deh Cho we're looking at the transmission line, but I mean, that's another subject. I'm going to look at Mr. Jenkins to see if he has anything that I'm not aware of in terms of, you know, projects in the region. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that the Member may be referring to geothermal heat, the use of geothermal heat.

There is a project that's been -- work done on, research done on, in just near Fort Liard in terms of geothermal heat and sort of really just trying to understand the resource and would it be viable, really is the point that we're at. But there's been some work that's been done on that project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the first question is with respect to Arctic Energy Alliance, and I see that the funds there have been pretty stagnant there over the years. And I was just -- for new initiatives, one thing that somebody brought to my attention, I guess with the rising price of fuel for vehicles and that, is -- and which isn't on the list, is motorized bicycles which allow you to -- you know, to ride the bike and then coast for a while. Is there any chance of something like that being added? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to ask the department if this is something that, you know, we can look at. I mean, right now within some of our funding programs that align with some of the Arctic Energy Alliance projects, things like the vehicles, a number of other programs. So I'm going to see if perhaps Mr. Jenkins has anything to add in terms of -- I mean, great idea. You see it all over the other places in the world. So I just want to see if that's something that's doable. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So a great question. We did work with the Arctic Energy Alliance to launch a pilot program for electric vehicles in 2020, and we've had some good success with that. So, you know, something for us to go back and talk with Arctic Energy Alliance about, other modes of transportation that are supported through batteries and electric vehicles. So something for us to take back and consider. But we have had good success with that electric vehicle rebate program so far. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I just want to be clear, this isn't for me, because I usually just power along on my own power.

The next one here is business support program. Can the Minister just elaborate on what that actually is and give me some examples? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm looking at the business support program. It's designed to help businesses in the Northwest Territories to implement renewable energy and efficiency projects. So I'm going to ask Mr. Jenkins if he can provide perhaps some examples on things that we've done with the fund. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So I don't have any examples that come to mind in terms of the project. We'd have to follow up with some specific examples for the Member. I don't have any at-hand that I can relay today. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

The next one is the energy guide for houses. I see that again it's at \$190,000 and then continuous. Has there been an uptake in that over the last two years considering people have been home and the increased cost of goods and building material and utilities as well? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, if you look at our energy contributions, you will notice that we in the past have gone from 190 to the actual of 150. So that just tells the story perhaps maybe it's not but the energy guide for houses, it's a program that we work with Arctic Energy Alliance, to be able to assist homeowners and businesses to be able to complete some of the energy efficiency audits. And I know, you know, it was brought to our attention on the floor at one point where perhaps where we've got an overtake in there but not enough capacity to be able to do the work. So I mean, we have that balance, and I know that's been a struggle for people who have signed up to be able to get a home energy audit. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I think that's an important area, you know, that some focus should go on just because of rising costs and, you know, in Hay River, for example, you know, last couple weeks ago, a lot of people got propane bills for a thousand plus dollars for a month. So, you know, it's getting a little bit scary out there for residents.

The next item is the incremental Arctic Energy Alliance programs. We showed revised estimates at 3,831. Now we're down to 1,585. Just explain that; thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If I can ask the Member to perhaps provide what page

they're referring to and then I can -- it would be a little easier for me to go back to that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Page 248 on the main estimates.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Mr. Brennan to provide that information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so what the Member is referring to is a result of a re-cash flow due to our Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund.

So we had a four-year agreement for low carbon -- LCEL program, and we've extended it by two years. So we've done a re-cash flow throughout the next two years. So that decrease that you're seeing is actually moving money into two fiscal years by upwards of \$4 million over two years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Members, can you please wait for your light to go on before you start speaking so it gives some time for the interpreters to catch up. Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I will.

The next item is Students Against Drinking and Driving. You know, we talk about drinking and driving. Is there any I guess program that's equivalent to that for drug use? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Students Against Drinking Driving is a program that'd be able to support awareness to high school students in the territories so that they can make safer choices when travelling on vehicle or passenger roads or trails. Madam Chair, this is not a lot of money. We recognize that. But I mean, it is a campaign tool that we used in the past to be able to ensure that we don't have students drinking, driving, and provide awareness. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister, I think the Member was asking whether we have something equivalent for drug use and driving.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So I will ask Jenkins to be able to see what we have -- if we're able to expand in this area as well because they're both very -- not good. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So obviously good point raised by the Member here. And, of course, this program is, you know, labelled Students Against Drinking and Driving but obviously the program itself really is to sort of promote driving under the influence. So whether that be alcohol or drugs. So thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The next one is there was a line item there for -- or there is one for Tulita Solar Project and, you know, that is done by the looks of it. And is there any other -- is there an indication that -- or is the department looking at any other projects? For instance, wind. Because Hay River being on the lake, it would be nice to see something being done with, you know, in respect to that in the South Slave. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The department, you know, we have an energy strategy that we need to meet. We are advancing some of the projects such as the transmission lines that's happening in the Deh Cho and perhaps the Inuvik wind projects happening in the Beaufort Delta.

The department did look into two wind projects in Sachs Harbour, in Norman Wells. Unfortunately, it was not feasible and which means there was not enough wind generation to be able to advance with some of these projects.

In terms of where the Member's coming from and looking at next steps, if there are any other projects that are happening, if I can, Mr. Jenkins.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So we did provide some support to ARI for wind monitoring equipment, and there has been wind monitoring that's been done in 15 communities across the NWT. We did advance monitoring in Sachs Harbour and Norman Wells, and we're looking at installations there. Unfortunately, the data didn't support putting an installation to produce power in those communities in the end. So it's something that we're going to have to go back under our new energy action plan to look at; you know, are there other areas where we could advance these type of renewable projects. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, ADM Jenkins. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. I was interested in your biomass energy. I think that's \$200,000 I think you have. It's supporting new initiative to assist increased use of wood burning technologies.

I'm just wondering if there's other departments that access this funding or your department helps other departments? And I'm speaking about like the Housing Corporation, and utilizing some of this. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Member asked this question on the floor earlier and, you know, I'm looking at my colleague here from Housing and I provided her with some notes. I leaned over; I can't find them anymore. But there are -- the Department of Infrastructure works with Housing. We did 40 apartments in the Sissons. So I mean, we do continue to advance some of our projects together. I mean, all the departments need to be able to work together and advance some of these projects, not in silos, but altogether, and look at what's the best source of energy savings for residents, communities, and the departments as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Are any communities accessing this program and if you could get some examples. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, you know, we have done a lot of projects in the Northwest Territories. You look at some of the schools that are built, all new infrastructure buildings. We try and incorporate biomass heating as it's cleaner and it's better for the environment.

In terms of going forward, I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can talk about anything that we're advancing, perhaps looking at other federal funding to be able to support more biomass in the territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So in terms of biomass, I think there's a couple of conversations going on there, is that we did support

the Housing Corporation, as was mentioned earlier on the floor today, to install a biomass facility at Sissons Court with 45 units I do believe. But we also are -- work with a lot of our client departments - Education, Health, and other areas - to install biomass boilers into various buildings. And I don't the exact number of biomass boilers that we have, but I think that we have like seven district heating plans that are biomass. We have buildings in Yellowknife that are run by biomass and in most communities now, we have some biomass. We just recently installed one in the Inuvik Hospital, for example, two years ago. So we are doing biomass across the board. I think right now we have nine buildings that are either in planning or are in construction that we're adding biomass to as well. So thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** I think I wasn't clear on that one, but it's nice to know that you're working with other departments.

I was wondering if anyone else, besides government departments, access funding like this or you have funding for them, like community governments, community local businesses? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Mr. Jenkins to see if he can speak about some of the partnerships and the building with other departments or other NGOs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So we do have a GHD grant program for government. We do have one for buildings in industry. That includes Indigenous governments. And these are application-based programs. And we do have a number of examples, not all of them are biomass of course. They could be solar or other type things but we have had projects funded under this for pellet boilers for schools. We've had them for wood heating systems for the Gwich'in multipurpose camp. So there's a number of examples there where we have funded broader than government buildings. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi for that. Mahsi, Madam Chair. There's a lot of little programs within here; they're almost kind of similar, they must be tied together somehow. But I'm just wondering about the

NWT energy efficiency projects which has about \$300,000. It's working with -- specifically, this one is stating it works with NTPC to integrate residual heat, variable speed generators and other energy technologies to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

I don't think I'm aware of anything like this. Can you provide clarification as to what that is actually doing? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one projects we did work with to reduce the fossil fuels and the diesel and revert to solar was in Aklavik. We've had an extensive program that happened in Aklavik where this is just one of many examples where we have reduced diesel consumption and, you know, started to look at solar panel. So that is something that we are doing. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Okay, so the Minister's clarifying that they incorporated solar panels for their plans. It's interesting stuff.

I'm wondering if the extent of this program or look to assist the Housing Corporation and MTS in reducing? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think I spoke earlier about the partnership that the Department of Infrastructure and Housing has done. We are doing that.

In terms of MTS, I'm not sure what exactly the Member is asking in terms of how we work with MTS in terms of -- because MTS does not fit within what the grant and program is. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** I'll just retract that one. Maybe it's steamships maybe on that one, but.

The community government retrofits, was that the one that I was at ... or the energy efficiency incentive program, it provides financial assistance to reduce electrical, heat energy, and water. It's only a hundred thousand. Is that available for community NGOs and local businesses? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to -- my understanding is that it's not but I just want clarification. So I'm going to ask Mr. Jenkins to be able to speak if that's where the department is going with that funding, given it's only a hundred thousand dollars. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So my understanding is this program, this is money that flows out under an application basis. So supports that could -- to go out through AEA. So a lot of these things, these types of energy efficiency, there's a number of rebate programs across the territories. So thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Community government retrofits, \$200,000, to perform energy audits and retrofits to community government buildings. I'm just wondering if these are just government buildings, or are they available for NGOs and local businesses? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is I believe just governments. Yeah, would you -- okay.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the community government retrofits is a contribution to Arctic Energy Alliance, and that's helps to administer a program for energy audits and retrofits to government community buildings. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi. The Tulita Solar Project, I know there's been questions about it where we were asking about other communities. I'm just wondering where this was set up or which organization? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to look at the project. Maybe Mr. Jenkins can answer. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So I believe the Tulita Solar Project was a community-led project. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Further to that line of questioning, I see here there's nothing budgeted for 2022-2023. Are there no ongoing costs for the Tulita Solar Project? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That project's done. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My next question is in regards to continuing a conversation about electric vehicle pilot project successes that we heard about earlier today. I'm wondering if there is a plan from the GNWT to build electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Northwest Territories?

Our neighbour to the west, the Yukon, currently has 11 charging stations available to residents and an additional five planned for 2022. And so I'm wondering if we can hear about the plans for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Just remember to wait for your light to come on so the translators have time to catch up. Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So we did launch a pilot electric vehicle program in June of 2020 with the cooperation from the Arctic Energy Alliance which provided \$5,000 rebate for new vehicle. And also as part of that, we provided \$500 to be able to provide for charging stations in hydropower communities. And that's a tricky thing because, I mean some of these electrical vehicles won't work all across the territories. We recognize that. However, we applied for federal funding to be able to deploy electric vehicle fast charging station along the highway. So this is something that we as a department are working with Canada to be able to look at advancing that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam -- I can't see -- I don't have a light anymore so I can't -- oh, okay, there we go. Thank you. Not sure what light I was looking for. Thank you very

much. And my apologies to the interpreters for jumping the gun there.

And I appreciate that the government is going currently back to the feds to work on some agreements for those charging stations. I do note that the investment in energy section of the main estimates has come down by about \$4 million. Looking on the next page, I see that that's from the reductions to the Low Carbon Leadership Economy Fund. And the concern there is this is at a time where we really want to be investing in innovative energy solutions for the Northwest Territories.

So can the Minister speak to how they intend to replace that \$4 million so that we can continue to grow our investment in energy and not reduce it? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we had a lower uptake in the LCELF. So the department, you know, worked with our federal funding counterparts to be able to arrange some changes to how we can utilize this program a bit more.

The agreement caps contributions to 25 percent for businesses and individuals and 75 percent for governments. So we know that from experience that 25 percent is not good enough to incent GHG reduction initiatives here in the North, and as well as communities that are accessing federal funding.

