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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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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
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(Monfwi)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, March 29, 2022****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr.): Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 234-19(2):
INNOVATION ACROSS THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has a mandate to advance the knowledge economy in the Northwest Territories. In doing this, we have engaged with residents, and they have told us that the knowledge economy needs to be grounded in innovation. Guided by input from residents, we are working to expand both our understanding of innovation and the scope of action in this area. We will focus on an innovation action plan to facilitate growth, create opportunity, and diversify our economy. It is a new way of thinking, empowered and driven by new technologies merging with traditional practices.

While our vision of the knowledge economy may be new, its foundation in innovation is not. Northerners have long been recognized for their resourcefulness and resilience, but most especially for their innovation.

Historically, sustainable northern fur harvesting practices established the beginnings of our modern economy more than 200 years ago. And long before the first geologists arrived, Indigenous people used the oil seepages along the banks of the Mackenzie River to caulk their canoes. Inuvialuit kayaks have distinct shapes designed for the conditions of the western Arctic. And today, the blending of traditional and scientific knowledge plays a key role in projects like the planning and construction of the new Tlicho Highway.

This path of innovation continues today, Mr. Speaker. Our government has invested in a

world-class fibre link which supported the development of the Inuvik satellite station facility where polar-orbiting satellites transmit data. The Aurora Research Institute at Aurora College applies scientific, technological, and Indigenous knowledge to solve northern problems and advance social and economic goals. The Innovate Centre for the Arts, Crafts, and Technology in Inuvik merges traditional arts and crafts with new technologies and supports community technology centres across the region. Research on permafrost is expanding, including in areas that are now more accessible through the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway.

Often, the challenges presented by our climate and permafrost can lead to innovation. Building hundreds of kilometers of ice roads is a painstaking but state-of-the-art process that connects communities and industries to wider transportation networks. Using technology to measure ice thickness with ground-penetrating radar has created space for pioneering research. Current testing is underway to use satellites to measure the thickness of the ice and identify where it is weakening and shifting.

In the natural resources sector, mining in a northern environment with permafrost also requires groundbreaking approaches. This includes engineering award-winning dike technology, blending knowledge and innovation that keeps the ground frozen to enable mining and testing new underwater remote mining systems to extract kimberlite with minimal waste.

Mr. Speaker, the private sector has always looked for ways to innovate and create efficiencies, and our government is adopting the same approach to strengthen the conditions for collaboration, discovery, innovation and ultimately create a more diversified and inclusive NWT economy. Part of this diversification will happen through Aurora College.

Through recent amendments to the Aurora College Act, our Legislative Assembly has taken the first legislative steps to establish an arm's length post-secondary institution. The polytechnic university's vision is to become a hub for researchers from across the North, Canada, and the world. The university will work to increase investments and build partnerships with governments, industry, and other post-secondary institutions. Opportunities in

research have already been seen in recent years in northern organizations like Hotyi ts'eeda and Dechinta.

Mr. Speaker, we have creative thinkers and doers in the Northwest Territories. With emphasis on incorporating Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, our territory will have even greater opportunities for development with an NWT innovation action plan and knowledge economy. These approaches will strengthen our entrepreneurial ecosystem across the NWT to bolster job creation, employ state-of-the-art technology, and establish investment opportunities for businesses, especially as we transition to a low-carbon economy. The possibilities are limitless. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 235-19(2):
HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM RENEWAL

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Healthy Family Program is a voluntary, home-visiting and knowledge-sharing program for pregnant parents, caregivers, and families with young children under six.

Over the last five years, the Department of Health and Social Services has worked closely with communities to renew this valuable program. Elders and other community members have shared their vision for this renewed program, where children thrive, caregivers are supported, and communities care for families so that future generations are stronger and stronger.

The robust renewal process included an evaluation of the existing program, research on successful parenting programs in other jurisdictions, and extensive engagement with over 180 staff, families, and caregivers from across the Northwest Territories. The new program is designed to include innovative practices successfully implemented elsewhere and encourages integration with other community programming. It also includes a change in approach, from risk-based to prevention.

Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action Number 5 calls on governments to develop culturally-appropriate parenting programs for Indigenous families, both as a commitment to reconciliation and to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care. Such programs are needed because government policy rooted in colonization has attempted to dismantle Indigenous family life and parenting practices for generations through assimilation and violence against children in residential schools. It is our

responsibility to acknowledge this truth and commit to action. The re-design of the Healthy Family Program responds to this call as part of a system-wide shift to prioritize culturally-appropriate and prevention-based programming that supports parents and nurtures children.

Mr. Speaker, the renewed Healthy Family Program is available to all families and is responsive to their needs. It combines a traditional Indigenous approach to parenting with techniques and best practices learned through scientific research. It prioritizes children and families and provides a hub for support services and resources.

Healthy Family support workers work directly with families to develop their identity through a connection to community and culture. Workers encourage an active role for fathers, partners, extended family, and community in child development and well-being.

Implementation of the renewed program is taking place in all 14 original locations and is expanding to five additional communities. In the next year, we will focus on communication with families and staff, program delivery, and program evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, the Healthy Family Program staff have been the champions of this work from the beginning. They are dedicated to families they work with and always do their best to treat clients with respect and as the expert on their own family. Program staff are knowledgeable and experienced in the communities they serve and their expertise in early childhood development is vital to the success of this program. They apply the program's guiding principles daily and serve as coaches, facilitators, and community connectors.

The Healthy Family Program helps to create an environment where children feel loved and where parenting leads to healing. It can have lasting positive effects on children, their caregivers, and on the community they live in.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our achievements to date. I would like to thank the knowledge-holders who worked with us on this renewal project, including elders, families and caregivers, social services staff, Indigenous scholars, and the project team. The government is committed to improving early childhood development indicators for all children in the NWT and renewing the Healthy Family Program is an important part of honouring that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Infrastructure.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 236-19(2):
UPDATE ON WINTER ROAD SEASON AND
COMMUNITY FUEL RE-SUPPLY

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories' winter roads are a very important part of providing much-needed access to and from communities. They are especially critical when it comes to connecting families and businesses.

Every year essential goods, like fuel for electricity generation, heat, and transportation, are delivered to communities and homes by way of the NWT's winter roads. I would like to thank all the highway and fuel delivery crews across the territory for their care, diligence, and commitment this season. Their work is vital for the day-to-day lives of residents in all NWT regions. The pandemic has created challenges and hardships but the highway and fuel crews have risen to the challenge and continue to deliver quality service, safely and reliably.

Today, I am pleased to provide an update on the 2022 winter road season and fuel resupply activities.

Each year, highway crews in the Beaufort Delta, Sahtu, Deh Cho, and North Slave regions build and maintain 1,399 kilometres of winter roads, ice roads, and ice crossings, connecting nine communities that are not served by all-season roads.

Mr. Speaker, fuel is an essential good for residents and businesses in northern communities. Many communities rely heavily on diesel and gasoline for electricity generation, heat, and transportation. The GNWT is responsible for the purchase, transport, and storage of fuel for 16 NWT communities that are not served by the private sector. During the winter resupply season, seven communities receive dedicated resupply services while five communities are part of live supply activities. Local contractors then sell and distribute these petroleum products to residents and businesses.

This winter, the GNWT's first fuel delivery took place on February 2. It is expected that fuel resupply will be completed by mid-April, with a total of 9.7 million litres of petroleum products - diesel, gasoline, and jet fuel - delivered to 12 communities.

We are aware of the effect that recent world events have had on fuel costs. I want to assure you that the delivery and resupply of fuel to NWT communities continue to run smoothly this season. Partnerships are an important part of this work. This year the supply and delivery contracts were carried out by the same two contractors as last year - Bassett Petroleum and Midnight Petroleum.

Mr. Speaker, our staff and contractors have worked diligently this season in keeping communities

connected as well as supplied. Our government will continue to work with the public and private sector partners to maintain a dependable supply of goods and services to all NWT communities. Quyananni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1051-19(2):
MENTAL HEALTH

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am going to be talking on mental health. Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has been a challenging time for all of us and now we go into the endemic stage. How are people going to move ahead?

Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge in the Tlicho region are poor mental health, high rates of addictions and substance abuse, lack of housing, and unacceptable housing conditions. These were major issues before the pandemic and we know that isolation and other limitations imposed through COVID only worsen the situation.

Mr. Speaker, over half, like 56 percent, of residents in the Tlicho region consider their mental health less than very good. We know across the NWT, residents struggle with mental illness and this is the greatest in some of the regions, particularly Tlicho region.

Mr. Speaker, people are drinking and doing drugs at alarming rate. We even have crack cocaine in our communities. At one time we know this was unheard of. But Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to improve people's mental health or address addictions without appropriate housing. Without a safe place for people to call home, where they are comfortable and can make healthy choices, people will continue to struggle. Throughout the Tlicho region, people are crammed into housing units. People wait for years to get into housing. Many of our elders still live in rundown and condemned housing, desperately in need of refurbishment and renovations. How are we doing this to our old people?

Youth and young adults alike, who are the future of our regions, are struggling to get ahead and stay ahead because of mental health challenges. Drugs and alcohol abuse and lack of safe places to call home. All of these things are destroying our regions. Not just our regions, there are other regions as well.

Mr. Speaker, these are desperate times and we have to act fast in awareness of this situation. What we have been doing is not working. We need a community-centre approach. Mr. Speaker, I will have

questions for the health and social service Minister at appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1052-19(2):
SMALL COMMUNITY CANCER SCREENING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was struck by a CBC North article dated March 11th, 2022, in which a Dene says local health centre failed to detect tumour that nearly killed him. The elder stated he [audio] died because of his local health centre failed to diagnose the problem. The elder had gone to the local health centre multiple times for abdominal pain only to receive Tylenol medication. The elder then ponders the question as to why he was treated this way. And [audio] if it was because he was an Indigenous Dene.

Mr. Speaker, the saving grace in this story is the actions the elder took upon himself to get to Yellowknife and check into the hospital. I believe it was a CT scan that confirmed his worst fears. It was colon cancer and the tumour was the size of a pop can. The doctor told the elder if he had waited longer he would not be with us today.

Mr. Speaker, that CT scan is not in every small community health centre. I will questions for the health minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1053-19(2):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, no one is more precious than our babies, children and youth.

Every child deserves to live and grow in a healthy home where they are cared for in a stable learning environment. I do not doubt that all parents, grandparents, and caregivers want to give their children the best But not all have the means to do so. In the language of child welfare, the difference that emerges is not what parents and caregivers want for their children; it is what resources they have available to fill those wants and needs.

For too many, safe and adequate housing, nutritious food, health supports, and stable income are out of reach. This puts children and youth at risk. Often exasperated by poor mental health and addictions in the home, babies, children and youth experience hardship that is unfairly placed on their young shoulders.

But raising children is not an individual responsibility, and it never has been. For decades we have repeated "it takes a village to raise a child", because

it's true. We are not built to go it alone; caring for children is a collective responsibility. We need a whole-of-government and, furthermore, a whole-of-territory response to pull us out of a crisis that continues to separate Indigenous families. To lift up every family, child, and youth who call the NWT home demands that every person, leader, government department, and civil society organization work together to keep families together raising children that grow to not only be healthy but thriving, creative, self-determining Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, we declared a public health emergency two years ago to change the trajectory of COVID-19 and keep communities safe. The NWT came together. Now, here we are, with a public health crisis that continues to separate Indigenous families needing the same all-of-government resolve to change the life trajectory of children in care. Our children need us to come together again.

COVID-19 proved that all-of-government responses are possible. We watched as the government acted through a public health lens that controlled our borders, identified available housing, and put extra dollars in families' pockets. And I get it, Mr. Speaker - this public health emergency has been life or death but the NWT is also losing vulnerable children through the child welfare system. This loss is a slow decline of the health, cultural continuity, and creative potential. It requires an integrated approach to provide a continuum of care and support for all families throughout the territory's 33 communities.

With 98 percent of children in care being Indigenous, the GNWT must work respectfully and generously with Indigenous governments to ensure that all children have the opportunity to thrive. Because, Mr. Speaker, no one is more precious than our babies, children and youth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Minister of Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1054-19(2):
NWT METIS CLAIM

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a Member for Thebacha, the majority of my constituents are part of the NWT Metis Nation. As one of their representatives in this Assembly, I consider the advancement of their priorities as part of my priorities.

Mr. Speaker, on May 19th, 2021, the NWT Metis Nation, along with the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories, signed a self-government negotiation framework agreement to help advance land claim negotiations for the NWT Metis Nation.

This framework agreement will help guide negotiations in order to reach a final self-government agreement. The signing of this framework negotiation agreement is a major step in the advancement of this land claim and self-government process. This document also marks six years since the NWT Metis Nation agreement-in-principle was signed and 25 years since the initial NWT Metis Nation framework agreement was signed, which was when this process began.

Mr. Speaker, in talking with various Metis leaders during this term, I have heard that there is a high level of concern and frustration at the lack of progress with these negotiations. I am also told that the Government of the Northwest Territories negotiating team for the NWT Metis Nation claim has had a lot of turnover which seems to be preventing this claim from advancing in a timely matter. It seems that the Government of the Northwest Territories' negotiating team is very busy in dealing with many other files concurrently and are unable or perhaps unwilling to provide a dedicated team to this particular file.

Mr. Speaker, as with other Indigenous governments in land claims negotiations, the NWT Metis Nation wants a fair deal for their people. The NWT Metis Nation wants a final agreement that provides for land quantum and generalized interests that is comparable to other NWT claims. They also want to continue dealing in good faith and want to use the remaining time of the 19th Assembly to advance their claim as soon as possible before the end of this term. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to complete by statement. ---Unanimous consent granted Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with only 18 months left in this Assembly, I hope our government will prioritize this ongoing land claim and self-government agreement with the NWT Metis Nation.

Settling this claim will help provide stability and many positive lasting socio-economic benefits to the NWT. Finalizing this claim would also enable our government to advance one of this Assembly's priorities of settling and implementing all outstanding treaty land and self-government agreements. I will have questions for the Premier later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1055-19(2):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we need to enshrine in the Child and Family Services Act that no child shall be apprehended on the basis of socio-economic conditions.

Now Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that many cases by the time child and family services have intervened are due to severe neglect or abuse and likely the time of intervention was long before child and family services got involved. To solve those issues is something all of us in the House strive to do but it is one that will take healing of a whole territory. However, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that there are still children being apprehended simply because their parents live in poverty.

Mr. Speaker, we may not be able to provide everyone with enough income to get out of poverty and we might not be able to, you know, end our waitlist in the life of the Assembly, however I believe a whole-of-government approach needs to make it a priority that whenever a child is facing apprehension the government provides every single resource it can to address those socio-economic conditions, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is that this is probably cheaper for us to do in the long run. Taking children into care, operating the system, running apprehension trials, are extremely costly. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we do not presently provide those, our child and family services workers, with the resources needed to create truly wraparound plan of care agreements. I believe they need the power to provide housing immediately for those families when they are facing apprehension.

Mr. Speaker, telling a family to get on a hundred-person housing waitlist when they are homeless and facing their children being taken away does nothing. Telling a family that is homeless and struggling to provide food for its children that they have to fill out a series of forms does not help. We need to empower our child and family services workers to make sure that plan of care agreements provide all of the basic necessities of life for those children and we need to do that before they are apprehended, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Service about what we are doing to break down silos and make sure that our CFS workers have true access to immediate resources and wraparound services for children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1056-19(2):
VACCINATION POLICIES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we near the end of COVID restrictions imposed by this and the federal government, you can hear a sigh of relief from all residents. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there remain issues that are unclear and questions unanswered.

One issue, a specific issue, which impacts public sector employees is that of job descriptions that include a requirement for duty travel.

The vaccination policies this government developed were, in part, based on federal government restrictions for air travel. Because of these policies, some GNWT public sector workers were placed on leave without pay. This action not only impacted the employees but also resulted in emotional and financial hardship for their families.

Mr. Speaker, in making those restrictions for air travel, the federal government recognized the unique circumstances of the NWT, more specifically, the remote and isolated communities with air access only.

Documents posted by the federal government dated December 1, 2021, and February 28, 2022, which have been tabled in this House, confirms exemptions for air travel for Indigenous people and Northerners in remote communities to and from Yellowknife. The documents confirm that a valid COVID-19 test result would be accepted for travel in the NWT by persons not fully vaccinated.

Mr. Speaker, our vaccination policies were developed on the premise that air travel was restricted equally for all Canadian jurisdictions and that only those who were fully vaccinated were allowed to board aircraft unless it was an emergency. This was, in fact, not true for the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, our vaccination policies must recognize the federal government directives and incorporate those exemptions that allow for employee testing if not fully vaccinated. This would support and allow duty travel for those employees not fully vaccinated by having them test.

Mr. Speaker, the harm has been done as some GNWT employees were subsequently placed on leave without pay; some were compelled to take a vaccine they did not believe in; others took a severance package or outright quit. This could have been avoided if this government were aware and fully understood the federal directives.

Those impacted employees, and their families, experienced tremendous stress as they experienced ongoing harassment from management, from other employees, and the public. For this, the government owes each of them a public apology. We must now recognize the wrong by reinstating and compensating those employees who were placed on leave without pay or forced to leave their employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1057-19(2): INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY

MS. NOKLEBY: Mr. Speaker, this Thursday, March 31st, is the International Transgender Day of Visibility, an annual event dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by them worldwide. It is also a day to celebrate the contributions of transgender people and their achievements in society.

The day was founded by transgender activist Rachel Crandall of Michigan in 2009 as a reaction to the lack of LGBT recognition of transgender people, citing the frustration that the only well known transgender-centered day was the Transgender Day of Remembrance, which mourned the murders of transgender people, but did not acknowledge and celebrate living members of the transgender community.

The first International Transgender Day of Visibility was held on March 31, 2009. Since then, it has been spearheaded by the US-based youth advocacy organization Trans Student Educational Resources.

In the Northwest Territories, the Northern Mosaic Network, formerly know as the Rainbow Coalition, is working hard to advocate on behalf of this vulnerable sector. They are "invested in making the Northwest Territories a safer, more equitable place for 2SLGBTQIPA+ youth, families and adults." In the past I have spoken about the amazing work done by this NGO, work that includes inclusive youth activities such as ski and paint nights, body positive swims, and peer support groups where non-cis-gendered youth have an opportunity to spend time in a welcoming, inclusive environment where they can lean on each other for support and understanding.

The Mosaic runs a youth centre and a library, providing resources for those wishing to discover more about 2SLGBTQIPA+ issues and history, and to learn about the accomplishments of those who have contributed to the movement and to celebrate their achievements. The Mosaic also offers training for organizations and businesses that want to improve their corporate culture towards making them more inclusive.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge all of my colleagues and the people of the Northwest Territories to spend time this Thursday, the International Transgender Day of Visibility, learning more about the accomplishments of transgender people and their history. If people are not sure how, then I suggest a great place to start would be the Northern Mosaic Network and looking into the amazing work they do. I can't say enough about how their important work is saving lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Great Slave. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1058-19(2):
CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'm going to return again to the issue of a child and youth advocate for the Northwest Territories, an issue my colleague from Kam Lake reports has been raised almost 900 times in this House since 2003. I've raised it a number of those times, yet we appear to be no further ahead today.

To be clear, a child and youth advocate is an officer established at arms-length from the government to ensure that the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children and youth are considered when decisions are made that will affect their well-being.

In addition to a general oversight function, the advocate will stand on behalf of individuals engaged in the child and youth family services system and to promote transparency and accountability.