If I can, maybe just get Mr. Jenkins to speak a little more about that, because I saw that on the line as well and that was a big flag for me. So I mean, we as a government we're able to work with our federal counterparts to be able to ensure that going forward we're able to make use of the project funding. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. ADM Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So we were successful in negotiating an extension to that LCELF agreement to 2024. It would have expired this year. So unspent funds from the program, we're proposing to move those forward over the next few years and we've also proposed some reprofiling. A lot of the programs under here are application based. We've got some experience now in those programs. Some are getting good uptake, and some aren't. And so we've reprofiled some funds. And in particular, reprofiling a number of those funds to AEA programs. And so we are pleased that we're able to continue to provide additional support, in particular to AEA, because those programs have been pretty successful over the next the few years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Yeah, thank you very much for that. And I guess the department, I suppose, has heard that there's definitely support for growth in this area from this side of the House, and I just want to -- and I value what Mr. Jenkins just said about the AEA program as well but just want to also reiterate, and support the words of my colleague from Hay River South, about investment in Arctic Energy Alliance as well and increasing that line item so that we can see some more funding to innovative energy supports in the territory. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Didn't have any questions? Are there any further questions under this section? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. On page 248, the large scale commercial and industrial under the Low Carbon Leadership Economy Fund, I think that's supposed to be -- whatever, why is that bouncing around like a yo-yo? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There's the three different variances. So you look at the variance of the Greenhouse Gas Grant Fund, the variance is due to lower than expected anticipated uptake of the program application. So that's the big variance there of 2.237. And then there's a decrease because we had, as Mr. Jenkins pointed out, we had to reprofile the cash flow for this in 2021-2022. And now you're seeing an increase because we're able to cash flow some of these that are related to an amendment now and an extension. So we went back to the government and requested an extension. So that's why you see it jumping around all over the place.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah okay, thanks Madam Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that. I guess I'm worried about what this does to the continuity and availability of funds, particularly for Arctic Energy Alliance. I see from further up in the table there that they have a flat kind of amount of core funding, it appears, from the Department of Infrastructure of \$1.6 million and there's this incremental funds through the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund that kind of go all over the place. So how does that affect the ability of Arctic Energy Alliance to provide funding for its programs? Because I've gotten complaints from my constituents about the money running out quickly for certain programs or -- and I've raised this in the House before. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at some of the projects. The budget here is -- it's the same across the board. It is what we've given Arctic Energy Alliance in -- 1.6, but yet we recognize some of the increases that we're able to divide within the government under different projects.

I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can speak a little bit more about how we're able to, from a financial perspective, be able to move one line item under grants and contribution and transfers and then be able to recognize in another part of the exchange here the difference. So thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so in terms of the Arctic Energy Alliance program, we recognize the need there as well. This year, I do believe that there was some funding gaps that we were able to find some money internally. But one of the things we did on their Low Carbon Leadership Economy Fund was take some of the money that wasn't being as much uptake, including the commercial industrial greenhouse gas grants, and move it into the Arctic Energy Alliance. So through that cash flow, we've secured funding of about \$1. million for the next two fiscal years.

Our goal is to seek additional federal funding first to try and keep that momentum going, so to speak, with the AEA. And if no federal funding's available, well then we'll have to look in terms of whether or not the GNWT would support some increases in that area as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I look forward to a supplementary appropriation to support Arctic Energy Alliance and the good programs that it offers.

But I want to switch gears and move to probably some higher level questions around energy and strategic initiatives. I raised this with the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources and was told that this was something that he wasn't really responsible for.

So when I look at the GNWT energy initiatives report for 2021 and the forecasts of greenhouse gas reductions, by the year 2025 we will have only reached 20 percent of the target that was set through the Pan-Canadian Framework. And so we have to reach another 80 percent reductions in the last five years. So I always complained about how the last

Cabinet's approach was back end loaded, and it's coming true.

So what is the department doing about making sure that GNWT, or the Northwest Territories more properly, meets the Pan-Canadian Framework, because the current energy strategy is failing and failing quickly. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there are a number of things that we are doing to ensure that we meet our 2030 strategy and, you know, we look at the action plan every three years and we're able to see if we're meeting targets. If we're not, what are some of the things that we're able to do to further advance our projects.

So, you know, some of our key initiatives, like big projects, we're advancing the Taltson Project, the Inuvik Wind Project, Fort Providence-Kakisa Line, feasibility for Tuk liquefied natural gas, you know, replacement oil heating of 45 housing. And I'm not going to go on because I'm using up Member's time but we are doing -- advancing some of these projects within the strategy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, clearly, the 2030 Energy Strategy is failing, and it's not -- we're not going to reach the Pan-Canadian Framework target; there's no way. So what I was hoping I was going to hear from the Minister is that we're going to reset that or throw it out, quite frankly, and bring in some energy projects that will actually allow us to meet that target. And those -- it's going to need -- we require things like hydrogen - a workshop that I recently attended that the department put on. We need to find ways to reduce the energy that's consumed in the transportation sector and in the mining sector, quite frankly. And I don't want to have wait for diamond mines to close so that we can actually meet the target, but that's where we're going.

So what is it that the department's going to do to reset this strategy and get us on a proper track so that we can actually meet the Pan-Canadian Framework target? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, and I believe the Member's asked me this on the floor, if we can just scrap the 2030 Energy Strategy, and at the time my answer was no, because we're going to go back and look at the

action plan and assess it every three years. And perhaps, you know, see where in which areas we're not meeting targets and be able to assess that. And if I can, Madam Chair, to have Mr. Jenkins just to speak a little bit more in specific initiatives that we are trying to get to our bigger target by 2030. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Jenkins.

**MR. JENKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the current target is 30 percent for 2005 levels by 2030. So we are currently 16 percent below those levels. So we do feel that we're progressing towards our current GHG reduction targets. We are advancing a number of larger projects. As they come on stream, we'll see more GHG emissions reductions. And as the Minister mentioned, we're starting work on our new three-year action plan, and we're going to look at, you know, what actions we need going forward. We're going to look at different pathways, different targets. You know, are they feasible, can they work; we're going to look at a number of things. We've recently launched our public engagement on that, and we look forward to hearing back from different stakeholders and our partners and building that plan moving forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Jenkins. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. We're just not going to make the target at this rate. There's no way. It's impossible for us to make the target especially when we're stuck in this strategy. And, you know, the federal government has to be watching this, and should be watching this, the money that they're giving us, because part of the reason we -- you know, the last Cabinet, it took a lot for them to actually sign on to the Pan-Canadian Framework in the first place. And the only reason they did that was because they said that if we're going to reach that target, you got to give us some money. So the feds have given us money and we're still failing because it's the mix of projects that are being presented here. There's no way we're going to meet the Pan-Canadian Framework target. So that's a warning to the Minister, I guess, that we're not going to make it, and I don't want to be sitting here a year from now, or two years from now, hearing from the Auditor General that again our government has failed to reach the targets that were set in our own internal greenhouse gas emission strategies, because that's the record that this government has. We don't meet the targets that we set and that's what's happening with this strategy. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Are there any further questions under the energy strategic initiatives?

Seeing none, Infrastructure, energy and strategic initiatives, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$15,906,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. And Sergeant-at-Arms, I'll get you to switch the witnesses. Thank you.

Welcome back, deputy minister Loutitt. And so we are going to continue on with programs and services beginning on page 251, with information items on page 253. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to, I guess, talk a bit about MTS, and I'm hoping this is the right section, or maybe we passed it. But nevertheless, I've got ten minutes so.

There was a loss shown for MTS of around \$5.8 million and of that, about \$4.3 million, I think, was with respect to operating losses. Can the Minister just talk a bit about that, and I think it was partly because of the properties and that, just give me an explanation to, you know, why that loss was there. Can we expect something in the future with the number of properties that they took over from NTCL? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The marine transportation system had a net accounting deficit of \$3.3 million even before departmental appropriations in 2020-2021 due to continued cost of maintenance and staffing along with, again, the good old challenges of COVID-19. So the main estimate does not show a deficit because it's under the revolving fund. And I quickly was able to go back to that section when -- it will speak specifically about that in that section, because of the Revolving Funds Act. So any deficits must be covered by departmental appropriations.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you. So the deficit, the accounting deficit comprised of some of the active operational losses due to uncertainties, insurance coverage that is required, amortization expense was another big one of 2.6, additional interest cost of financing on loans estimated at 1.1. So these were all the losses that were comprised of MTS. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thought I saw somewhere on there that with

respect to repairs to the equipment that was purchased from NTCL that there was -- that was part of the reason for the losses? Can you speak to that a bit. Because there is -- you know, there was a lot of equipment that was purchased, and I'm just not sure how -- you know, how much of it has actually been used for operations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to have Mr. Brennan speak about the question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so the Member's correct, there was a lot of equipment purchased from NTCL as part of that purchase back in 2016.

One of the things that we've done in the last couple of years is we've looked at our business and tried to right size the equipment that we're actually using. So there is a lot of surplus equipment that we want to get rid of sitting around the yards there. What we've done in the last two years, though, is just look at the equipment we're going to use for the next sailing season and prepare that equipment and try and right size the organization. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'd be remiss not to mention ORC. I'd just like to know what is happening with that contract, if it's coming up for renewal or is there an extension on it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my understanding it was just recently renewed but I want to get clarification in terms of, you know, as MTS is going through a governance review model and just to see how that affects some of our contracts. So if I can have Mr. Brennan speak to where we're at in terms of the contract details. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so the ORC contract I believe was signed in 2021. I do believe it was a three-year contract so that won't expire until 2024. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to change up here a bit, and I want to talk about the -- or the ferries. And I'd like to talk I guess about specifically the Abraham Francis. My understanding is that vessel is only rated at 40,000 kg so this limits the number of loads -- the weight and loads coming across whereas you got the Louis Cardinal, which is closer to Inuvik, and it's rated for 64,000 kg.

So my understanding is that -- is it possible -- my understanding it is possible to lengthen the Abraham Francis which would then allow you to increase that to 64 which will make it a lot better to -- a lot easier to move cargo across. And so I'm just wondering if any work or any assessment is being done to make that happen? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to ask Mr. Brennan to speak a little bit more about some of the technical questions in that question because I don't fully understand what it means from going from 45 to 67. So I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can help me out here. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so the Member is correct, there's definitely different weight limits on the Abraham Francis, which is a cable ferry across the Peel River. And I'm kind of concerned because I had a conversation about this yesterday and now I'm wondering if he's been listening in on our conversations, but.

We are looking at extending the ferry. We put in some more styrofoam in last year just to increase the buoyancy of that vessel, and we want to extend the ferry by I do believe it's 20 to 30 feet. Unfortunately right now we don't have any funding so we are seeking funding. We're trying to come up with creative ways to extend that ferry to allow our super-Bs to go in one load rather than to have to decouple the fuel trucks and go back again.

So the Member is correct, there is some challenges with that ferry. We do want to extend it. We think we can extend it by X number of feet and get 25 more years out of that ferry as well. So if we can identify the funding, we will actually proceed with that project as soon as we can. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And no, I wasn't in the conversation, and I was just talking to some people up around Inuvik, so. And they just raised that question to me.

The other thing about the -- you know, we talk about going green. We talk about, you know, electric conversion. So, yeah, I look at the four ferries that we have out there and the Abraham Francis is probably being the smallest. I would like -- you know, it would be interesting if we were to possibly look at turning that into -- converting to electric because it would do two things. It would reduce fuel consumption thus reducing greenhouse gases. So is that something that the department has actually looked at, either for that ferry or any other of the ferries? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you. I don't understand what the question -- I'm going to ask Gary to speak to that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, we actually have looked at the electrification of the Abraham Francis ferry. Some of the challenges we do have at some of our camps is a lack of electricity and power hookups at our sites, but we have looked at the electrification of that one. I'm not quite sure what the result of that was, though. But I -- we continue to look at that there.

One of the things that we look at actually is a lot of the federal funding that is coming out is green funding and in replacement of a ferry, that might be the way we'll have to go to get monies through the green funding to reduce -- well, to reduce GHGs but that's where the funding seems to sit these days so we continue to look at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, the other thing about the ferries too is, like, they are all aged and, you know, and to keep them up to I suspect Transport Canada regulations is probably fairly cumbersome and I suspect costly, especially if you're using, you know, southern firms to do the work.

So, you know, is there any plans in the future, I guess, to either build a new ferry or do any really major retrofits? My understanding is that maybe we continue to do retrofits as I -- when I go through the budget I see that. So I'm just wondering, you know, kind of where we're at with that as they kind of age out? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We continue to do retrofits. We do that now with some of our ferries. And I do agree with the Member that we do have aging infrastructure and, you know, we continue to work with the feds to be able to look at replacing these, perhaps from single hull to double hull which may perhaps be a requirement going forward in the future. But at this point, that's not the intent other than to just continue with the retrofits. It is quite costly and, you know, we all know that we're working within a deficit right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just have a small comment or question to ask around -- I'm really glad to see that there's been the increase in positions for the occupational health and safety section here, and I know that that's the result of one new position in a region, which I think is great, and I guess I'd just like to urge the Minister or see if there are plans for one of these positions in each of the five regions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it was hard enough to get just one, let alone five in each of the regions. But I mean, we recognize that this is safety. They are responsible for the department's occupational health safety, which includes all the national standards for various occupations that is throughout the departments. So at this time, we're just, you know, recognizing that we need to expand and I'm just happy that we were able to get one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't really have much more to say, but I just wanted to say that I note TSC is here and I wanted to apologize to them for blaming them for my tablet problem during my statement last week. So they've been great and helped me a lot. So thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. I need them to help me unlock my phone. Are there any further questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that the TSC is here, and I believe there are a couple of initiatives to increase the bandwidth and internet speed across the territory. I guess can I get an update on that work? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The digital communication networks, the DNC contract. With that, we have schools across the Northwest Territories will have internet provided through this. It will be especially beneficial in smaller terrestrial communities where the schools will now have at least one to three times improved access rates with no overage costs. So our regional centres in satellite communities will see minimal improvements. Currently, however, it is expected that Northwestel rolls out new services so we can leverage those improvements as part of our contract. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister just explain to me where that money is found in the budget? Was that already in the capital budget or is that coming forward in a SUP? I'm assuming that that expansion and that contract are not in the \$2 million I see here for TSC. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I don't believe I answered the Member's question before, but after -- after I said, I was like hey, I know the answer. But let's move on to the next one. I'll try to be as quick as I can.