The offices are commonplace. Yukon has had a child and youth advocate since 2010; Nunavut since 2014. Both these offices produce annual reports for public review. We are the last place in Canada without a child and youth advocate.

The last time I raised this issue was almost two years ago in the review of the health and social services budget. At that time, I was told that the department was looking actively at options for establishment of that role. A jurisdictional scan was underway. We were told that in moving to proposed models, the unique circumstances of the NWT needed to be analyzed, both in terms of national changes in child welfare and to address the need to build and share accountability with Indigenous governments. Needless to say, all of this work is needed more than ever in light of the 2018 Auditor General of Canada's report on child and family services, and subsequent recommendations from Indigenous governments and key stakeholders.

But here we are again in 2022, and I see us no closer to creation of an advocate. I see no references to an advocate in the child and family services quality improvement plan activities now underway, nor any updating of the almost decade old Building Stronger Families Action Plan. What I do know from reading of other jurisdictions' successes, and in my work with constituents seeking the authority of an arm's-length authority, is that the time for a child and youth advocate is now. I'll have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on the status of a Northwest Territories child and youth advocate. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 1059-19(2):
EULOGY FOR GINO PAUL KOTCHEA

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Gino Paul Kotchea was born on May 6th, 1978 to Frank Kotchea Sr. and Jeanie Fantase in Yellowknife. At the young age, his grandfather Harry ran him through some willows after the rain and after this his grandfather named Kaidday.

Gino spent many summers on the Liard River with his grandparents and shot his first moose at the age of 12. In the traditional way of the Dene, the meat was shared with elders in the community. Gino learned many skills from his Uncle Pete whom he called his brother. While at Whitefish River, Gino and his grandfather caught another moose. Upon returning to the cabin, Gino's shirt was ripped up and he said, "Grandpa ripped me up pretty good, eh", and they both started laughing.

Being out on the land, his grandfather was his greatest thing. Gino learned many traditional skills from his grandfather and spent a lot of his early years Beaver River and Fantase Lake area.

In 1990, Gino attended school in Fort Smith. One weekend on a family picnic, he saw his first garter snake ever. He pulled his socks up over his pant leg, and that's where they stayed for most of the day. Later that day they went on a 9-kilometre hike and he carried his sister on his back most of the way. He was very protective of her.

Gino attended school at Echo Dene School until grade 12 -- or grade 10, and then graduated high school in Fort Simpson June 2022 -- or '20. 2000.

Gino loved to give back to the community and his way was coaching the girls and boys soccer team, and he took them on a number of regional tournaments.

Gino had many adventures during his lifetime. He wanted to be a police officer. He started working at the local police detachment during his last years of school as a special constable. Gino's grandfather Harry did not approve of this. He told Gino there is more negativity than positivity and a young Dene man should not experience this. As a result, Gino did not pursue that career.

Soon after high school graduation, Gino began working for Chevron and continued to be an oil/gas operator in the Cameron Hill area. In 2014, Gino got his class 1 and he said that it was his most -- one of the most challenging things he's ever done. 2017,

Gino achieved the power engineering ticket at the High Level college.

Gino loved listening to his brother Frank tell stories, like the one where there was an Inuit boy lost on the tundra. The story lasted three days until Gino discovered it was all made up.

Gino and Donna had their first child Eva Raine on November 26th, 2012 and Medin Storme on February 1st, 2016, and adopted Donna's son Melvin. The family was his most important part of his life and he loved them dearly.

Family and community will miss Gino, Mr. Speaker. We will keep him and his family alive in our hearts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and community at this time.

Members' statements. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome. If we have missed anybody in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It's always good to have an audience with us taking in the session. Especially after the almost two years without anybody in the gallery, it's really good to see people back. Mahsi.

Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 26-19(2):
REPORT ON THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT – LIFTING NWT CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES: AN ALL OF TERRITORY APPROACH TO KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together.

Executive Summary

Call to Champions and Message to Children and Youth

All children are sacred. NWT children and youth are talented, unique and powerful. But not all children

have access to what they need. Over 98 percent of children and youth in care in the NWT are Indigenous, even though just 57 percent of the population of children and youth are Indigenous. The extent of destruction and trauma on Indigenous peoples, families and communities due to colonization, residential school and the Sixties Scoop, and the resulting overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care in the child welfare system is a territorial crisis that requires an all-of-territory response.

We call for champions at all levels of governments, Indigenous governments and groups, non-governmental organizations, and allies to work together to provide a broader continuum of care, including supports and resources for all children and youth across the NWT.

Thank you to the children and youth in the territory who shared courageously with the committee. We hear you. We respect you. We value you. From you, we learn and take your lead. We hope you see your thoughts, insights and brilliance reflected within the following report and its recommendations. Once again, thank you to each and every one of you.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Social Development (the "committee") is mandated by the Child and Family Services Act to review the act and its implementation every five years. Thus, the Standing Committee on Social Development of the 19th Assembly of the Northwest Territories commenced a review in April 2021 to meet this requirement. In plain language, the review may include the Child and Family Services Act itself, directives, policies, plans, guidelines and implementation such as programs and services.

Committee focused the scope of the CFSA review on prevention strategies, and reviewed areas of child welfare put forward by stakeholders. The recommendations that follow are informed by feedback provided to Committee through the engagement process, internal research and Committee direction. The recommendations reflect prevention, early intervention and targeted supports.

Committee Approach

With the passing of Bill C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families and the Child and Family Services Act's expected amendments to align with the federal legislation, committee is completing its statutory review at a time of change for Canadian child welfare. Together, the 19th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories priority to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the 2015 Truth and

Reconciliation Calls to Action, and the 2019 Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls strengthen the long-needed momentum for change required in the Canadian child welfare system.

The committee has selected two lenses of analysis for this report. First, committee has taken an equity-oriented approach to prioritize recommendations with the greatest positive impact for Indigenous children, youth and families and those with lived-experiences with child welfare.

Second, Committee has taken a trauma-informed care approach. A trauma-informed approach recognizes a person holistically and acknowledges that a person may have or is currently experiencing trauma. A trauma-informed approach also considers how frontline staff in organizations deliver policies, structures and services.

Engagement Process

From April 2021 to January 2022, more than 50 people stepped forward to participate in the Child and Family Services Act statutory review. Participants represented themselves individually, and as territorial governments, Indigenous government and nongovernmental organizations through public presentations, in-camera private listening sessions, written submissions and online surveys. The presentations and written submissions are included in Appendix A of our report.

The Committee would like to thank everyone who offered their expertise to this statutory review and subsequent report. Committee would also like to thank the Department of Health and Social Services for the in-camera briefings and information.

Challenge: Overrepresentation of Indigenous People in Child and Family Services and the History of Colonization

According to the Department of Health and Social Services, over 98 percent of children and youth receiving care from CFS are Indigenous, even though just 57 percent of children and youth in the Northwest Territories are Indigenous. Indigenous children and youth are virtually all of the children and youth receiving care in the territory and represent most of the 1044 protection and prevention services provided by Child and Family Services in 2020-2021.

The historic and ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care in the NWT is staggering. The overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in Child and Family Services has long been documented and is rooted in Canada's history of genocide, colonization, residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, and the modern-day child and family services systems. All stakeholders

described the harmful impacts of these legacies and the ongoing trauma of those familial and community experiences including the death of family members, addictions, abuse, family breakdowns, loss of cultural knowledge, poverty and displacement within their communities.

Recommendations

Committee heard the voices of children and youth and children and youth want to be with their families. Committee recognizes that to raise healthy and well children and youth, supports and resources must be made available throughout their entire lives through parents, caregivers, family and even the broader community. The intention is to support the family and community so children and youth can remain with their families and within their home communities.

Culture

Culture is a source of strength, healing and positive identity. Over time, culture changes and innovates. Therefore, respectful incorporation of culture must be made to implement the recommendations made below.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories declare the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in Child and Family Services a crisis and develop a whole of government response in partnership with Indigenous governments.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services provide birthing support that is holistic, client-centered and culturally safe with doula and midwife services staffed in each regional centre.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services establish a territorial treatment addictions recovery program or treatment supports specifically for youth to remain in the territory and to maintain their support systems.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services create a pan-territorial youth homelessness plan that expands safe community-based housing options by collaborating with communities and non-governmental organizations.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services tailor the Healthy Family Program for vulnerable families to access culturally safe and affirming child-rearing practices and expand the program to all 33 communities.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends Municipal and Community Affairs lead an all-of-government approach to ensuring access to recreational programming by providing additional funding for recreational facilities and programming, so all families have increased access to these spaces outside regular business day hours and additional funding specifically for those children and youth in care to participate in extracurricular activities.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services establish family mentorship pilot projects that pair vulnerable parents with grandparents or elders to share encouragement, child-rearing practices, and Indigenous knowledge.

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommend the Department of Health and Social Services increase funding to Indigenous governments, communities, and organizations to deliver addictions recovery on-the-land healing options specifically tailored to youth.

Recommendation 9

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services lead work with communities to establish culturally safe and gender-inclusive family violence emergency shelters in each NWT community with sustainable funding.

Recommendation 10

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services deliver and make mandatory culturally safe and trauma-informed training for foster families.

Recommendation 11

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish a recruitment strategy to increase the number of Indigenous foster families, including encouraging extended families to care for

children by providing additional financial resources and support.

Recommendation 12

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services develop a Child and Family Services evaluation and monitoring framework, including a data profile on children and youth in care.

Recommendation 13

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish an Indigenous advisory body sub-committee specifically for Child and Family Services.

Recommendation 14

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services audit all Child and Family Services resources, ensuring they are all plain language, culturally safe and easily accessible online, including a plain language summary of the Child and Family Services Act.

Recommendation 15

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services provide legal services to parents as early as the plan of care stage with Child and Family Services.

Recommendation 16

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services make legislative changes to the Child and Family Service Act to support the readiness of Indigenous governments to draw down jurisdiction for child welfare, using trauma-informed language, that centers children and youth as individuals with rights, ensures cultural continuity for Indigenous children and youth, and affirms the unique political relationship with Indigenous groups and peoples.

Recommendation 17

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services establish a comprehensive spectrum of services available to children, youth and adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, and their parents and/or caregivers, to prevent developmental delay and mobilize support for families.

Recommendation 18

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Department of Health and Social Services annual quality improvement plan reporting include progress on the Committee's recommendations.

Recommendation 19

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report in 120 days.

Conclusion

The committee respectfully puts these recommendations forward in the hopes that it will benefit all children, youth and families in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that the remainder of Committee Report 26-19(2) be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

The remainder of Committee Report 26-19(2) is deemed read and will be printed in Hansard in its entirety. Member for Kam Lake

[Committee Report 26-19(2)]:

[Committee Report 26-19\(2\): Report on the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together](#)

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Great Slave, that Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together, be received and adopted by the Assembly and referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. To the motion?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion has been carried.

---Carried

Committee Report 26-19(2) and has been adopted by the Assembly and is referred to Committee of the Whole.

Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 19.4(4) and ask that Committee Report 26-19(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Child and Family Services Act - Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together, be referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. The Member for Kam Lake is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 9.4(4) so that Committee Report 26-19(2) be referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Is anyone opposed?

There is no one opposed. Committee Report 26-19(2) is referred directly to Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you.

Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Acknowledgements. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1049-19(2):
MENTAL HEALTH

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, people dealing with mental health and addictions need safe places. There are no shelters in the Tlicho region for those struggling with mental health and addictions.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to establishing a shelter in Tlicho communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you know, one of the mandate commitments of this 19th Assembly is the need to strengthen addictions aftercare programming. And so with that in mind, we recognize that having a safe place to live is essential to achieving and maintaining sobriety, whatever the root cause of the addiction is. So from that point, we put out a call for proposals to

Indigenous governments to ask them if they would be interested in creating a transitional housing model in their communities, with our money, and create a model for service for this kind of programming. And that call went out in December. We did not receive a proposal from the Tlicho but we did receive four other proposals, and we are working with each of those Indigenous government organizations to develop the transitional housing options as a pilot project with my hope that eventually when we find a model that works, it will be scaled up to the rest of the NWT. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, can the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to reviewing the need for a sobering shelter in the Tlicho communities? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. The transitional housing program pilot project which I just mentioned may, in fact, fill that role otherwise there is only one sobering centre in the NWT. It's in Yellowknife where the majority of the vulnerable population who require the service are located. So at this time, that is the major service for immediate sobering. The transitional housing program is for people who are maybe a step or two further down that road. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to working with the local organizations - Tlicho Government Friendship Centre, Tlicho Community Services Agency, and other agency in other regions as well, and the Minister of Housing, to find solutions to address the need for shelter space in communities? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you. As I mentioned, and I'm happy to add some more detail, we advertised generally for Indigenous and community organizations to provide transitional housing. We heard back from the Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the K'asho Got'ine Housing Society in Fort Good Hope, and the Salvation Army here in Yellowknife. So at this point, the department is working with each of these organizations to fund them to create a pilot project which would provide safe housing for people who are recovering from their addictions. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the GNWT identified a list of public housing units that could be available for isolating individuals.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services commit to reviewing this list with the Minister of Housing to determine where vacant units in the Tlicho regions and other regions may be repurposed

to provide safe shelter for community residents? Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can certainly have that conversation with the Minister of Health -- I mean, the Minister of Housing. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1050-19(2):
SMALL COMMUNITY CANCER SCREENING

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement alluded to problems in small community health centre nurses for having diagnosing ailments especially of the cancerous types, could be colon, prostate, breast cancer, abdominal, and back pains. (Audio) CT scan in the small community. Can the Minister (audio) the procedure used at small community health centres to diagnose cancerous tumors? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank the Member for the question. Of course we're all the concerned about the high rates of cancer, including colorectal cancer, that occur in the NWT.

I want to make a distinction to start with between screening and diagnosis. We actually have a colorectal cancer screening committee, and they've recently started work in the Deh Cho by providing what are called FIT kits to households so that they can use that to provide a sample which would be screened for colorectal cancer. The health centres cannot provide diagnosis. The public health nurse, or the community health nurses who are there of course see patients, evaluate their complaints, take note of whether it's a continued complaint, and then they would refer the patient to a higher level of care, whether that's a visiting physician or a nurse practitioner, and from there, there could be additional referrals to a specialist. So the situation for Fort Providence, the Member's primary community, would fall into that area. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. She did reference at some point there referring to a specialist, but I just want the Minister to be aware that I brought it up previously and with the present case of this Deline elder, they'd been to the health centre more than once and the community, it's been four or five times. And -- and I'm wondering if the Minister can acknowledge at what point would a patient be referred to a specialist for their ailment? Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the referral onwards for diagnosis is provided by a healthcare professional. In the case of small health centres, that would be a community health nurse. If it's an emergency, the telehealth system is available for the community health nurse to call the Stanton emergency room and speak to a physician there. And then, as I say, when the visiting doctor comes, it's possible for that person to make a referral for a diagnosis. So those are the different ways that that's handled by medical health professionals who are working in the local community setting with the assistance of people who may be a phone call away through telehealth. Thank you.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi to the Minister for that. I don't think my question was really answered because I've been stating that there's many residents probably up and down the territory that go to centres for an ailment, and like four or five times. And perhaps by the fifth time, they're being medevaced out. And it's at that point. So getting where -- we're missing something within the health centre, the diagnosis there.

Can the Minister advise that the department has any evaluations, evaluation processes in place to determine if small health centres nursing staff will require other training screening for cancer and other chronic diseases? Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community health nurses adhere to clinical practice guidelines for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer. They will assess for symptoms and taking into account family history, age, risk factors, and other circumstances. And once again, this would be for screening.

So this is to -- not to make a diagnosis but to -- on a general basis, offer people the opportunity to be screened in or out of the risk of cancer based on their health indicators. Nurses are offered frequent professional development opportunities and we do have, as I mentioned previously, a colorectal cancer screening program. So this program would be well known to the nurses and used by them to deal with this particular type of cancer, which is one of the most prevalent in the NWT.

As I mentioned at the beginning, in the Deh Cho region the Member can look forward to seeing communication from the Department of Health and Social Services about screening for colorectal cancer. And I certainly encourage everyone to take advantage of that opportunity. It's free of charge and in your own home. Thank you.

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

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and mahsi to the Minister for that answer. I think she's answered my question, but I really wanted to stress that even though you say that nurses do ongoing training, I don't know we as the public here, but and I keep saying and I said it many times since I've gotten to the Assembly in 2019 that there's many times -- I hate using the word "misdiagnosis" but that's the only one that I can use that a lot of people been there and I'm saying it again. Like, they've been there four to five times. And I don't want to get into specifics of what happened to those people at this time, but it's serious in our small communities and this elder from Deline, you must have read the story too, he's been there numerous times. He was sent there with just a Tylenol. You know, and that screening processes. What and it's not determined on site, you know, they go to Yellowknife where there's actually CT scan machine that can determine stuff like this that we don't have in the small communities, and I'd really like the Minister and her department to start working on better processes of diagnosis a lot of the unknown ailments which can lead to serious, serious illness and even death. Mahsi.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not possible for me to comment on individual patient's cases because of privacy considerations. I just will go back again to the difference between screening and diagnosis. Screening can happen in the small health centres for colorectal cancer, cervical cancer. But you need to have no symptoms in order to be screened. You just need to show up. The diagnosis would happen in Yellowknife or further afield maybe in Edmonton.

I would say to the Member that the Department of Health and Social Services has a patient experience questionnaire available at this time to capture the experience of people who have used our services and gauge their satisfaction with them. So there are, I'm told, paper copies available at the health centres. It's also available online. And I would recommend that anyone who has received health services in the last year, whether they were satisfied with the service or not, complete the patient questionnaire so we can learn how we can do better with our services. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1051-19(2):
CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

I'm hearing from constituents that day home providers are unable to see the contracts that they

are going to be expected to sign to take part in the new federal childcare agreement before they are expected to sign them. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not this is accurate and if ECE is willing to ensure that all providers have the information they need to feel comfortable signing onto this childcare agreement, including see the contract before being expected to sign it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we would never expect anyone to sign a contract that they haven't seen.

There's been a number of meetings between ECE officials and childcare providers, whether that's day home or childcare centres, and there has been a number of documents provided to childcare providers, and those documents contain all of the information that is contained in the actual contribution agreement. It's a contribution agreement, not a contract. So I just wanted to clarify that as well because childcare providers can have contracts with parents, but they would have a contribution agreement with ECE. And if the information that is being provided, which is the same as what's in the contribution agreement, isn't sufficient, we're happy to show a template of the contribution agreement as well with the understanding that it wouldn't be filled in with the actual numbers as those are dependant upon the situation of that particular day home, and that's the whole point of the -- the work beforehand. So if that's a hurdle, it's not much of one because we're more than happy to share that information. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that commitment from the Minister.