TSC operates a charge back. So I mean, that has not been done in the past. The Department of Infrastructure in the past has always assumed these costs, and I think we just got approval to be able to ensure that departments cover their costs for chargebacks. If I can, Madam Chair, if Mr. Brennan wants to add anything further. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so while the TSC is under the program for services and terms of maintenance and if there's actually an information item near the end of the line of where the TSC budget is, and the Minister is absolutely correct, it is a chargeback model whereby all the users, basically the departments, pay certain proportion based on their usages. And the DCN is covered under the chargeback model. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess from my perspective, I don't really care whether a department pays Infrastructure for it back. Can I just get a -- how much that DCN contract costs? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to get Mr. Brennan to speak a little bit more about the cost for that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't actually have the cost of the entire contract but the increase this year for the new DCM work is \$3.9 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair, can I just get a bit of an update on how -- whether we expect this to improve internet in schools in Yellowknife? We met with a number of the school boards, and they said during the switch to online learning that at certain times it just became impossible, and they were well past, you know, any of the bandwidth that TCS was providing them. Do we expect that this improvement will allow online learning to, you know, be a bit more feasible in the NWT? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do want to note, you know, TSC manages all GNWT cell phones. The department does not have any direct conversation with Northwestel, Bell Mobility, regarding any of the wider coverage of cell phone or internet that is accessed here in the Northwest Territories. This project would need to be accessed by Department of Finance. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe I just have to step back because I don't understand fully. I see that TSC collects \$32 million a year in chargebacks. So we spend \$32 million a year providing itself internet through the TSC. I heard that we're spending a couple three more million to improve that network. And I guess my question is -- I don't care what Northwestel is doing. I care what we are doing to our infrastructure. Do we believe with that additional money that the internet that the school system gets will be improved and capable of online learning following this? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we continue to work with our partners

at Education, Culture and Employment to be able to understand what are some of the issues within the boards and be able to look at options so that we could better manage capacity. So I mean, that's -- that's where we're at now, and I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can add anything further. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so adding to what the Minister said, we are trying to figure out the issue in Yellowknife because we actually doubled the bandwidth in September however there still seem to be some challenges for them but I'm not quite sure if it's a TSC issue or a school issue. We do have the ability to go up as high as five gigabytes. It's at two at the schools in the Yellowknife. But currently, they're not using their two megabytes. So we're trying to understand where that issue is right now. And if it is a TSC issue, we have the capacity to flip the switch to go a little bit higher. But right now, they're not at the capacity that we're currently providing them. So it could -- and we don't -- and we're not in charge of what infrastructures they install in the schools, which may be limiting something as well, so. But we're working with them to try to figure that out. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. And I -- sorry, I think the Minister said that I may have to ask Finance this question, and forgive me if I am slightly confused how this all works. Like I said, we're charging back \$32 million to ourselves as a GNWT here. I get that TSC has about \$10 million in staff, but some of them -- has 20 million remaining. How much of that would be going to Northwestel? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's very technical. I mean for us to just pop a number off on how much we're giving to Northwestel would take some time. So I'm going to ask the Member if we can get back to him. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, and I guess perhaps I would also like the Minister to clarify if I have a misunderstanding here. I know TSC kind of operates on this model of charging departments for the service provide, and it may not in fact be a true cost to the GNWT. So perhaps in coming back, the Minister could also clarify a bit about the TSC and

what this \$30 million means. Does that mean we are actually spending \$30 million? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can provide further clarification and perhaps a little more detail on the confusion the Member's having. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think in answer to the Member's question is yes, we are spending \$32 million. We're spending \$10 million on salary, we're spending \$20 million on hardware and software, and somewhere in there is a bill to Northwestel. I'm not quite sure how much that is. We have various contracts in place, you know, fees and payments that we have licences, those types of things that we're paying. But yes, in answer to the Member's question, we are spending \$32 million this year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So I'm looking at page 253, and I see that there's a couple of new positions that have been added to this activity, and I'm just hoping that the Minister can tell me what those two positions are and where they're located? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The departmental changes for the two for 2022-2023 is a highways transportation officer to ensure that we have highway compliance and safety and as well as the occupational health and safety specialist to ensure that we have compliance with regulatory as well as legislative and policy requirements. One is located in Yellowknife. The other one is in Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So maybe I'll just start with the occupational health and safety position.

Look, I love Hay River, but why is the position located in Hay River? Are there existing occupational health and safety positions throughout Department of Infrastructure in all the other regions? Why Hay River here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister for infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The decision -- I mean, when we look at increasing positions in the regions and here in the Northwest Territories, we try and ensure that we do, you know -- to be able to look at things equally by region and perhaps a decision was -- I'm going to see if my deputy minister, Mr. Loutitt, can add more to that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister Loutitt.

**MR. LOUITT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We made that decision based on the fact that we do have an occupational health and safety specialist up in the Beaufort Delta in Inuvik, and we also have one in Yellowknife, so it made sense to have one south of the lake.

As the Member for -- I can't remember which riding, sorry, noted earlier, we would like to get occupational and safety specialists in every region. We recognize that we do perform activities that need that type of oversight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair; yeah, you can give me a promotion.

Yeah, look, I think I understand something of what these folks do and it is important work and we have to make sure that there's a safe workplace for all our employees. But I just wonder how we approach this as a government. You know, do these people only serve and work with Infrastructure staff, or do they serve other government departments as well and how -- and if not, how do other government departments meet the needs in terms of occupational health and safety for their employees? So yeah, I guess that's a question for the Minister here. It's probably more of an issue of how do we approach occupational health and safety as a government. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So each department is responsible for their own occupational and health safety of their department. I don't think I want to speak to some of the other departments and what and where their occupational health and safety positions are. I do want to note, though, Madam Chair, while the Member was speaking about a position, the highway transportation officer was a request from the region because there were, you know, issues on Highway no. 1, on Highway no. 3, and, you know, this is result of the communities coming back to us and

leadership coming back to us to ensure that we maintain all health and safety of the highways. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks. I think I'm going to have ask some questions of the Minister of Finance, then, when we get to that department about how our government approaches the issue of occupational health and safety across the whole government because, you know, with different departments are having these occupational health and safety officers of different, they only serve one department, and they -- it's kind of -- doesn't seem like there's a coordinated approach, so I'll just leave it at that. I'll have questions then for the Minister of Finance when we get there.

But on the highway transportation officer, is this new position going to be serving the Tlicho All-Season Road as well? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, yes, that's the plan, to be able to look at. But not only that but to support the other position, and -- that's located due to some safety issues and regulatory issues. But if I can get deputy minister Mr. Loutitt to be able to explain because I mean, I asked that question as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister Loutitt.

**MR. LOUTITT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We made a decision or we wanted to get this position in Yellowknife so that would support the other highway patrol. And Yellowknife is the only -- in the only area that we have a single highway patrol officer, and we have 60 percent of the commercial vehicles in the Northwest Territories located. It does require two officers to inspect, and the Workers Safety and Compensation Commission recommends two officers for patrols from a safety perspective. So it makes sense. We have two in Inuvik. We have five in Enterprise. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, thanks, Madam Chair. Is there any possibility that this position could be located in Edzo? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we looked at that as an option, and

it's -- that's not the decision that's going to be going forward. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Okay, yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. We'll -- I guess we'll have a discussion about that.

But I think that's all the questions I have on this section. I'm just going to look at my notes. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions from Members on programs and services? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On page 252, contract services, are the actuals for 2021-2022 were 6 million 302 and then we go down on the 2021-2022, and then down, everything else is down to \$1.7 million. I'm just wondering why the decrease?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there is a variance of 4.5. \$2.2 million of that is absorbed -- the department had to absorb that as part of our NTS service deficit so that we can stay within some of our authorization stable limits. The other 2.7 that you'll see on page 252 speaks to the department had to absorb fuel service division deficit so that we can, again, stay within some of our stabilization limits. So that's the decrease in that line. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** So my second question is -- I don't know a lot about MTS but just from the figures, and so the main contractor is ORC, or whatever, and it's a three-year contract; am I correct?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is correct.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member. It's okay. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Madam Chair, I'm a little bit tired. So Madam Chair, I'm just wondering would that contract be going out for tender when the time comes, or is it going to be sole sourced?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that just went out in I believe -- the contract was just awarded in October of 2021, and it is for a three-year contract. But I mean, at the time that was put out for tender, so. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** So the next question I have is on page 253, you have ten positions allocated for this coming 2022-2023. The ten positions in the South Slave. How is that divided? For which communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for -- sorry. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, if you look at the active positions from 2021-2022 and then 2022-2023, there's only an increase of one, and that's what's put in the occupational health and safety specialist. So the breakdown is -- so we're only increasing it by two. So the South Slave will be ten. The Deh Cho, seven. The Sahtu, one. And the Beaufort Delta, seven. And the North Slave, six. That's the breakdown of the positions. There's only two new positions that have been included.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Madam Chair, I said with the South Slave positions. There are several South Slave communities. I want to know how that -- well, if we even go to the nine positions, because we know one is going to Hay River now. So I want to know how that's broken down with the South Slave. Are they -- so how many in Fort Smith? How many in Fort Res? How many in Hay River? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to note that all the MTS positions are in Hay River. So that's why you see the number there. It relates to just MTS.

I think the next section when we get into some of our regional OPs, you'll be able to see much more of some of the positions there. But under this section that talks specifically about MTS, that's where the majority of those positions are, because it fits through our fiscal projects in that area. So that's why it's high in that area. But if we get into some of the -- the next section, you'll be able to see some of the other positions equally. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I don't have any other questions, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Are there any further questions from Members on programs and services?

If there are none, please turn to page 252, Infrastructure, programs and services, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$16,716,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. We will now move on to -- I'm just going to -- yeah, move on to regional operations. And that begins on page 254, with information items on 255 to 257. Questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I just get the total amount we are spending on road salt right now?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I think I said this number yesterday but I'm just -- it's about almost \$400,000.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I believe the Minister was asking for 478,000 more money in road salt but I'm looking for the total that would bring us up to. I believe we're spending quite a bit more than that already. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Sorry, Madam Chair. I thought the Member was asked to -- off the top of my head to be able to say how much more we're asking. Our total budget for salt is \$1.1 million. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, I guess when bringing forward this ask for a half million dollars in salt, it seems like a lot. Can I get, you know -- what is the temperature we don't put salt on the roads and for how many months of the year essentially are we not salting the roads? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that's very technical in nature. I don't know what exactly months. I'm going to assume in

the winter months because it wouldn't make sense in the summer. But I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can speak to the exact months of the year that we provide salt. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so we generally use salt between minus 15 and plus 5. So depending on where you are in the Northwest Territories, but generally speaking from October to late November/December-ish, and then again in the spring is when we use the majority of our salt. This year has been a cold winter. So I'm willing to bet we never used none since the middle of November because it's been very, very cold, at least in Yellowknife anyway. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I guess I'll note that my understanding is that most, if not all, of our municipalities don't salt their roads. It's one of the nice things about vehicles up here is they don't rust. And I'm just curious whether we have done any studies of whether this \$1 million in salt actually makes the roads safer. I guess, you know, considering the coldest winter months, we're not using any because it's useless, I'm just curious, you know, whether we've -- we are just too far north to actually be spending this much on salt, or have we done any safety standards, or are we just doing this simply because everywhere down south does it? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, product data on any of the alternative products are reviewed on a regular basis. And it's based on environmental impact; it's based on cost of purchase, storage, handling, and application. Challenges identified through high costs of purchase for storage of these alternatives and required dedicated uses while the salt can be applied by trucks and equipment that are used for other tasks. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'll hold off on any more questions about salt. It just seems like a lot of money to spend on salt considering we don't use it for the coldest and darkest months.

I have some questions about the highway operations budget here. I'll note previous fiscal, it was at \$71 million. This year's fiscal, it's jumped about \$14

million, and then we're asking for another \$3 million. I think it's fair to say if you went back in time and look at the highway operations budget, it has a steady, steady increase. It's not getting any cheaper to maintain our highways.

Can I just get, you know -- have we done -- I don't even know how to phrase this. How about I'll start with what is the \$3 million increase getting us here this year? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that is an increase. 2.5 is for increase in some of the amortization adjustments. The \$478,000 is for the salt, which the Member and I just spoke about. The 263 is for the collective bargaining agreement increases. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess perhaps that \$88 million is not as bad as I thought it was because I imagine it includes some amortization of things like bridges, and I -- I'm getting a nod over there.

I guess I want to move on to contract services here, another line item that I strongly suspect has a pretty steady increase upwards. We're spending \$69 million in regional operations on contract services. Can I just get a sense of what the biggest contracts are that make up that \$69 million? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The variance. So I mean, you look at the different line items on the contract services, line 30, 31, and 33, where you talk about the different increases. So the biggest variance is at \$2.5 million in contract services that offset increase in expenditures that are being quoted to materials and supplies in our operation -- regional operations division, which means less contracts were entered into in 2021-2022 because of the COVID pandemic.

The increase of a half a million dollars is new lease space for the Hay River Health Social Service Authority in Hay River. That's the increase. Another increase of 1.3 is the lease budget for renewals, as well as the O and M cost escalations. So you look at TSC where we have charge back. Utilities we don't. The government buildings that we lease, we pay the utilities. So I mean, we could charge that back too. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm going to just ask again there, because I actually didn't know that leases that the department had would fall under contract services. Can I just -- in this \$69 million, is that the primary driver, then, that the leasing money falls under here, or what are the biggest contracts under this \$70 million? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to get -- no, I'm going to take a stab at this, actually. So no, it's -- okay. We have infrastructure leases, which is about 44 percent. We have highway operation, 19 percent. We have some of our winter road. So I mean, the list goes on, Madam Chair. If maybe perhaps Mr. Brennan wants to take a little more clarification on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, and the Minister is correct that the biggest driver in here is INF. This is our leases that we pay. So we're paying \$34 million in leases. Some of our other bigger ones, though, the remaining funds, are our highway operations, airport operations, winter road construction, all of those basically, marine operations that are not our own forces, that's where the majority of that money is going though. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake -- or sorry, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** No further questions. I'm sure I'll have questions on the 44 percent of that money that is leases when we get to the information item. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any other questions under regional operations? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like a rundown of the airport operations of 17 million 363 by community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have that breakdown by community. But airport operations, you look at our main estimates budget and you look at the surplus, the variance, the \$1 million, is due to amortization expense that is being miscoded to program services. So in one section, we're taking it out and then we're moving it to the other section.

The decrease is the travel budget reduction. And the other decrease is for the amortization for adjustments for our airport division assets. And we had an increased cost for airport maintenance costs as well as factoring bargaining -- collective bargaining agreement increase as well. Those are the higher operational costs. In terms of detail, I don't have that with me right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is the airport operations, is that line where they're going to be resurfacing of the runways? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to get clarification. I don't think this is a line item that falls under here. I think it comes -- part of it does but it is still a federal funding, and I'm going to get -- I will ask Mr. Brennan to speak about where it falls within the budget, because it was quite complicated because it is a new initiative under a new federal pot. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, so the runway overlay for Fort Smith runway is actually in capital, and it's funded by the airport capital assistance program for \$15 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I don't have any other questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Monfwi, did you have questions? Did you have questions?

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Yes, thank you. For the regional operations for the highway, active position here it says for Tlicho, it says here we're not part of the North Slave, this one. So I see that -- well, the Tlicho All-Season Road is open now, and the last fiscal year for this coming -- you know, 2021-2022, it was this nine, and it's still nine within the new fiscal year. Is that number going to change now with the all-season road opened for the -- that active position that's in page 257?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Sorry. Thank you, Madam Chair. No, that's not going to change. That's the contractor maintenance part of it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Okay, contract services, okay. And so out of these position, how many of these are full-time or part-time positions?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. 270 are full-time. There are 13 seasonal. And no part-time at this time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** No, it's -- you know, the highway from Highway 3 from -- that's the most busy highway. And I'm kind of a little bit surprised we have only nine active positions, which I thought it would be more than some of the regions when Tlicho make up six percent of the population. So I'm just a little bit -- why is that, that, you know, there's only nine positions when that road is busy. It's the most -- it's busy all-season road so I'm just -- I'm just asking why there's only nine and other regions have more than us. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can add further clarification and to be able to justify why -- how the regions are separated based on positions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So the -- I guess the factor is looking at for determining how many people work in what we call "the highway beat" is the length of the "beat". And so there's a Yellowknife camp which goes from the end of Highway 4 out near Tibbett Lake up to approximately Stagg River. And then the Tlicho camp takes from Stagg River out to Chan Lake. And then the Fort Providence camp goes from Chan lake basically out to Highway 1 near Red Knife. So nine is basically a standard. It's the most we have in any camp in the Northwest Territories. Some of the camps in South Slave actually only have seven people depending on how close they are to other camps. So we don't look at the population of a community when we're determining. We look at the length of the highway and how many people we need to maintain that safely. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Okay, thank you. Thank you, that's -- you know, at least now I understand so, yeah, thank you. That's it for now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about highway operations. This year, we all know that there's been fairly heavy snowfall in the territories which will -- which may cause some drainage problems come spring. So I'd just like to ask if there is any work to be undertaken to address I guess the draining and ditching prior to melt. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to see what our plans are going forward, and I have a feeling it might be a capital initiative but I just want perhaps Gary to clarify. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And that's an interesting question because I think we don't normally do ditching or improve drainage before -- well, while things are frozen basically. It's usually a summer activity. But what we did do last year because of the increase to the amount of I guess flooding in the South Slave region was we did install some culverts around highway -- Highway 1, and we also had to repair and improve some bridges on Highway 5, a significant amount of drainage issues. And we did do some inspections at that time as well to see where the drainage issues were. So what we do, then, is we take those inspections and look at future rehabilitation, including drainage improvements on the highway system. But for this year, I'm not aware of us doing anything before freshet. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about I guess airport operations, and this may be capital too; I'm not sure. But upgrading runway lights, and I know there's -- you know, there's an issue up there and we've been going through and upgrading, I suspect to LED or something like that. And I'd just like to know how that's going and if we're looking at doing all the runways, even in the small communities? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we have a list of different projects that are happening. This year, we're doing a bit of work at the airports in Fort Simpson. We're doing some work in Fort Smith. We're doing a little bit of work here. I'm not sure, unless the Member wants to speak specifically, where we're at in Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I don't think there's any planned upgrades for Yellowknife -- or for Hay River Airport, which I'm assuming is what the Member's referring to here. We did just do a lighting upgrade in Fort Smith two years ago I do believe. But we are looking at all of our airports and trying to convert all of our airports to LED. We generally do that through ACAP funding so it would be capital applications that we're looking at. And I'm just not sure if there is one in for Hay River or not right now. So thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And this will be, I guess, more of a comment and a suggestion. I just want to put a plug in for Hay River.

When I was at the airport the other day, I looked out at the runway and I noticed that two of the runway lights were kind of off, and it looks like they probably should be straightened out. So whether it's the base that has to be fixed. So I would just maybe check with the guys there. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Hay River South. You got that, Minister?

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I'm going to Hay River for the carnival this weekend so perhaps if we land, I can make sure that those lights are straightened before I land there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Any further questions? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I probably won't be as funny as my colleague from Hay River.

I just have a quick question, and I get that it would probably be a capital project, but I'm just going to slide it in here. Has there been any further talk about a weigh scale in Yellowknife to help support the winter road? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a good one to sneak in because I don't have the answer right now. Normally with projects of this scope that we'd have to perhaps come back to this drawing board, and if it's -- yeah, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave, you can't slide it in.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. Madam Chair, this has the area that has road licensing and safety. Can the Minister speak to whether or not there's been some assessment of the system that's used for the toll permits and such for the Deh Cho Bridge? I know that it's a little bit onerous and difficult for people that have certain types of vehicles that are not maybe necessarily semis but do have to purchase the toll, and I know there's been some upgrades around transponders. So I'm just wondering if there's any further work being done there or changes? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Mr. Brennan to speak about that while I have some water and catch my breath here. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. And to the Member's comment, I haven't -- currently there's no work on the way currently to look at this system. That system was installed when the bridge was built, and I think in terms of purchasing, I'm assuming you mean purchasing individual permits? Yeah, that would be -- I think you can do that online, and we tend to think in our department that our systems are okay online. Once you get logged in, there are some issues with the log in process that we -- I think has been identified before. Unfortunately, that's not within our control, to the single sign on, but we'll bring those comments back, though. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would offer the department if they'd like to sit down with me, I could tell them what's wrong with their online programs. So thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. If that's all the questions -- are there any

more questions under Infrastructure, regional operations?

Seeing none, please turn to page 255, Infrastructure, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$221,649,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. There are additional information items from page 258 to 269. Are there any questions from Members in regards to these information items? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm going to ask a couple questions about leasing.

I understand that due to both a Cabinet-level policy and a public accounting standard that we only enter into leases of less than five years, because after five years they tend to be a tangible or a capital lease which would then be recorded as a liability and go up against our debt ceiling. You know, seeing that there's \$134 million in lease commitments here, we don't even have that room in our debt ceiling. So we can't enter into long-term leases.

Can I just get a sense from the department to the extent that that limitation is influencing this habit of kind of doing repeat three-year leases? And I'll note we've been kind of doing this in some buildings for 30 plus years now. Is that one of the limiting factors why we are not kind of negotiating this a little bit more aggressively? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can speak a little more to the leasing. I see he's got his papers there to be able to explain why the department is not going to further leases. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, ADM Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, just to clarify one of the Member's comments that the \$125 million leases, I think a hundred million that is related to Stanton Legacy which is a capital lease, which is causing some grief on our borrowing limit.

As for the other issue, certainly we do try to stay away from capital leases. I'm not sure of the impact it has on our negotiating power, though. I don't know that we've ever looked at that, to my knowledge. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you. And I guess, you know, my understanding is what historically has happened is that leasing has been rather decentralized, and departments just kind of tell Infrastructure what they need. And I guess I'd like the department to speak to any work they might be doing in this area to, you know, centralize it, maybe be -- push back sometimes and say hey, you don't need this office space; actually we're going to move you into this building because it'll save us a bunch of money. And I know there has been some new design standards to perhaps, you know, lower the total number. I'm just wondering if the Minister could speak to any work to reduce the costs in this area? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So you look at the leases and it's based on client needs. As per our policy, we do have a leasing policy. We also work with some of the program requirements as well for the leases. So this is not something we just look at every three years or five years. This is something we have a look at ongoing to be able to work with the departments, their needs, whether it fits to do the renewal in terms of what works best for the department as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I remember when they built the new government building, there was a lot of talk that, you know, the energy efficiency of this and it's cheaper to own the build, and I'm sure in order to build it the rent verse own analysis was done. And I'm just wondering, you know, whether we have any plans to build other commercial office space? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that's not something we're looking at in the near future. My understanding is that there was just a new government building built here in Yellowknife so it's not something that we're looking at. And again, it's got to be based on need - whether we need the space and whether it's viable to be able to look at lease versus own. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any more questions from Members on any of the information items at the end of this section? Seeing none -- oh, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. The Yellowknife Airport Revolving Fund, I know I've been

after the department for some time to start to spend money at the airport. And I understand they're supposed to be completing their third version, or third different contractor to produce a master plan, by the end of this month apparently. So what can we actually expect to see any of this money expended in the 2022-2023 for the airport, and for what? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The airport -- you know, the airport revolving has -- has a fund. I'm sorry, I'm just trying to look at, you know, we will be investing \$2 million in the coming years for the rehabilitation as well as the airfield drainage in relation to some of the ACAP projects. I'm looking to see if Mr. Brennan can add anything further on, you know, where we're at with the Airport Revolving Fund and the surplus. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, so I think -- I have a list here now. Since 2018, we've spent about \$15 million at the Yellowknife Airport on capital programs. And some of that was federal funded through CATSA or through ACAP. We spent about \$4 million on various fleet, most recently a \$1.4 million fire truck just delivered in December 2021, going to go in service this spring after appropriate training is completed. And we have another \$9 million planned in next three to five million -- three to five years of -- and that will be various capital projects.

And I think the Member mentioned the master plan. We do -- are nearing completion of the master plan and hoping to have that finalized in the next month or so. And the Minister has directed us to share that with Standing Committee, which hopefully will get to you guys later this week. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. Look, the airfield fire truck, that's all great, but I -- and important for safety, but I'm thinking of the convenience of travellers. Now that we're going to reopen for out-of-territory visitors, tourism's going to get going again. There's traditionally been problems with the lineups at the airport. The waiting areas aren't big enough. Is any of that sort of passenger-convenience stuff going to get addressed in the near future through the revolving fund? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm going to ask if we can get back to the Member in terms of where we're at with some of the projects going forward as we look to, you know, some of the stuff that's happening at the YZF airport. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, I look forward to that, and I think there's a lot of people that use the airport that are anxious to know what's going to happen as well.