My second question is that the cost of living has gone up everywhere, including the cost of fuel and food as of late. As such, some businesses are having to increase the cost of their services. And so I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to what are the rules around increasing the cost of childcare now that the average rates have been set in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in our agreement with the federal government, we've agreed to use the funding from them to reduce the cost of childcare by on average 50 percent. And we understand that the cost of childcare varies depending on what people are charging. There is a number built into the federal agreement which -- so we can handle a 2.3 percent increase and not have to take from any other pots of money. The timing is not great right now because as the Member

mentioned, the price of everything is going up. We're seeing, you know, inflation like we haven't seen before. So what we are willing to do is work with childcare providers to ensure that if they're proposing an increase above that 2.3 percent, that it is something that is justifiable. And while I say that, I'll preface it by saying that most childcare providers are, you know, only putting forward increases that are justifiable. There have been some instances where we've seen, you know, increases of 20, 30 percent proposed for this month, even retroactive a month, and it's -- you know, it coincides with this new money that's flowing -- that's supposed to be flowing to parents. And so if we have a childcare provider increasing their rates by 30 percent when we're trying to reduce rates by 50 percent, that causes some problems because that will take money away from some of the other efforts that we need to put forth, such as increasing wages for early learning and childcare providers. So we want to ensure that parents are getting this money in their pocket, and we want to ensure that the childcare providers are not being unduly burdened. So we are providing them with additional funding because we understand there's additional reporting. And the 2.3 percent increase is seen as reasonable, and we -- you know, we believe that most operators are charging what they need to charge at any given time. And there are increases that businesses need to make along the way but when we're talking about 20, 30 percent increases, there are definitely some questions and we likely can't accommodate those types of increases, and we don't want parents to have to pay those increases as well. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some people have been informed that the average for the cost of day homes or childcare in the Northwest Territories was determined using a zero dollar figure for providers who do not charge because of alternate federal funding contributions. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not this is accurate and how the average cost of NWT childcare was reached? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so we are looking to reduce the cost of childcare by 50 percent on average. And so what that average is, is the average of all childcare providers who charge for childcare. So we do not factor in all of the hundreds of childcare spaces that are available free of cost, many provided by Indigenous governments in smaller communities. The average that we're looking to reduce by 50 percent is based only on childcare providers that actually charge money. Thank you.

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

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if a licensed day home

chooses not to opt in to this new childcare agreement, if a parent can switch their child to a new licensed childcare provider and still receive the retroactive subsidy from their new childcare provider. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And no, the money that flows from the Government of Canada through the Government of the Northwest Territories through the childcare provider to the parent has to be flowed from the childcare provider who actually provided the services to the parent. So it can't be a different operator. If you've had your child in childcare for three months, from January, February, March with one provider, it has to be that provider who is flowing the funding to you. And we've had a lot of success. We have most people signed on to this, most providers. For some people, it's taking a bit longer. And, you know, I think we'll get there. There are some instances where perhaps information needs to be explained in different ways, but I'm confident that the vast majority of childcare providers will have signed on and that parents will be receiving these refunds. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1052-19(2):
LABOUR MARKET

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance as the Minister responsible for the public sector. I have questions in regards to the labour market supplement that was offered to the Union of Northern Workers.

Given that there is a labour shortage across our healthcare positions, what was the rationale for only including the frontline RNs and medical lab technicians in the proposed labour market supplement? Is the department planning at looking at other healthcare positions for a labour market supplement and if so, what are the timelines on that? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the labour market supplement was a policy tool that was developed, firstly, in consultation with the union.

In terms of what choice was made around which workers or which specific positions would first be -- would have the opportunity to utilize this policy, that was a choice made by the Department of Health and Social Services who was applying that policy. So there's a number of factors that are within the policy as to what types of positions should -- should qualify

for what is an exceptional -- an exceptional tool, an exceptional that's being used to enhance costs -- or rather, to salaries and recruitment through the use of an enhancement, of enhanced pay. So that's why it was quite specific is because this was a segment that, in our view and in the view of the Department of Health and Social Services when it came forward, they had the evidence to support that these were positions that were difficult to recruit for, that they had tried to recruit for, that they weren't able to recruit for consistently. And, you know, again I won't go through all the elements of the policy that are there as to whether or not it -- we will be expanding or whether the Department of Health and Social Services will be expanding to other specific positions. Mr. Speaker, that will ultimately be a determination that they'll have to make looking at what's happening with the recruitment and retention processes and then bring that forward to -- to the Financial Management Board for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, well given that we've had a shortage of health care workers enough -- and this has been going on for long enough that it was one of the things that we did include in one of our priorities, can the Minister explain why the union wasn't approached sooner to negotiate the labour market supplement?

It's my understanding it was pretty much a give or -- you know, take it or leave it type scenario with not any room for negotiation. So why was the government not more proactive here versus reactive? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the union was engaged, I believe, back in the fall -- I believe in September, in fact, with respect to this labour market supplement in terms of its design, and then there was a process of going through to determine which positions to which this -- the supplement policy would properly apply.

But, Mr. Speaker, the health recruitment unit that now exists, and was developed both by Department of Finance and Health and Social Services, that's something that's been in the works obviously in response to the fact that there's been challenges in our healthcare and this is part of the mandate. That's been in the works for some time. It's looking not only at the salaries and compensation but at the totality of what the workplace situation is like.

You know, one of the elements that's considered in the supplement is whether or not the position itself is still at the top of the pay range compared to other jurisdictions in Canada. And in general, our health care workers continue to be high in the pay range and yet we still struggle. So we want to make sure that we're looking at the totality of what's happening in the workplace, morale issues, you know,

workplace safety issues, whether it's the timing of the shifts, so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker. And so for that reason, it's more than just a labour market supplement and it's -- it's a process that's going to have to continue to go on but it is already well underway, and I'm again confident that we're going to continue to find good solutions as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding in talking with people that while we may have health care workers at the top of the pay grade, it doesn't mean that they're making or pocketing or -- or getting ahead any more than in southern Canada. It is my understanding that that high pay is no longer lucrative enough for the -- to attract workers here.

Another thing that's causing issues around attracting workers here is our housing and childcare issues.

How is the Minister working with the other departments and how is the government addressing the fact that even if we could recruit a healthcare worker, we have no house for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a challenge, Mr. Speaker, that I hear about actually wearing my ITI hat as much as Finance in terms of an impact on labour market shortages in a variety of areas and particularly in the private sector as well. So certainly I'm very live to it.

With respect to childcare, obviously I'll turn it to my colleague at ECE and the news that's being announced around a movement towards \$10 a day childcare. But back to more generally with respect to housing, again that is a whole-of-government problem and a whole-of-government challenge as it is a whole-of-territory challenge. So at that point, I'd turn to my colleague over at Housing. But yes, absolutely, you know, when we're recruiting folks in, we are trying to find -- to look for, you know, some assurances as to where they'll be going, to work with the community, work with the Department of Housing, and try see, you know, again -- you know, what is available, what will the needs be, and to work with the -- to work the morale to see that the person's that's coming in is being supported to transition to being a permanent resident here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to something that the Minister just said around contacting the union back in the fall.

It's my understanding that the union responded with several questions as well, and there was a very -- a

large lack of engagement during the fall time and then into the new year at which point the union was presented with a take it or leave it.

Is it not -- maybe the Minister could speak to the fact that isn't it under the collective agreement that the government has a responsibility to negotiate with the union and not present take it or leave it scenarios? Can the Minister speak to what happened to the breakdown of negotiations. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of discussion back and forth firstly around the design of the labour market supplement in which case some of the requests that were made by the union were, indeed, incorporated into that policy to better reflect some of their suggestions. Then when it came time to apply the policy on the first occasion where the Department of Health and Social Services had brought forward their suggestion, it -- you know, again, there was further discussions. There were requests to expand in a way that did not, in our view, meet the conditions of the policy. And so we were left with a situation where we were trying to apply the policy as designed and as written and as understood in a limited way, again being an exceptional policy to provide an enhanced salary or enhanced pay to a specific set of workers who meet a set of conditions, and of course, you know, I don't want to speak for the union, and I can't speak for the union, their view was that it should have been expanded and applied more broadly. That's the situation we found ourselves in.

You know, I don't -- again, not speaking for the union, I certainly don't think that anybody that was involved in that process was happy with where it ended, Mr. Speaker, to be quite frank. I think anyone in the territories, very well aware that there's a lot of challenges in the healthcare sector right now, a lot of challenges in that employment area across Canada, and we are looking for solutions. We're going to continue to look for solutions, and we want the union to be partners with us in that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1053-19(2):
NWT METIS NATION SELF-GOVERNMENT AND
LAND CLAIM AGREEMENTS

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the NWT Metis Nation and their efforts to establish a final self-government agreement with the Government of the Northwest Territories. My questions are for the Premier.

Is the Government of the Northwest Territories prepared to offer the NWT Metis Nation an amount

of land that is equitable to other NWT claims? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, the Government in the Northwest Territories remains committed to land claim agreements that are comparable across the Northwest Territories. So absolutely, we're looking for a comparable agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if the Government of the Northwest Territories is prepared to prioritize the self-government and land claim agreement with the NWT Metis Nation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, this government remains committed to making negotiations and land claim and self-government agreements a priority. It's one of our 22 priorities of this Assembly. It was a priority from the last Assembly, many before. It remains a priority, and it will remain a priority until it is -- until they are completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us what the Government of the Northwest Territories is doing to demonstrate its commitment and ability to achieve an NWT Metis Nation final agreement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are actively engaging with the NWT Metis Association and Canada and ourselves around negotiations. We're talking about flexibility, what we can do. And that process will continue throughout. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if she anticipates a final agreement with the NWT Metis Nation will be established before the end of the 19th Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd love to be able to say yes, that these final agreements will be signed tomorrow, today, at the end of the day. The reality is that we're one member at the negotiation table. There's three members. And so we're trying to do our best to make sure that these agreements are done in a fair equitable manner that meets the needs of the -- the NWT Metis Nation people and also the needs of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Thebacha -- oh sorry, just checking.

Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 1054-19(2):
VACCINATION POLICIES

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions are for the Minister responsible for human resources.

Mr. Speaker, whatever one's perception of those vaccinated or not vaccinated against COVID-19, we must follow our laws, legislation, regulations, and policies, which, in the creation, must be made in conformity with the Constitution and followed as we create new laws and rules.