But earlier today, the Minister made a statement in the House about restarting the economic advisory committee. I'd understood there was a couple of different committees that were supposed to be set up to provide a little bit more input from the public and airport users and so on. And I don't think they ever were -- if they were established, they never really got going, and they never really did anything, and there was no reporting back to the public about what was happening.

Is there new terms of reference for these -- for the advisory committee, and was there a public call, expression of interest, for people to put their names forward? Who's going to be sitting on this economic advisory committee? The last thing -- the last time this was done, it was like an old boys club, and I want to avoid that. So what assurance can the Minister give me that this is not going to be an old boys club again? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister -- or Member. Minister.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we did an expression for interest in the fall, and we had a great turnout. We had a number of people with all different skill set that are interested in being a part of the advisory committee. We are going to bring it up. I went through, and I approved the -- the committee. And we've reached out to them. I've reached out to them yesterday to advise them they're part of the committee. And, you know, I brought this to Cabinet as well to be able to ensure that we don't -- we have good representation on the committee - a combination of Indigenous, non-Indigenous, women, male, female, you know, some of the capacity in terms of airport knowledge. So I mean, I do want to reassure the Member that as I'm looking through the applications, there were a lot of good application intake. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, okay, thanks. Can the Minister share that if there's a revised terms of reference and the people that she just signed off on

with us as lowly Regular MLAs? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, absolutely. And I believe I've gone to committee at the beginning to advise committee that we were putting out for an economic advisory committee to be able to direct -- to direct some of the master plan for the Yellowknife Airport. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks for that. Yeah, when this was being discussed in the last Assembly, it was very interesting because all of the Yellowknife -- all the Regular Yellowknife MLAs voted against establishing a Yellowknife Airport Revolving Fund because we could never get any commitment for accountability, representation on these committees. There was no accountability. Nothing. And then, you know, to have -- now it's being reestablished, that's great. But a little bit of more input from this side of the House would be appreciated. The last bunch were appointed by the deputy minister rather than the Minister. So that's -- it sounds like this is going to be a little better, but. So I anxiously await for this information.

Some of us actually pushed for a model much more like the waste reduction and recovery advisory committee where there was a committee actually established in legislation, and the representation is set out there and so on, to provide some greater accountability and so on. So I think that's a model that we still have to look at at some point in the future. But I'll accept the Minister's word. I look forward to getting more information about this as soon as possible because I think we have to get this on the right track, especially as tourism is going to start again. Thanks. That's all I've got to say. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. I didn't hear any question. So if there are any -- how many Members still want to speak to the information items? I'm just looking at the time that we've been sitting for the interpreters. So I don't want to -- if there's only one more person that I have on my list, we can finish that one up and then we can move on to Education after we get a break. If there's more, then I'll break now. Just -- okay. So we'll just continue. Get this one done. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to talk about the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund. And I understand that, you know, we buy some of our fuel; it comes down

from -- through Alberta and down the Valley, and then we -- I think we pick some up on the Pacific Rim.

I'm just wondering I guess, you know, what's -- what is -- I guess what justifies bringing fuel over -- over from the Pacific Rim. I suspect that of course we're saving money. That's probably the bottom line. But is there anything else that pertains to it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, it's funny, one of the other Members asked this on the floor as well and I remember looking at the answer, and I don't have it in front of me right now. But if I can ask Mr. Brennan to speak a little more about it while I find further information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. So I think there's a couple factors going in to the decision to purchase fuel from -- not from Alberta and bring it "over to the top" as it's called. I think right now we purchase our -- our fuel through a Glencore in Washington, and it comes up across Alaska North Slope.

One of the issues that we have of bringing fuel up is obviously we're 100 percent reliable on rail or road transportation. It's a long way to bring fuel in tankers. So what we've done to try and reduce some of the risk is to bring fuel from a tanker right to the port of Tuk where it's loaded off into our barges and barged into the various communities in the Inuvik settlement region. So I think there's a risk analysis that is undertaken to decide just to go that way. So last year was our first year, kind of a trial run. We do have a two-year contract. And then we'll have some options to whether or not we extend the contract or not.

So it's not just about prices, although we're constantly trying to reduce the cost of living, especially in the coastal communities. It is also a risk analysis that's done there as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member -- or Mr. Brennan. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So if we put risk aside, is the cost pretty well similar I guess bringing it both ways, or is there a difference there? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There is no difference in the cost. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the next thing then is that, you know, we've got -- we've got MTS sitting there and whether it's -- we're fully utilizing their assets or not, would it make any sense to -- if we're paying for the assets and maintenance and that, would it make any sense to -- you know, not to bring it around from Washington over the top but continue to bring it down by rail for any cost savings? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Some brought over the top versus the North Slope of Alaska may offer risk management advantages, and I think that's just further to add from Mr. Brennan's comment earlier. But the reliability of quality and delivery are the greatest importance, to be able to deliver fuel in a fashion that is safe for our communities as well. But I mean, I hear the Member's comments in terms of how to utilize MTS. I mean, we do have fuel storages. This year we did something a little new up in Tuktoyaktuk where we're looking at planning to be able to have bigger fuel storages so that we don't be able to tug so much fuel up and we have enough storage in some of our regional centres. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess the other thing about bringing it over the top is that, you know, it -- I suspect it'll impact, you know, the opportunities for jobs, opportunities for northern business as well. You know, we've got a number of fuel suppliers or middlemen here in the territories. And I wonder if that's taken into account as well as, you know, the impact on employment, the impact on business opportunities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure. I mean, we could predict so or we could predict not. But I'm going to see if Mr. Brennan can add anything further just given, you know -- he's got a little more knowledge on some of the costs and some of the savings in terms of how we deliver fuel in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Brennan.

**MR. BRENNAN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, and that's a good point, and it's actually the subject of discussion that we had this week in talking about this, was what are the impacts on MTS. And right now, I think that'll be part of the evaluation process after next -- after this coming season, is what are the impacts. My understanding is that they're negligible because of the way they operate in terms of basically transferring the fuel from the tank -- from the trains directly into the -- into the barges for shipment. But there might be some impacts that should be evaluated. So we'll consider that when we do the evaluation next year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I think it's important that, you know, that we -- we try to ensure that we're using northern businesses and we're using northern labour, we're maximizing that.

The other thing, I guess the question is, when we do bring it over the top and we transfer it to other barges there in Tuk, are we using MTS barges, or are we using somebody else's? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. DIANE ARCHIE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we are using MTS barges. And actually, it was later in the fall where we, through MTS, assisted some of the local barges to be able to ensure that we have fuel in -- fuel supply for communities such as Inuvik, Tuk, and Aklavik. So we had MTS provide that support for that as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, again I just want to reiterate that, you know, that we do have northern businesses that do invest a lot here in the territories. You know, we have a lot of people up and down the Valley that are looking for work. And so I think it's very important when you do your assessment, you know, that we use that as a consideration as well. And I can understand the risk assessment. You know, I've got -- you know, I don't really have a problem with that because we don't want any major spills, especially in, you know, in our rivers or in any waters. So -- but, you know, just look at all the -- I just ask that you look at, you know, at all the areas when considering how we're going to move fuel. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure, you're good? No further questions? Okay. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Yeah, I just wanted to ask -- I know it's getting late, and we're all tired. And I know when I said that six -- we make up 6 percent of the population and you said, you know, we don't use the population. But I wanted to ask, well, nine positions in Tlicho region, my constituents, they use that road a lot. That's why I said that, because we use the road. And now Whati's -- you know, the all-season road is open. So it would be nice if we can have some of these position. 47, you know, in North Slave, and this is the first one that I saw, you know, in Tlicho region in this part of your regional operations.

Is there any plan that some of those positions can come to Tlicho region in the future? Like, because that road is busy and we do need, you know, more position to be transfer to the regions who -- so.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** And ask about that, if there's any plan to transfer any of the positions from headquarters to the regions?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** So we've already passed all of our activities. We're just on the -- we're just on the information pages. So which --

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** About the position so I just wanted to ask. I know I'm -- I'm at page 257, but -- so that's what I'm referencing, yeah.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** So we've already gone there. So I'll just -- we'll just take that --

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** I'll talk to Diane after.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** We'll leave it at that. Thank you, Member for Monfwi. All right, so seeing that we have no more questions for the information items. Thank you, Members.

Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 235, revenue summary, information items on page 236. Are there any questions? Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE MOTION 193-19(2):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 561-19(2): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2022-2023 – INFRASTRUCTURE –  
DEFERRAL OF DEPARTMENT,  
CARRIED

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I move that committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Infrastructure at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee, there's a motion on the floor. To the motion?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried.

Consideration of the Department of Infrastructure is deferred.

Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses. You may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. And we are going to take a recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 561-19(2): Main Estimates 2022-2023. Does the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment have any opening remarks?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Go ahead.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Madam Chair, I'm here to present the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's main estimates for the fiscal year 2022-2023. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$5.159 million, or 1.46 percent, over the 2021-2022 Main Estimates. These estimates support the mandate objectives while continuing to meet the GNWT's fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include forced growth funding of \$778,000, including:

- an additional \$645,000 to address the increased demand on the senior citizen's supplementary benefit; and
- \$133,000 to address the increased lease costs related to Aurora College.

The proposed estimates also reflect a total increase of \$1.169 million to support new initiatives. This amount is comprised of:

- \$1.010 million to support the continued implementation of the action plan to improve JK to 12 student outcomes;
- \$159,000 to fund an additional position to support the Education Act Modernization Project.

The proposed estimates also reflect a total increase of \$8.787 million for other adjustments which primarily includes:

- \$1.984 million increase to support the 2021-2023 Northwest Territories Teachers' Association's collective agreement;
- \$626,000 to implement enhancements to the 2022-2023 School Funding Framework to address the declining enrolments in Northwest Territories schools and to provide consistent and stable administrative and school support to small schools;
- \$500,000 to continue an infrastructure fund to assist early learning and childcare programs with the cost of property improvement or new construction needed to offer new or expanded licensed programming;
- \$322,000 increase to the Canada-NWT French Language Service Agreement;
- \$298,000 to extend the existing Canada-Northwest Territories Early Learning and Child Care Bilateral Agreement;
- \$2.777 million for salary cost increases provided by the 2020-2021 Northwest Territories Teachers' Association collective agreement;
- \$2.684 million for salary increases across ECE in related to the 2021-2023 UNW collective agreement; and
- \$404,000 reduction to travel budgets implemented across the GNWT.

The increases are partly offset by a total decrease of \$6.308 million reflecting funding scheduled to sunset March 31st, 2022 which includes:

- \$4.255 million for Safe Return to Class funding allocated in response to the pandemic within education operations and educator development;
- \$1.088 million one-time support for NWT students in response to COVID-19 with student financial assistance;
- \$600,000 for one-time COVID-19 support funding which was federally funded for labour market programs;
- \$115,000 funding associated with northern studies expansion;

- \$211,000 establishment of NWT school and community child and youth care counsellors Phase 3 and 4, a transfer of associated funding from ECE to the Department of Health and Social Services;
- \$33,000 for a portion of funding associated with northern distance learning; and
- \$6,000 for one-time technology setup funding for quality assurance advisor and student records coordinator positions.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Do you have witnesses to bring in?

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, I do.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, will you please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To your left, we have Sam Shannon, assistant deputy minister of corporate services; and to your right, John MacDonald, deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Welcome. Committee has agreed to forego general comments. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Committee, we'll defer the departmental summary and review the estimates by activity, beginning with corporate management starting on page 33 with information items on page 34. Questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I see here that about half of your budget, or \$4 million of this budget, is chargebacks. Can I just confirm that that is the TSC chargeback?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, that is correct.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have an oddly specific question. So here under ECE, it lists that we're -- you guys are paying TSC \$4 million. Then when I go to the Infrastructure chargeback for ECE, it says \$5.5 million. Does anyone have an explanation for why there's a \$1.5 million difference?

And I suspect perhaps it might be that the school boards also charge back TSC, and that's not showing up here but I may be wrong on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Aurora College makes up that difference. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** No further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Are there any other questions under corporate management? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I see that there's one additional staff member for corporate management. Can the Minister inform us as to where that staff member is going?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. That staff member is being added to support the Education Act modernization. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I see that there is not a substantial increase to policy legislation and communication for that line item. So is that being funded from within? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'll just send that over to Mr. Shannon. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. ADM Shannon.

**MR. SHANNON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The new position that's contemplated in the 2022-2023 estimates will be located in the planning, research, and evaluation division. This is one of three positions as part of the ADAC project -- or excuse me, the new one that's being added this upcoming year is in the finance and capital planning. There are two existing positions that came in last fiscal year, one located in policy, legislation and communications, and one in planning, research and evaluation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Sitting on the Standing Committee for Social Development, we definitely get to spend a lot of time with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment because they do have a lot of legislative initiatives that they are working on. There are a lot that we are also anticipating, seeing one of which was the Education Act. Does the addition of one staff give them the human resources that they need to push this work forward? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So as was noted, we have in previous years increased the staff who are dedicated to this item and yes, we do have a lot of initiatives and they are across the department, and so they're not all supported directly by corporate services. There are initiatives that are being undertaken by the labour division and other areas. So we do have a lot but it is -- we feel as though we can undertake them and do it successfully with the contingent that we have. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, just in regards to the Education Act, that was one piece of legislation that we had anticipated seeing in the 19th Assembly. Can the Minister speak to the new timeline that ECE is working toward completing that work by? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So we had taken a different approach with the Education Act. You know, I would have loved to get it all done in four years and have the brand new modern act. But through our initial engagement, we realized that it's going to take much longer to really overhaul that entire act and so I expect that we won't see a fully modernized act until sometime in the next Legislative Assembly. However, my hope is that during this Legislative Assembly, we can make some more minor amendments to the Education Act to address some longstanding issues that are -- you know, not just housekeeping issues but not very -- not substantive perhaps but we believe they would make a difference in the years that we are modernizing the rest of the act. So we're breaking it into two phases. The first phase, I hope, will be complete this year, and phase -- or sorry, this Assembly. And phase 2, my hope is that it would be completed during the next Assembly but we are fully committed to fully engaging and codeveloping with our Indigenous government partners and so the time is -- it's unknown when it will be completed. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under corporate management from Members? Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Madam Chair, I'm just wondering if this is the section where we can discuss the curriculum change? No? I'm booted out then.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Any other questions under corporate management? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'm just curious with the change that my colleague was mentioning to the new curriculum, are we going to need to see a better or an increase to communications costs in other words to like get this messaging out there, to -- to assure parents that, you know, their -- I guess why we've made this change, assure the public why we've gone to this expense? I think there would be sort of -- I think there's going to be a lot of questions, and I guess I'm just wondering if we need more money for comms. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Over the years, ECE has built up its capacity for communications, and I think it's really been put to the test over the past two years with a lot of significant and rapid changes due to the, you know, ever changing environment with COVID. And so I'm confident that we have the ability to communicate that, and I agree with the Member that we do need to communicate that. There's a lot of interest in education and every aspect of it, especially in changes as large as communications. And so we are -- you know, we will be working with the education bodies to ensure that the changes are communicated as they happen over the coming years. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Are there any further questions under corporate management? Okay. Thank you -- or Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Corporate management and he did mention the Education Act. So is this where I can mention about the modernization Education Act? Is that -- or do I have to wait?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Modernization, I think, yeah. Yeah.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Have meetings with him, and then I think Indigenous. Are the Indigenous government organization are involved -- are going to be involved with drafting up this legislations?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, very much so. I've made that commitment at the Council of Leaders that this would be a very collaborative co-development process, and I believe the first meeting was actually today between the department and the partners and the Council of Leaders. So yes, it will be very, very collaborative. I'm fully committed to that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Monfwi.

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** That's good, yeah, I just wanted to ask that, double check.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. All right. So are there any further questions under this section?

Seeing none, Education, Culture and Employment, corporate management, operation expenditures summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$11,264,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Committee, we will now begin culture, heritage, and language beginning on page 36, with information items on page 37 to 39. Questions. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I can't stress enough I think the importance of this section, and I think we're coming into some sort of decade of awareness around culture, and I'm not quite sure I have that right. But I'm sort of disappointed to see that we're not getting too much more of an increase in funding here to support our northern performers, to our arts council. I guess this is on my forefront because I've just been doing a bunch of support letters for the arts funding.

So I guess could the Minister speak to why we're not really seeing too much of an increase here, and is there an opportunity to perhaps put more funding into these areas of Indigenous languages, etcetera? I am glad to see the increase for the broadcasting. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you for that, and so there's -- yeah, there's a few areas here. So we have things like culture and heritage and we have Indigenous languages. Most of our Indigenous languages funding, or a significant portion of it, comes from the federal government and we have been negotiating with the federal government for a new agreement. We are not -- don't have that signed

off yet but we expect that we will get an extension of what we currently have.

There has been a lot of work in the past number of years on Indigenous languages, and I think it is one of the bright spots in the GNWT.

And in terms of the culture funding, funding for the arts, things like that, we are embarking on a review of all of our arts funding as part of the review noted in the art strategy, and that will inform future funding. So perhaps we can spend the money we have in a more efficient way, or perhaps we want to seek some targeted increases, but that work is underway and I will, you know, reiterate what was mentioned earlier, that the department has a lot of different initiatives right now and it would be great if we could do everything at once but the fact is we sort of have to space these things out. And so we prioritize a number of areas, and the work is happening for that and the work for the -- you know, the work on the art strategy and that sector is -- it's in the future as laid out in the art strategy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. I do hear good things in amongst the arts community, the ones that do reach out to me. I guess I would like to reiterate a concern I guess I think we raise often, and that is the multiyear funding and that these are the types of organizations that can benefit from having guaranteed funding for several years versus having to always apply for this funding. This way they can hire staff. They are more guaranteed to be stable. And I do believe now that the NWT music does have a paid position, where before it was all volunteer, but maybe the Minister could speak a little bit more to whether that seems to be a possibility going forward for that sort of core type of funding? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, and that's exactly the things that we're looking at under the review of the art strategy, how we can best support organizations. Maybe, you know, project funding is not as efficient as a different type of multiyear funding. So that's exactly the type of things we're looking at. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, again, this is an area where if we increase some of this funding to these types of programs, we would then see an uptake in regional employment and employment in small communities. I know my colleagues have often raised being able to sell crafts

etcetera online. So I guess I'm not sure if I have too much of a question there but more just of a comment that I think that we could be very smart with the money here, and I guess maybe I'll ask the Minister what is he doing to ensure that that money is going into the hands of small community artists as well? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And perhaps I will hand it to the deputy minister for some more detail, but first I will say that we do fund the arts at the second highest level in Canada, after the Yukon. So we are providing some significant funding. But in terms of how we support a lot of the small artisans in the territory, which is what, you know, the territory is made up of, I can hand it to the deputy minister through you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So as the Minister mentioned, there are a number of art specific funding programs that the department delivers through the culture and heritage division. Those programs include support for northern performers, arts organizations operating contributions, heritage centres contribution programming, and Indigenous cultural organization contributions. As well, there is the arts council and it has funding that is provided through the council, makes the decision with regional representation I should say, about which projects should be approved during two intakes each fiscal year. So there is regional representation there. And the priority is for individual artists and so on to make sure that that is going to that sector. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess just to ask a little bit further about the Minister's comment regarding that we are the second highest funded in Canada, I guess my question is is that an overall second highest amount, or is that sort of a per capita fund? Because I -- my point or the reason I ask is that if -- I think it's harder to deliver this type of work in the North, like everything else that we do. So if it is just a sole amount, I don't know that that necessarily makes up for the difficulty maybe for our people to execute programs or a lack of capacity for executing programs and services in the arts. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So it's a -- we fund the arts to the second highest degree per capita. I think one of the differences between our jurisdiction and southern jurisdictions is that there are larger arts entities that can access third party funding, federal funding, things like that, that a lot of our smaller artisans here can't do just by the fact that they don't have that infrastructure around them. So while the government is providing funding, I think the artists are missing out on other avenues, and we want to capitalize on that, and that's part of the -- one of the goals of the review through the art strategy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That always makes me think of something else I want to ask.

I guess further to this, I think this is the right area to ask around, like, our archives and such and whether or not -- I know that there's been -- or again, for this lack of capacity that we have in the North or lack of resources, that we're potentially not able to preserve and archive and really utilize the great art that we do have stored at the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre, and when we did do the tour there that was expressed that the building isn't adequate. So is there money coming federally for us to start taking care of our arts stock better? And I guess I look at the fact that, again, we are not one area or one territory where everything is homogenized inside of it. And so in reality, we have, you know, however many different cultures that each have their unique arts and culture that needs to be preserved. So I guess I'm -- I know I'm probably pleading to the choir or singing to the choir, but maybe the Minister could speak if there's more money coming there? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So through the capital process, we are looking at ways to enhance the ability of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre to, you know, store and display art. There is not the level of federal funding that one might think available for things like this. It's actually quite limited. Generally, museums, art galleries are not 100 percent funded by a provincial or territorial government. Again, there's other avenues for funding and so we are exploring, you know, how to perhaps access some of those other avenues and how we can perhaps tie in with some other projects that might be happening in the territory and, you know, utilize some other facilities. So it is on -- there are staff who are working on this but it is a slow process given the magnitude of the issue. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I guess I really want to see that mukluk and kamik display or collection that we have at the museum get on display at some point because it's pretty fantastic.

I like what the Minister is saying about collaborations, and I think that there's an opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous organizations. I love that we have the art in the airport, that type of thing going on. So I think there's plenty of opportunities. We can have art in our schools, other ways that we could be showcasing that around city so that when we do have tourists return, there's something for them to look at. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions? Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I notice that there's a decrease to the NWT Arts Council. Is that going to -- is that decrease going to continue, or are we going to at some point get back to watching live shows and all these other things? And I'm just wondering why there is the decrease. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the NWT Arts Council is showing \$700,000 year over year, and the actuals in 2021 were \$710,000. Is that what the Member is referring to?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Yes.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So I believe the arts council just overspent that year by 10,000. Perhaps I can ask Mr. Shannon for some more detail on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Mr. Shannon.

**MR. SHANNON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have not much to add beyond the budget was overspent in that current year and there have been no budget changes during the course of that time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** The heritage centre's line, the \$491,000, could you give us a breakdown on the allocations of those funds? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. From what I can recall, the Hay River Museum Society gets \$60,000. I believe the centre in Thebacha gets \$198,000. But I can ask the deputy minister for the actual numbers. I believe he's looking at them. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the numbers for the heritage centres are.

- In Fort Smith, at the Northern Anthropological and Cultural Society, 198,000;
- In Norman Wells, at the Historical Society, it's 118,000;
- At the Hay River Museum Society is 60,000;
- The Yellowknife Historical Society is 60,000; and
- The Fort Simpson Historical Society is 55,000.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** The line for Indigenous language revitalization has gone down from the 2021-2022 Actuals by 25,000. And I just wonder how serious this department is in Indigenous languages revitalization when you see a decrease in the mains. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member -- or Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Very serious. I'm very passionate about this, this file, and like I said I think it's -- there's a lot of good work happening, work that wasn't happening, you know, just five years ago. A lot of strides have been made. For some of the details on the funding, I can ask the deputy minister to provide that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So that, I think, is just an internal move from grants to contributions. So the total amount of funding allocated for Indigenous language revitalization would not have changed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** One of our -- Madam Chair, at one of our government operations phone-in shows, the whole issue of bonuses for knowing a second language or a second official language was brought up. I just want to hear the explanation if that includes all Indigenous languages or just the French language? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So I believe there is some sort of a GNWT policy on languages. I'm not -- I can't say I'm overly familiar with it. The issue that comes up through ECE is often Indigenous language instructors. There are Indigenous language instructors in the schools who might not have education degrees and so they are not paid at the same rate as teachers who have education degrees. And this is something that, you know, the department has brought forward on numerous times to the -- you know, to -- and has brought forward to Finance who has then brought forward to the negotiations with the union. So we are working on trying to ensure that Indigenous languages are valued the way that we believe they should be. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for real clarity, the Indigenous language teachers at the elementary school and the high school in Fort Smith all have degrees from the teacher education program, and are they paid on par with the French teacher at those schools? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Perhaps I'll send it to the deputy minister for that level of detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Luckily with the recent conclusion of collective bargaining with the Northwest Territories Teachers Association, so my -- what I think I believe the Minister is speaking about has been addressed. So, for example, there is a provision within the collective agreement for a language bonus for Indigenous language instructors. So that's been increased. I think it's a little over \$6,000 per year now.

As well, in the table, the certification and the salary grid for teachers, the parties agreed to remove the initial step which was one year or less of experience. So Indigenous language instructors are now paid at two years or less, which brings them up a pay level,

and brings them to be equal to other educators within the system with that level of experience and education. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Thebacha.