So therefore, can the Minister confirm how federal government restrictions respecting air travel for vaccinated and unvaccinated public government employees in the NWT played into developing our COVID-19 vaccine policies? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister responsible for Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Government of the Northwest Territories vaccine policies were initially being developed, this was back in August, and if I recall correctly it was actually before the time that we had heard what the final federal policies might be, we were doing our best to develop our policy for the needs of our communities, having heard from Indigenous governments and communities here in the North and being aware of the vulnerable population we have in the North and seeing the evolution of COVID-19 to that point. And around that time, Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions started to come out with other policies, their own policies at around that same time, and -- but we really -- we were doing our policy, you know, based on our analysis and not waiting on that of others or dependant upon that of other jurisdictions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Considering the federal exemptions came out, you know, sometime in December and continued on. So after review and clarification of the federal restrictions on air travel for the NWT, of the employees placed on leave without pay can the Minister confirm how many have returned to work and received compensation for the time they were on leave? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, there of course is the GNWT's vaccination policy but then there are also some employees who, because of the existence of

federal policies either in the places where they need to attend, such as an RCMP detachment, or because of the concern around travel, they would have been doubly impacted because of their job descriptions on -- on those policies. And the federal government had put in place an exemption initially to January 31st, and it was our exemption that -- or our understanding that that -- at that point, people who were subject to needing to travel under their job descriptions would be on leave without pay because that exemption was no longer in place. That exemption was in fact renewed, and so there were, I gather, a total of I believe six or seven employees who were impacted and who were placed on leave without pay and who are since now welcomed back to return to their duties as a result of not having to travel and who can then comply with the GNWT's policy where if they're choosing to not provide a proof of vaccination, they can undertake PPE, protective -- protective equipment and testing in order to comply with their policies and, of course, any loss of pay during that period they would be compensated back for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister confirm if changes to COVID restrictions in the NWT will result in the elimination of revision of current vaccine policy? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I think folks are generally aware, we are anticipating that there will be some changes to the overall restrictions and approach to COVID-19 under the chief public health officer -- chief public health office and the associated orders as of April 1st. Mr. Speaker, when that occurs we certainly will be reviewing revising and updating our own policy accordingly. It's always preferable, Mr. Speaker, in my view to communicate directly with employees first and not necessarily to make statements here in the House that affect them, but I would say that employees should be expecting to have an update from us imminently. We're just again wanting to make sure that we are acting in tandem and in lockstep with what's happening with the chief public health officer who I know has been looking at numbers right up to -- right up to the end here to make sure that what we're doing is, in fact, the safest possible approach for -- well, for residents, but in our case, for employees as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this has been a stressful time I guess for everybody, you know, vaccinated/ unvaccinated, you know, for everybody in the territories and throughout Canada. And more so, I guess for, you know, those -- those employees who were, you

know, placed on leave without a paycheque and it was even more stressful on them and their families.

So due to the employees placed on leave without pay who could have continued working while meeting the federal restrictions for air travel, will the Minister offer a public apology to those employees who mistakenly lost their employment or placed -- or were placed on leave without pay? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I -- when we discovered that this -- that the change in the federal exemption hadn't been applied, it wasn't -- again, it was not -- it was something that we were not aware of, that their changes were not a public change. It was a change not communicated to -- to the Department of Finance. So as soon as we became aware of it, the employ -- the affected employees were contacted. I certainly, Mr. Speaker, I don't mind, and I think it's appropriate to say that I would not want to see hardship caused to any employee, any member of the public service, including those seven. I'm sorry that they went through that process. They've been contacted. They will not see any loss. They'll have their -- their compensation, their salaries dealt with appropriately so that they don't have to suffer any financial hardship or consequences. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 1055-19(2):
CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I want to pick up where I left off two years ago with my questions on the status of creation of a child and youth advocate in the Northwest Territories.

Can the Minister update us on the jurisdictional scan that was underway in February 2020 and provide a copy to regular MLAs and the public? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't the health minister at that time, and I did not make this commitment. It is my understanding there was a jurisdictional scan done and it has been -- it has been completed, that it is primarily about information sharing, which is a huge issue with respect to our path forward with child and family services and Indigenous governments. So it doesn't speak about the power or the role or the responsibility and so on of a child and youth

advocate. That's not what it's about. It's about information sharing.

The focus that we have now is to work with Indigenous governments for them to exercise their lawmaking power under the federal act respecting First Nations, Metis, Inuit children, youth, and families to draw down responsibility for their own administration of child and family services. So we're looking at community or regional or Indigenous government based solutions rather than a broad territorial office of an advocate. We're not looking at a child advocate at this time. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I'll go back and see what kind of commitment was made by the previous Minister on this topic but that was just disappointing to hear the Minister say this.

So, you know, the department has come up with this quality improvement plan in response to the auditor general's findings, and of course the Minister's just raised that there are consultations going on with Indigenous governments. So can the Minister tell us if the creation of a child and youth advocate is a specific topic of these consultations with Indigenous governments or other groups? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you. In the negotiations to date, this hasn't been a topic of discussion. I note it's also not a topic of discussion in the recently tabled Child and Family Services Act Review Report from the standing committee. The point of Indigenous governments creating their own child and family services law is that they -- they won't need an advocate. It's their law. They decide how it's implemented. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. Of course, there are other children that may not get covered by these negotiations, but I'll just park that one for now.

The auditor general in that report was not complimentary of how we have been carrying out child and family services. The report of this House or one of the standing committees that supported a child and youth advocate with regard to the auditor general's report, so. When does the Minister actually expect that we could ever establish an Office of Child and Youth Advocate for the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the child and family services system has been through a complete overhaul since the second of the OAG reports was tabled in 2018. And we created the quality improvement plan that the Member referenced which is now in its -- in its last days. We are going to create a bridge plan which will move over both the completed and incomplete

actions that came out of the quality improvement plan.

We also as -- as the Member knows, we are going to revise the Child and Family Services Act to align our legislation with the federal legislation that came into effect in January of 2020. The basis of that legislation is that we act in the best interests of the child and that the best interests are for the child to maintain their connection with their family, with their community, and with their culture. So that will be the basis of the changes that we -- that we're going to make. As I say, other than the Member bringing this topic to me today, it hasn't been a request that I've heard otherwise. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. But I don't know where she's been for the last five years, then, if she says this is the first time she's heard this raised. In fact, I can probably cite where the Minister herself raised this issue in the previous Assembly. But, you know, these offices are found across the country, we're the last jurisdiction without one, and I would like to get a commitment from the Minister that she's actually going to seriously examine this issue of establishing a child and youth advocate for the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's true, as a Regular Member I did advocate for this. But I have to say how much has changed in the child and family services environment.

The colonial approach of "father knows best" with some kind of office that takes care of the whole NWT is no longer considered best practice. The best practice now is for Indigenous governments to write and implement their own child and family services law and be accountable to themselves and their Indigenous Members for the provision of child and family services. That's what we're working on. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 1056-19(2):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding child and family services.

I heard the Minister say there that they are planning to update our legislation to bring it in line with the federal legislation. And Mr. Speaker, one of the key principles in that federal legislation is section 15 that

says no child should be apprehended solely on the basis of his or her socio-economic status including poverty, lack of adequate housing, or infrastructure, or the state of health in his or her parent or care provider. And Mr. Speaker, I -- I am concerned that we are still apprehending many children for those exact reasons.

So my question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is when we bring this legislation forward, will we adopt the same principle, that no child should be apprehended due to their parents' socio-economic status? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that -- that the Member is duly concerned about children being removed from their homes where poverty rather than parental neglect is the primary issue. That is something that we're aware of. And we do have voluntary service agreements and brief service agreements which will assist families with their -- with their needs for shelter, food, and so on so that the children are not removed because of poverty.

This is obviously a systemic issue. It's a question of an inequity within the system. Some children have much more than others and that shouldn't be -- that shouldn't be a matter for child and family services except to support all families equally to ensure that children thrive. So there is a whole-of-government committee looking at integrated service delivery which would address all these areas. It would take into account housing, income assistance, health and social services, all the social envelope departments, to create an integrated service delivery model for families where neglect -- because of poverty is the issue and to find a whole-of-government remedies to that. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate that. My concern is that with the service agreements they are relying on, you know, additional other GNWT resources to be provided, and we all know that there is a strain on those resources. And so what I think needs to happen here is either the child and family services workers have their own resources or there's some sort of prioritizing. We all in this House want to have integrated service delivery. But the reality is, is that there's just not enough houses for them to house all the homeless people presently. And I think we need to prioritize that anyone facing an apprehension can immediately get access to that. So I'm wondering if the Minister will look into some sort of prioritization for those voluntary agreements that CFS workers can, you know, essentially jump the line, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's point but I don't think that priority or access to their own resources is the issue here. The primary issue that is discussed every day in this House is housing. So, you know, the family may live in conditions that are overcrowded, the housing is inadequate and potentially unaffordable. So those are the kinds of issues that need to be addressed on a -- across departmental basis. It's not a matter of money. It's a matter of finding a place for -- a suitable place for families to live, and that's why I think that work on this integrated service delivery addressing poverty for families shows a lot of promise to come up with a holistic solution for families where their socio-economic circumstances are the primary reason that their -- their children aren't thriving. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that and, you know, I have had constituents and I know people who've -- they worked with integrated case management and they are moving towards an integrated service delivery model. I guess my question, though, is, you know, in times of emergency, I believe those CFS workers need their own resources. They need to -- their access to their own funding that is separate outside of waiting for, you know, our -- a shared vision of GNWT having all of its services delivered.

I'm wondering if the Minister could speak to whether there is potential to provide specific funding that is unique to how child and family services wants to spend it in the case of an apprehension or a plan of care agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that apprehension is always the last resort. And so at this point, we do have these service agreements available that family preservation workers, social workers can sign with families to ensure that their basic needs are being met. I don't know if it would be useful for these workers to have a -- another way of accessing money, whether that would improve the service delivery, the timing of it, and so on. To be perfectly honest, I'm not sure what the process is of getting money now and how onerous that is to meet a specific deadline. So I will make a commitment to the Member to look into that question and determine whether, in fact, having family preservation workers and social workers with their own pot of money would, in fact, facilitate getting the money into the hands of families. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 1057-19(2):
LITERACY SUPPORT SERVICES

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and they're in regards to the action plan to improve student outcomes.