**MS. MARTSELOS:** I don't have any other questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions under culture, heritage and languages? Oh yes, sorry, Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. So I wanted to start off on the travel line item. I see that there was a slight decrease to travel for this item. I'm wondering who within this key activity is doing the most travel? And so with this travel, given what line items are here, would this be mostly in-territory travel and why the decrease? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I can probably ask Mr. Shannon to explain the -- or Mr. MacDonald to explain the -- on the changes. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister mentioned in his opening remarks, ECE's contribution to the government-wide travel reduction was a little over \$400,000. In applying that reduction across the department, we looked at the various branches and divisions where staff conduct travel. So where there was previously a larger travel budget available, we made larger cuts commensurate to those organizations. So in this activity, the Indigenous language group would be providing travel support to Indigenous language communities as well as to education bodies for training and things of that nature. So that would be an example of where that would be reduced. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** So thank you very much, Madam Chair. So the cut then specifically would be in-territory travel; I just want to confirm that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. There may be a possibility that there may have been some out-of-territory travel under this budget. And if that was the case, that would be the first travel we would

look at not doing. So we are prioritizing travel within the territory if we do travel. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you for the clarification from the Minister.

My next, I guess more of a comment first, is I see, and I note that one of my colleagues mentioned this already, was the significant increase to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and that the Indigenous languages portion is still undergoing discussions with the federal government for contributions available for that. Is there a timeline associated with when the department expects to hear about that? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'd ask Mr. MacDonald to answer. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's always a bit difficult predicting when we can conclude formal negotiations with the federal government but we're actually optimistic that we'll be able to complete this fiscal year. And as the Minister I think mentioned when responding to a previous question, we're looking for a three-year extension to the existing Indigenous languages agreement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the next thing that I wanted to talk about really quickly was the Indigenous languages broadcasting line item which is found on page 37. It's been a stagnant number for a number of years now at 878. And the reason I wanted to point this out is in looking at different ways that different areas -- or different areas of the world have been able to do language revitalization, one of the places that was able to have quite a lot of success was Hawaii, and they found about 50 years ago that they had lost quite a bit of language speakers and, through radio and television broadcasting, were able to increase their language speakers by nine times. And I thought that was really interesting. And so I'm wondering if there is an intent to increase this line item? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. In this current year, there is not an intent. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one of the things that I think is really exciting is the opportunity for young kids to hear the languages that they're learning in schools or from family members on TV, on the radio and such. And so I'm wondering if there is a -- I know there's not a line increase this year. I'm wondering if there is intent to add to this line item or grow this line item in the future? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So there is Indigenous, you know, language programming on the radio, and it is much appreciated, and I know that we utilize it every time we need to get information out to Indigenous communities. But while this line item might be stagnant, the way that people can communicate has changed over the years. And so, you know, Facebook, YouTube, there are other ways that people now communicate and I'm not sure that, you know, a focus on radio is necessarily the way to go. That being said, I can ask the deputy minister if there's been any conversations in the department because I could be totally off base. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are -- I should back up and say that a number of our initiatives under Indigenous languages all link back to our Indigenous languages strategy and action plan, which was built upon engagements with Indigenous governments and organizations and other partners. Those actions include funding for broadcasting societies for radio, community radio. Those are in different budget lines. And there are also funding that's provided to create regional resources, products, apps. They've been used for applications, you know, for phones and for tablets and so on and so forth. So there are various funding streams that allow for these types of innovative solutions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm wondering if the Minister can -- and I know that this is slightly out of scope of the budget a little bit, but maybe not so much. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what kind of work the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat does with ITI as far as their film division and building

Indigenous languages into films coming out of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'll pass that to the deputy minister. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To be honest, not a huge amount of interdepartmental work on that issue has occurred in the past but it is an area of opportunity.

One of the things that the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat has done of late is establish a new committee across government with all departments. So Indigenous language coordinators in each department now have a form to meet regularly with ILE staff, share information, provide feedback on initiatives, and to move the needle forward in terms of the ability of departments and agencies to provide services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Monfwi, did you have questions for this section?

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** Yeah. Here, Indigenous languages revitalizations, it says -- can you clarify that for us please; what does that mean? Because you said development towards Indigenous language diploma program, etcetera.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So under the Indigenous languages line, there's a number of different initiatives that are taking place. The Member's correct that there's work being done to develop an Indigenous languages diploma. We have a mentor apprentice program. Perhaps I can get the deputy minister to point out detail on some of the number of programs that we have. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So as the Minister mentioned, it's through the Indigenous language action plan, which is broken into, really, two parts. One part is on revitalization, and the other part is on services. And over the past number of years as ECE has been implementing that action plan, the focus has been on revitalization because there's an urgent need to arrest the decline in languages in various language communities across the territory.

So under that action plan, the number of actions that the Minister referenced, such as the mentor apprentice program, are meant to do just that. So in that case, that's a program that ECE uses to partner with six Indigenous governments and organizations to provide training and support for a mentor in the language to work with an apprentice, and there are currently 66 pairs working on that program right now across the territory. And in fact that group will be graduating later this month. And there's a high, high success rate and the performance indicators are really showing some success. So that's an example of revitalization. So I'll stop there, unless there are other questions. But thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Monfwi, did you have any follow-up questions?

**MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG:** No. So I'm just wondering because we heard from educators many times too that in order to maintain your language, you have to start at the lower level and like right now, with the daycare, can they access this money as well, this funds, the daycare or Indigenous daycare that -- or in the outlying communities or a daycare here, can they -- are they -- are they eligible to access?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I will hand it to the deputy minister, but first I will say that, you know, we are embarking down a path towards universal child care, and part of that includes ensuring that we have a proper framework to guide us. And one of the pillars of that framework is going to be ensuring that all childcare is culturally appropriate. And so that is going to be one of our focuses. In terms of the funding available, I can ask the deputy minister for some more information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So to specifically answer the Member's questions, the early learning and childcare funding and the Indigenous languages funding are distinct. So a licensed program offering childcare would not be accessing the types of programs and services offered for Indigenous languages. But with that being said, as the Minister mentioned, the existing early learning and childcare funding that the department has includes funding grants for cultural and language programming as well as other activities such as training. And there is what's known as an early learning framework which is essentially a culturally representative, I don't want to say curriculum, but it's a framework for instruction within licensed programs across the territory. So that's still in the pilot stage. But once that becomes finalized, there's an

opportunity for licensed programs across the territory to use that as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under culture, heritage and language? Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just looking at these numbers, and I notice that if you add up the arts council support to northern performers, arts organization operating fund, and there's one more in there. But anyways, they come out to about \$1.6 million. And then we have heritage centres. Like, I understand, you know, putting a lot of money to the -- a lot of funding to the art councils and to the performers and organizations. I think it is very important. But just as important as well is heritage centres.

You know, we have in heritage centres throughout the territories, we have, you know, artwork; we have carvings; we have all kinds of exhibits and artifacts that are not being looked after properly because of lack of funding. They're there sitting there and, you know, it's cold out and the heat's turned off. So we've got to put more money into it. And I heard the Minister say as well that, you know, it's just not that easy to get money for the heritage centres and, you know, one thing I'd like to see is that we look at that number and in this budget here, we should see it -- like, I would like to see an increase anyway in that area and also maybe a one time -- a one-time shot to some of them just so that they could hire more people and maybe look at sourcing other funds.

So there any -- I just ask the Minister if there's anything that could be done in that area? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So the numbers in the budget are what's in the budget so there are no increases this year. That being said, the numbers in here don't represent the totality of the funding that heritage centres receive from the GNWT. ITI also provides funding to heritage centres. It's not specific for heritage centres but they can and have accessed to ITI funding a number of times to undertake capital upgrades to their facilities and whatnot. But the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre also provides in-kind support. So, you know, we have staff from the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre that will go to heritage centres and help them with their -- you know, ensure that the way they are handling, displaying, storing their collections, is appropriate.

But that being said, this number, this \$491,000, hasn't increased in a number of years, and I don't think I've met anyone who knows how many years

since it's increased. So it's in the double digits for sure, over ten years. So I think at some point in the near future it is probably due for an increase. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, I know that, you know, we've got artists out there, you know, and some of them have passed on, like Don Cardinal; we have, you know, other ones there as well, like, Antoine Mountain, Archie Beaulieu; we got Colinda Cardinal; we've got, you know, Sonny MacDonald, and, you know, they've got -- you know, they've got -- well, we see his work sitting here near the Speaker's chair. And I think that it's -- you know, we could -- we talk about that, you know, that -- you know, the -- the museum can provide supports but we've talked about that for a couple years, and I still see the artifacts of these -- I still see the objects and that's -- exhibits sitting there in Hay River in the cold and it's deteriorating, and I don't think -- and I don't think we're -- we're really serious about it.

I look around this -- around this building here. The artwork that's in here, like it's -- like, it's magnificent. And, like, we should be showing, and it should be out there. And I know the Minister and I had a discussion about, you know, hopefully sourcing funding to put up a -- to put a -- building up possibly in Hay River to showcase this, and -- for the Northwest Territories. And I think the Premier might have been in on that one. But it's something that -- it's something that, you know, we have to really take serious because we have -- we have a lot here, and I just don't want to see it lost because it is our history. You know, we have artists who are passed. We have artists who are still alive and still producing, and we have emerging artists. And we have to make sure that we -- you know, we preserve what they create. So I just ask the -- ask the Minister to keep that in mind as well.

I just want to talk about Indigenous languages and revitalization. And I see there's \$200,000 there. I guess I'd ask with that, has any of that money gone to supporting any revitalization of Michif language in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So the \$200,000 specifically is for development of an Indigenous languages diploma program. But we do have a much larger pot of money for Indigenous languages. Perhaps I can ask -- no. So the answer would be no. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And has there ever been any interest shown from any of the Indigenous organizations with respect to looking for funding for the Michif language? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I don't have that level of detail with me.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Hay River South.

**MR. ROCKY SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I'll just have to I guess work with my colleague from the Deh Cho and we'll have to push that, and also colleague from Thebacha. Can't forget her. And try and get some of the Metis organizations to maybe access some of that funding. Thank you. That's just a comment. Thank you. That's all.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Are there any further questions under culture, heritage and language? Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Yeah, I don't have too many questions here. I'm just struck by when they mentioned the MAP program, the mentor apprenticeship on that. We don't have a line item for it in here. So is there any specific budget going to this and how does that program work? If I could get some clarification. And mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And yes, we don't have all of the programs broken out in here. But it does have funding associated with it. Perhaps I can ask Mr. MacDonald for the details on exactly how that funding is distributed and how the program works. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So the mentor apprentice program is in its second year of operation, which is still considered a pilot. So after one year, it was expanded based on feedback and a program evaluation that was conducted. So as I mentioned earlier, there are now six Indigenous governments and six languages being supported through that program. So there is an annual allocation right now of \$300,000 for that program, and that program is an annual intake where ECE provides support for mentors and apprentices to

come together. So those funding provides for training supports and information for those pairs, funding for them to participate and to work together, to have that time with the mentor language speaker. It provides funding for individuals to support those pairs and to provide language expertise and instructional expertise and so on and so forth. So it's essentially a program that runs over the course of a year.

So, for example, for the upcoming year, there will be a call for individuals to apply, and they'll be able to apply in the spring. They'll be on-boarded through training, and then they'll have course work and opportunities to work together in pairs over the course of the year and speak the language and develop language proficiency. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi for that. I'm just wondering which organizations you would work with in the communities to advance this. It sounds like, you know, a really well thought out program to really encourage speakers with languages. I'd want to know what you actually pay the mentor for their services but I'm just wondering if their -- you know, if you've had lots of turnovers in this and whether there was any complaints about any of the pay, because I don't know what they're getting paid right now. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And so we work with the Indigenous governments. That's who our partners are on this. The mentors receive -- the starting compensation rate is \$25 an hour, and the apprentices receive \$20 an hour. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi for that. I'm just wondering, you know, if we can look at increasing that, because even for us as we get CAs and all government positions that I think I'm aware of, they start at about 30 bucks an hour. So I just wonder if there'd be consideration for -- in order to have a real good program, you know, and people want to be committed to it, right? So if we don't, you know, put the money there, you know, it won't be as successful. That's what I would think anyways. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Did you have any further questions? No? Okay. And any further questions under culture, heritage and language? Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. So on September 17th, 2021, the new arts strategy was released, and it doesn't look like there's any -- there is no changes to any of the contributions on page 37. So when might we expect to see some changes in, you know, even culture, heritage and languages budget that reflects the new arts strategy? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So it could be the next budget. The program evaluation is happening, and you know, I'm of two minds of these strategies. Do I just do the work without telling anyone what we're doing, or do we release something that is very high level so that people know what we're doing but then I get criticized for not having dollars attached to it? And so I've opted to put something out there so that people know what we're doing and know where we're going. And so right now, the programs are being evaluated. There is a budgeting process that happens throughout year and so if there's an opportunity to perhaps increase some of those numbers, or perhaps change some of those numbers, you know, none of our arts funding programs were designed with an evaluation component. So we really don't know how they're doing. There's no way for us to look at them and say, yes, this money is well spent. So we want to do that work, ensure that what we're doing is appropriate and, if not, adjust as necessary. And if we find that, you know, an investment makes a huge difference and we'd be crazy not to increase that funding, then we can pursue those types of changes. But I understand the Member's frustration. But we are looking at the programs and determining if we need new money and how that money would be spent and where it would go. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, I know the Minister was on this side of the House in the last Assembly and saw lots of different strategies. Once in a while, you might actually see one that actually had some dollar figures attached to it but pretty rare. But, you know, here a significant amount of time, I know even committee time went into reviewing draft of the strategy, not that that was really reflected in the strategy but, you know, we put a lot of time and effort into this and then we just get the same thing in the next budget. Then the Minister talks about how, well, we're reviewing things within the department. Is that part of the government renewal initiative? Because I've seen zero results from that effort so far. Zero. Nothing. No inventories. Nothing. But I understood that Education, Culture and Employment was supposed to be one of the first departments. Still

haven't seen anything. Is that what the Minister's talking about here? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And no, I'm not talking about the government renewal initiative. As the Member may recall, the art strategy included a number of actions in there. The first action, it's one of the foundational action, was to review the current programs that we have. And again, that work could have been done prior to a strategy being released, and we could have released the strategy with the reviews done, you know, perhaps this year or sometime next year but we decided to do it in that order. And so we have -- we know what we have. We know what our inventory of arts funding is, our programs are, and we're going to review those as part of the art strategy, not as part of a broader government renewal initiative. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yeah, just my disappointment with not seeing any changes here about this -- after developing the art strategy.