Yesterday I did a Member's statement in regards to support services. And looking at the action items or the action plan to improve student outcomes, I've noticed that a lot of the action items relating to literacy and support services have been delayed or put on hold and so I have a couple of questions for the Minister.

And the first one is the action item, develop a junior kindergarten to grade 4 literacy and numeracy strategy in collaboration with education bodies is currently on hold, and I'm wondering why. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Generally when we release strategies/action plans, they're quite high level, relatively big, but I said, no, we're going to get down into the weeds with this one and so we have timelines; we have dollar amounts; we have very discrete actions. And what comes with that is the fact that things don't always work out the way you would like. Sometimes you don't have the money. Sometimes other things get in the way. And sometimes positive things happen that can even set you back. So in this instance, with this particular item, the development of a literacy and numeracy strategy is -- is intimately tied to the curriculum, and we are now changing our curriculum from the Alberta curriculum to BC's curriculum. And once that's implemented, we begin implementing that in the 2023-2024 school year, then we can start developing and rolling out that strategy. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that response from the Minister.

My second question is in regards to the action item develop greater integration of services for children and youth in the education system through expanding regional capacity. This action item has also been delayed, and I'm noting that it also includes explore regional approaches to expand the current capacity of the territorial-based support team and identify a pilot or a demonstration site for the model to be deployed and evaluated. So when is this work expected to be completed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So we've done a jurisdictional scan, a literature scan, and the model for a regional-based support team

was developed. Of course, like many things our efforts had gone elsewhere over the past couple of years in the education system. There was a drastic shift in how we do business. We're finally getting back to normal, and next week things are going to look a lot more normal in schools. But that really held us up, and so when you -- we -- I guess in the past couple years as well, there's been a greater push towards integrated service delivery approach, and we are looking at how that is going to impact this development as well. So we are delayed because of events that have happened, but I think that we are in a good position to move forward in a coordinated fashion. Thank you.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the territorial-based support team is vital to children, especially outside of Yellowknife accessing support services. And I'm wondering if the territorial-based support teams are currently all fully staffed, and if not, what positions is the department still trying to fill? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have five positions. Three are staffed. I have a text telling me which positions are not staffed but I can't scroll to it at this moment. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I can get the Member that information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question is in regards to the OAG report. And the OAG report that came out near the beginning of our term stipulated that ECE must change the way that it's collecting data. And the example of that was the reporting of graduation rates.

Improved data collection analysis and reporting and better use of data can increase equity, improve student achievement and outcomes, and improves decision-making as well so that it's evidenced-based decision-making.

So I'm wondering, do the changes to data collection and data analysis extend to identify and close equity gaps for learning interventions and access to supports across the Northwest Territories? This -- this is an important requirement, as noted, to prevent potentials for systemic discrimination or inequity among our support services. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we know there's issues with the education system along with some student outcomes. But that's -- just saying we know there's issues isn't enough. We need to target those issues. And in order to target those issues and develop solutions, we need data. And so there has been a shift in the last few years to collect more data and use that in different ways.

As part of -- our education is very decentralized and so it has made it difficult at times, but there is a lot of work happening. The graduation rate, it's a more complicated number than I think a lot of people that I -- than I expected, even, and we have finally I think settled on a way that really reflects the realities of the territory because not every graduation rate calculation is created equal. So we are using our own rate as well.

We are also publishing the JK to 12 Education Assistance Performance Measures Technical Report, and we intend to do that yearly. And that has a lot of information about all sorts of different outcomes across the territory.

So, yes, we are doing that work. As with everything else, things have been delayed a bit. We were pushed off track quite a bit over the past couple of years, but it is still our focus. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Colleagues, our time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Speaker.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 36-19(2):
(PROVISIONAL)

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR RESIDENTS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a provisional Return to Written Question 36-19(2) asked by the Member for Great Slave on March 8th, 2022, to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding mental health supports for residents.

We require a bit more time to finalize the response and will have a final response for the House on Thursday March 31, 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Replies to Commissioner's address. Petitions. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 614-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
1035-19(2): MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICIES

HON. JULIE GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 1035-19(2): Medical Travel Policies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism, and Investment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 615-19(2):
WHAT WE HEARD FINAL REPORT – CATALYST
RESEARCH GROUP

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following document: What We Heard Report - Catalyst Research Group. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 616-19(2):
AUXILIARY REPORT OF CHIEF ELECTORAL
OFFICER: ISSUES ARISING FROM THE 2019
GENERAL ELECTION

Colleagues, further to direction to the chief electoral officer from the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, I wish to table the Auxiliary Report of the Chief Electoral Officer: Issues Arising from the 2019 General Election.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Member for Thebacha.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 51-19(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
MAY 26, 2022

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 31st, 2022, I will move the following motion:

I move, second by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 31st, 2022, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, May the 26th, 2022.

And furthermore, that at any time prior to May 26th, 2022, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet an earlier time during the adjournment, or at a time later than the scheduled resumption of the House, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Notices of motion. Motions. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for Justice.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 48: ARBITRATION ACT

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 48, Arbitration Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 48, Arbitration Act has been presented, deemed read for the first time, and is ready for second reading.

First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 23, Bill 29; Minister's Statement 202-19(2); Tabled Document 561-19(2), Tabled Document 567-19(2).

By the authority given to me by Motion 1-19(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the house, with Member for Hay River South in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 567-19(2) and Minister's Statement 202-19(2). Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Committee, we'll take a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): I will call the committee back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Minister's Statement 202-19(2) and Tabled Document 567-19(2): Annual Status Report - 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Does the Premier wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness into the Chamber.

Would the Minister please introduce -- or the Premier please introduce her witness.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Chair, with me I have Mr. Martin Goldney, the deputy minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs and the secretary to Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Committee, yesterday we finished -- or we were on pages 23 and 24, settle and implement treaty, land resources, self-government agreement. And are there any questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. On page 23, it's one of the progress milestones is two agreements concluded. And I guess I just want to get some assurance from the Premier that these two agreements are not just these trans-boundary agreements; we're talking hopefully something more substantive like either Akaitcho or Deh Cho or the Metis Nation; is that what this refers to? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly, if -- just take a moment here; I've just got to figure out this clock. You've got 62 minutes.

---Laughter

Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We want -- we would like to make all of the agreements concluded but that's not a reality. So you know, we're hopeful that the southeast and southwest ones will be concluded. We're also hoping that the Nyak Dun one will be concluded. We -- we've got a tentative agreement-in-principle with the Akaitcho but they've got to go to their membership. And, you know, thought we were close with the Gwich'in and then they joined back. What I'm trying to say is that things happen and, you know, there's changes in leadership; there's changes in negotiations. There was questions today about the NWT Metis Nation and the statement that we've had two agreement-in-principles with them. So sometimes you make agreement-in-principles and then they change their mind and they come back. So our commitment -- the last Assembly said they were going to settle them all. That wasn't realistic. They didn't get any done. This Assembly, we're going to try to settle two. What two they will be, I'm hoping that we'll have more, but I can't say that for a hundred percent certain that any of them will be done because it all depends on what happens at the tables, and things change all the time.

We're hoping that when we release our -- when we look at the core principles objectives, the intents around the interests around negotiations, that that will open it up a little bit more. But like I said, on our

side we're doing our best we can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'll try that one more time. So the two agreements concluded as the milestone, is that beyond the two draft trans-boundary agreements? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we began this Assembly, we did not sit down and say these are the two agreements that should be concluded. We said instead of trying to do all agreements, we will shoot to make sure that two agreements are finalized. So which ones they will be were not defined at the beginning. And so we're hoping for more. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'll just leave it as a comment that I hope that this is more than just two trans-boundary agreements and if the -- if Cabinet needs more money to get this work done, I urge them to go to FMB. The Regular MLAs, I'm sure, would be very supportive of this. We have to deliver on this. And I don't know how else I can say that. Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's all I've got.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is not an issue of money. I've never heard from any of the negotiators or any of the tables that it's more money. It's a matter of everyone being willing to sit and negotiate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on settle and implement treaty, land resource, and self-government agreements?

Seeing none, Committee, we will move to page 25, implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Questions. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see here that the NWT Council of Leaders has a working group, and we're working on legislation to implement UNDRIP. I guess the big question there is do we expect -- does the Premier expect to introduce UNDRIP implementation legislation in the life of this Assembly? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is my hope, that we have it (audio) Assembly however we're getting some flack on that

as well at the working group. It's a matter of -- and we may have to -- we're looking at maybe the possibility of bringing in a facilitator to help.

They don't understand the process of the Legislative Assembly. There -- a lot of the members that are part of the working group believe that they can just say this is what we want and it's a done deal. We experience that at the last Assembly when we did the land and water as well. So we're still going through that. But we're committed to getting it done, and we'll use whatever methods we can other than -- it has to be by the lead of the Indigenous governments. So if we need a facilitator to help to explain the process, then we will do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. Also I see here that, you know, some of the work is to identify changes for GNWT policies, and then there's a how we'll demonstrate progress as reporting on program changes provided.

I have yet to see any of that work, or I've yet to see, you know, us change a policy or, you know, change some sort of internal operations of the GNWT and say this is due to UNDRIP. Can I just get the Premier to speak to whether, you know, the federal and BC legislation kind of mandate a work plan that demands departments and agencies to review all internal policies and then make changes? Is it -- you know, is that our plan, and when will we see some reporting on programs and policies as a result of implementing UNDRIP? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that we are working on the housing policies but for cross-jurisdictional information, I'd like to turn it to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Deputy minister.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I can report that in addition to the work we're doing in collaboration with Indigenous governments, we are looking internally doing an inventory of our programs, doing a bit of an assessment of our own and where they align or misalign with the principles in UNDRIP and then the intent is to take some of that work back and have continued conversations with Indigenous governments when they're ready. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Questions? Committee, we're just waiting for the Members that are virtual to get tabled documents. It'll just be a minute. Relax.