Can the Minister tell me if there's any increases in funding for the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in here? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And I will also comment that I've had discussion was the department about trying to align strategies with budgeting processes. So if we release a strategy in September, the budgeting, we're almost too late to develop new initiatives and then get that funding in there. So there are challenges with that as well, though. We are pretty thin in all positions in the GNWT. We're generally one person deep and so, you know, when we have a number of different reviews happening, it's hard to get them all done at one time so they all align with the budgeting process. But I am very much alive to the Member's concerns, and they are my concerns as well. So we are working on that.

But in terms of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, I can say that there is a revenue study that's underway to determine how we can find more funds, how we can increase the revenue and perhaps better supported. But in terms of how the heritage centre is funded, I can ask the deputy minister for that information. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So as the Minister indicated, the Prince of Wales Centre has not received an increase of funding. But to maybe expand on that comment about the revenue study.

This is meant to be the final component of a more comprehensive planning study to look at the museum. The Member may recall that ECE embarked on -- with the assistance of Infrastructure and a contractor, an analysis of the mid life retrofit for the Prince of Wales, and the initial figures that came back were significant, 160 to \$170 million required. We revised those numbers down to look at a more realistic expenditure, which was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 50 - \$60 million. And at this point, the revenue study is meant to try to find ways in which those costs could be offset with ongoing revenue through the museum itself. So we're anticipating that that will be complete by the end of this fiscal year and that will feed into future discussions around the Prince of Wales. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, okay, thanks. Yeah, I look forward to this revenue study although I must say I'm a bit skeptical that charging admission to Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is really going to generate a lot of revenue. But, you know, maybe I could be surprised.

Well, just as my colleagues from Hay River and Fort Smith have said, you know, we need to invest I think more in heritage, and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre does actually serve as the Northwest Territories Archives. We have legal obligations to manage the records of the Government of the Northwest Territories in a way that's going to protect and preserve them for future generations. And I don't think the archives right now cuts that. And for anybody who has had a tour, and I've been over there many times and a couple times as a Regular MLA, you know, the facility is in not very good shape. And I think we're at risk of not meeting our basic legal obligations in terms of protecting the heritage of the Northwest Territories there.

So anyways, the Minister's heard me about all of this before and I just don't get a sense that anything's changing. So I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under -- Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm surprised my colleague from Frame Lake didn't ask it. Is there any update on renaming the Prince of

Wales Heritage Centre, and maybe we could consider asking the Prince of Wales to pay for that \$170 million upgrade if he wants to keep his name on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So the idea was to look at the revenue study and figure out how we are going to support the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre to fulfill the legal -- our legal obligations to store archives and wrap it all up in one package with a name change. And so that work is all happening.

I will say that, you know, a revenue study is looking at more than just charging admissions. I mean, you could look at number of people through the door and multiply that by two and then you know how much you would make for charging people \$2 to get into the heritage centre. So it's more than that. It's looking at, you know, things such as rental spaces, gift shops, but primarily, what I think might be the biggest thing, is the third party funding.

We are the only jurisdiction that funds their museum a hundred percent from the government. Generally, these are not funded by government but third parties. And so the hope would be that we could access some things like that in terms of, you know, the archives and perhaps future art galleries. We're also looking at the growth of Aurora College and what that might mean when we look at a new polytechnic facility. So all that to say that things are proceeding quite slowly, and I feel the Member's frustration, but that is the pace of government and I will apologize for it. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Are there any further questions under culture, heritage and language?

Seeing no further questions, please turn to page 36. Education, Culture and Employment, culture, heritage, and language, operation expenditures summary, 2022-2023 Main Estimates, \$21,251,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, committee. So we will move on to early learning and child care beginning on page 41, with information items on page 42, 43. Questions? No questions? Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister just explain to me why we just signed a big agreement with Canada for -- Early Learning and Childcare Agreement but there's no increase here? Is that just because that money has to come forward in a SUP? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** That's correct. If I may use the Member's time to clarify my statement earlier. I'm not apologizing for the pace of the work that we do in terms of saying that we are slow and employees are slow; I'm saying that it's a big job and that's why it takes a long time. It's just government but people are working hard on all of these things that the Members are bringing up.

And, yes, the Member is correct that the agreement was signed well after this was finalized by the printer so we will have to get that money through a different method. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. JOHNSON:** Yeah, thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I look forward to seeing the SUP going forward in this fiscal that we're reviewing now I guess next fiscal, and I'll have a number of questions then.

But it's my understanding that we're actually hoping to reimburse some people who have already paid childcare costs in this calendar year. Can I just get an update of how that work is going and when we expect that to occur? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So I will be having a discussion with the federal minister in a public forum in the coming days, and we'll be discussing what the program's going to look like as it rolls out. So I'd be happy to have those conversations at a future date. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Any further questions on early child -- early learning and childcare? Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I was happy, on page 42, to see a substantial increase to the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund. I'm wondering if the Minister can let us know how many communities do not currently have licensed childcare? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'm not sure what the number today is. It does vary between 11 and 13, and so I suspect that it's still between 11 and 13. And it looks like it's 13 today. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Building infrastructure in the NWT is very, very expensive, and childcare facilities are not immune to the costs of building. And so I know that using existing structures, infrastructure, especially in smaller communities, is key. So I'm wondering if the Minister knows if the policy work to be able to run licensed day homes out of public housing has been completed? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I believe that work is still underway. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. While I know that this is not NWT Housing Corp's day, this is something that definitely has an impact on childcare in communities. Does the Minister of ECE know when this work will be complete?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. No, I don't but I want to temper everyone's expectation that this is -- I don't think this will be a silver bullet, and I think in fact there might be very few units that might even be available for licensed childcare. So the work is underway but we don't have an anticipated completion date yet. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

**MS. CLEVELAND:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No, I think I'm -- I think I'm -- I think I'm good. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. You're good. Any other questions? Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, with the increase or the look at the money coming in and the plans for the future, I also have concern about, you know, the licensed daycare spaces or childcare spaces in communities. Is there going to be an opportunity or a way that family members can access funding through the new federal funding to provide that daycare for their own, you know, grandchildren or nieces and nephews? I would rather we paid family members to take care of their children versus people having to go out necessarily and work or grandparents that are just doing it at their own expense. I think that there's definitely a way we could be funneling some of that money into sort of a unique program like that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And there's not a way unless the family members get licensed. So the agreement is specifically for licensed childcare. And we don't have the ability to fund unlicensed childcare providers. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there potentially a way to carve off a chunk of money that then could be provided as a support to people, or even through an NGO type organization, so that -- I guess I get really hung up again on, you know, we are a small territory with lacking capacity. I don't want us to sit here with money that doesn't get spent because there isn't -- I mean, I know it would get spent somewhere. But it would probably get spent somewhere in a community like Yellowknife versus in, you know, Paulatuk, right? So to me, the amount of spaces like this we'd be talking about would be probably fairly small, and I guess there's -- I just feel that this is a -- at least a solution to bridge through until we maybe can have a day where we actually have those licensed daycare spaces in those communities. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. And I hear the Member's comments. I guess I have to say that we have focused on licensed childcare spaces even through our own programs and sometimes we do have to pick a lane and stick with it, and I think that our efforts are focused on licensed childcare centres, and supporting people who are providing childcare in a community without a licensed centre but as if they were a licensed centre. So, you know, there are babysitters in communities where you drop your kids off but they aren't licensed. And so when we learn about that, we do our best to help them become licensed, and we have funding to help them make the, you know, renovations that they need to make. So our efforts are focused on supporting licensed childcare centres and helping people become licensed. That being said, I completely understand the Member's comments and in a perfect world, yes, we would be able to do that, but that's not the direction that we're going. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Great Slave.

**MS. NOKLEBY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate the Minister's comments, and perhaps I have to find a different department to press for this type of funding through a social program.

I guess with the Minister's comments then about trying to help unlicensed spaces become licensed but they run into that hurdle is the building code and the fire marshal and all of that good stuff, which we've heard lots about in this House. So I guess can the Minister speak to how do we -- or how does the department help spaces that perhaps aren't ideal become licensed in that case? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So there are regional early living and childcare coordinators -- or consultants in every region, and those are the people on the ground who people can reach out to have those conversations.

We also have, like as I mentioned, some monetary supports. And we are, as part of the move towards an universal system of childcare, we are looking at supports that we do provide and determining if that's the best way to provide those supports. And so we could see some changes in the way we roll that funding out as well, to make these types of changes that the Member is talking about. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Minister. Anything further? Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. And I know that we had a supplementary appropriation, a couple of them tabled earlier today. One contains some information about the new federal agreements so I'm not going to ask any questions about that here because I think they're more appropriate for the SUP. But I do have a few questions about what's forced in the main estimates.

On page 41, it's about a hundred thousand dollar increase in purchased services, and can someone explain to me what's going on there? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. So that is related to the extension of the Canada-NWT agreement on early living and childcare, so not the Canada-wide. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks for that, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. What do we get for the hundred thousand bucks? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I'll do what I should have done in the first place, and I'll ask the deputy minister to answer. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Deputy minister, what will we get for that money?

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In that case, that money is provided primarily for support for training of early childhood educators working within licensed programs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks for that. There's just a couple of smaller changes on page 42 under grants.

The early childhood program grants going up \$35,000 while the early childhood scholarships are going down by \$15,000. Normally we don't really see a lot of movement in these sections. So is there an explanation there? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. I believe the grants were -- perhaps I'll ask the deputy minister. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Deputy minister MacDonald.

**MR. MacDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just believe those are year over year changes to that funding to actuals. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Madam Chair, I don't have anything further but -- yeah.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Are there any further questions under this section? Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. My question's in relation to the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund. I believe you had an application process out earlier in the year, I believe, or last year to apply for early childhood infrastructure funding. And that one was to preserve existing centres, also to create new licensed daycare centres. I'm just wondering if this program would help an organization build a new infrastructure from the ground up? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you, Member. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, it would help it. It's unlikely that it would fund the entire thing but a number of the projects -- or I know at least one of the projects was a brand new build, and that was the one in Fort Smith. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** And your application process, I'm just thinking about the small communities where we never get anything like this in there because of the, I don't know, the limitations with the amount available organizations or volunteers or whatever it is, or for that matter qualified people. Your application process, I'm just wondering if there's been any applications, any interest from the communities like Fort Providence, Kakisa, all the small communities I'm mentioning about? Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Minister of ECE.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Yes, I believe that Fort Providence actually has an application in. We supported a project in Deline. And we do prioritize small communities, understanding that it's generally small communities who really lack the infrastructure. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. BONNETROUGE:** No further questions. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** All right. Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Given that I don't think there's anybody else on your list, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler):** Thank you. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. Motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress.

---Carried

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. I'll see you tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** May I please have the Report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MS. SEMMLER:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bills 23, 29, 38; Minister's Statement 202; Tabled Document 561, 567, 578,

579, and would like to report progress with one motion adopted. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Do we have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Replies to Budget Address (Day 7 of 7)
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motions
17. Motions
18. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Public Utilities Act

- Bill 29, Resource Royalty Information Disclosure Statute Amendment Act
- Bill 38, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021
- Minister's Statement 202-19(2): Annual Status Report on the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2019-2023
- Tabled Document 561-19(2): 2022-2023 Main Estimates
- Tabled Document 567-19(2): Annual Status Report – 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, February 2021-January 2022 of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2019-2023

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8 p.m.