Members, are there any further questions on implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People?

Seeing none, Committee, we will move to page 26, increase regional decision-making authority. Questions? Are there any questions -- oh sorry, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just looking at the implementation plans announced for the training programs there, and they're both saying that they're fulfilled and that we're going to be delivering at the beginning of early of 2022. Can the Premier speak to whether or not that those training programs have started? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know that they're started. I'm not sure if they're completed, though. For that, I'll turn it to the deputy minister to expand on that. I know that we're also doing more work to -- because the job descriptions where similar training is happening, and then we're still looking for -- to identify from staff on what they see as issues. So the work is still ongoing. But as for if it's all completed, I'd like to turn it to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Deputy minister.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have completed some of the training but we've identified some components to that training, including training on the human resource manual and delegations of authority. That work's been done. That training's been complete. There's been training on Cabinet processes. That's largely complete. I think training on that began in December. And there's further training modules that are being developed, and the plan is to continue delivering those once the other training is complete. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Member.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for that answer. I guess my next question is just around is there no commitment here for the moving of jobs into the regional areas in order to increase that decision-making authority? I'm just wondering if I'm getting two mandates mixed up -- or two priorities mixed up. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, this mandate didn't address moving positions. However, in saying that, I think Members

are aware that the Minister of HR/Finance did release that people that are working at headquarters in Yellowknife, if their jobs allow they will be allowed to move into smaller communities outside of Yellowknife to be able to do their work if their job allows that to happen. And it's a one-way street. It does not -- people from the smaller communities that were -- communities outside of Yellowknife are not allowed to move in to Yellowknife to do their job. But I think that's a progressive move in -- in trying to attract people to outside of the Yellowknife as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on increased regional decision-making authority?

Seeing none, Committee, we will move to page 27, reduce the municipal funding gap. Questions? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the goals here is to refine the funding model to ensure continued fairness and transparency. And I know this work is, you know, actually on track, and I'm happy to hear that but I find it a little ridiculous that we're going to ensure transparency when the department refuses to publish how much we actually give specific communities. So there's no way for anyone to know whether their community is overfunded or underfunded. And I know the Minister of MACA has refused to answer that question. So my question is once we are done and we have a new funding formula, will we publish specific community breakdowns going forward? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to defer that to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. We will look at it. And we will not make a promise but we will look at it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. And I think the other big fight with this one is that it -- there's -- they're reducing the gap by \$5 million was initially interpreted to be reducing \$5 million considering the way the formula works in total, so adjusting for inflation or, you know, the increased costs as the formula takes. It seems now Cabinet has switched to not be that target.

My question is, can we get an update on what the actual amount the funding gap will be reduced by.

You know, adding \$5 million to it if it -- if inflation went up by \$5 million will actually be zero dollars. So we don't seem to be publishing by community and we don't seem to be publishing the actual closing of the gap. So can I get a commitment that we will publish what the gap will actually be closed by adding \$5 million? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I think that that will have to be something that we'll have to work with the -- couple of departments on. I don't think it's as easy as just making a commitment right here. It's really hard to tell. The commitment is to be able to address the -- reduce the municipal funding gap by \$5 million. That was a decision made in the House. However, the Member's right. I mean, inflation hits, cost of living and, you know, things change all the time with communities so we won't know if -- if it's really affected that or not. We don't even know if that -- if the amount that was originally said was the gap is the real gap because as soon as you do that research, it's outdated. So what I can commit to is that we'll have that discussion at Cabinet and -- or in Finance I guess, and we'll get back to Members on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just looking at the line item where it says that MACA is going to provide new opportunities for the own source revenue through the transfer of lands to community governments. It's the last one on page 27. I'm just curious to know if we have a measurable amount of actual land transfer. Has this actually happened? Is this just talking about it at this stage?

I note that in the next part of this, it's talking about the tool being developed by the -- by April of 2023, which makes me concerned we wouldn't be transferring lands until that time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Chair, I'd like to defer that to the Minister of Lands, please, Mr. Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, so we've developed the tool. It has gone to the City of Yellowknife. They have it, approved it, and adapted it. We're working with them. When we talk to them about doing transfers of land, it's very specific to certain areas and certain things. So it's not one big bulk transfer. We were doing it -- working

with them to do it -- I don't want to call it piecemeal but to do it as they feel comfortable taking on different tasks and what they need their land for.

We've also taken that very tool and given it to NWTAC and which will allow them to get feedback to their membership -- from their membership moving forward. We do have a number of projects on the go that we are looking at doing that from this -- bigger centres as of Yellowknife as -- into the small ones as of Enterprise. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that. Would it be fair for the Minister to characterize that the communities or municipalities are happy with this approach, or would they rather have seen a bulk transfer of land? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: They're happy with it. We are actually working with them. We're working at their speed, their capabilities, and what they want to do and what they are trying to achieve. Again, it's -- you know, if you give them a bulk land, just a whole chunk of it, then you're really not expecting them to do a lot of work to certain areas. So like in the city of Yellowknife, we are looking at very specific areas that the community -- the city uses and they're looking at taking over. And then as we move on, then bulk land transfers will be moved to their -- at their speed. So we are relying on theirs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And just for the part of the rollout, then, for the rest of the territory after the city of Yellowknife, is there a plan to look at that individually by community versus having them all be sort of under the same umbrella or all at the same time; will it proceed based on community capacity? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: No, I think I'm good. I just want to always throw in the faster we can get land I think into the communities' hands, the better. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on reduce the municipal funding gap? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, the first item on page 27 is reduce the funding gap by \$5 million. Do we actually have a formula to calculate what the funding gap is at any point in time? Is it

transparent? Is it reported annually? Sorry, there's two or three questions there but I'd like to find out more about how this is actually calculated. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Martin? Thank you, Mr. Chair, I'd like to transfer it to the secretary to Cabinet.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Secretary to Cabinet.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish I had the answer, but I don't.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's great to hear that the deputy minister for the Executive doesn't have the answer but can I get a commitment, then, from someone who -- a Minister, to actually provide that information to me in a public fashion? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I will either make a commitment to either provide it to the Member in a public fashion or to provide an explanation of why we can't give that to the Member either with a why we can't give it period; why we can't give it in a public manner. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you for that commitment, Premier. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. And look, no disrespect to the deputy minister; I know he's very hard working, I just need to get a political commitment from my colleagues across the aisle.

So I'm a bit surprised to hear that nobody really knows if we actually have a formula for calculating this on an annual basis and that it's not reported annually. So my suggestion, recommendation, is that whatever the formula is, that it should be transparent and that it should be recalculated on an annual basis. And I imagine that this is something -- like, it was done in 2014 with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities. There was a 2019 sort of update or reassessment but I think it still used figures from 2014. So I don't think we've actually got a transparent way and an annual reporting of what that gap is. And I think that's part of the problem with having a vague target like this of \$5 million. Well, \$5 million when and where and so on. So that's all a recommendation that we need to have a formula. It needs to be transparent, and it needs to be reported on annually so at any

point in time if federal dollars fall from heaven or some other funding comes free, then we know what the gap is and how we can start to better close that. Thanks, Mr. Chair. Those are comments, and if the Premier cares to respond that will be great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Chair, well I do know that Municipal and Community Affairs does keep track of the capital amounts that they get from the federal government. The difficulty with having a formula, Mr. Chair, is that the -- years back, and I can't remember what year it was, but the GNWT did a good decision in my opinion, was they signed what was called the new deal, which meant that city -- municipalities were allowed to define their own, what they wanted to do instead of the GNWT telling them what to do. But when the -- the bad point -- there's always good and bad with everything and what happened that -- with that that wasn't so good is that instead of saying you have a community of 500 people so within that community, like it was before, you can have an arena of this size or a gym of this size like we do for some things, we allowed the communities to do what they wanted. Some communities made great big recreation centres that all of a sudden put it out of -- out of whack. You know, 500 people and you got a rec centre that meets the needs of an Olympic team. That's the reality of what happened. So how do you make a formula that addresses that? The only way we could address that, in my opinion -- and that's because I used to be the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. The only way we could address that, in my opinion, would be to do the research every single year which is not financially feasible to do either, and a bit disrespectful. So I don't think that we're going to be able to come up with a set formula, Mr. Chair, because of the -- because of the new deal and allowing municipalities to do what they want with their money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just very quickly, it was done in 2014. There's no reason why it can't be done again. And as I understand it, it has to do with an asset base that changes in value over time and I don't think it's rocket science to recalculate that. It was done once -- or even calculate it once or twice, or do it on some sort of regular cycle. But to just keep reverting back to 2014, that's not good enough. Thanks, Mr. Chair. And I'll just leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on reduce the municipal funding gap? Oh sorry, Mr. Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. I just want to make sure committee is aware -- or the committee here is aware that we are reviewing it this year. We are working the NWTAC on this exact issue right now. So we are reviewing it.

Also I want to advise committee that I'm -- I have had a conversation with the president of NWTAC. We are looking at a tri-territorial meeting with the three ministers and the three NWTACs, their equivalents in the Yukon and Nunavut. We are trying to work on scheduling that meeting and going to the federal government as a tri-party approach to it. As well as they will be reaching out to the Premiers' offices to try to meet it at that level as well. But they -- they're just talking about that right now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on reduce the municipal funding gap?

Seeing none, Committee, we'll move to pages 28, 29, strengthen the government's leadership and authority on climate change. Questions?? Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the items here is to work with the national and international organizations to advocate for the consideration of our unique perspectives on climate change impacts, adaptation, and mitigation.

I'm concerned when I look at the strategies on the government's website that a lot of talk there is about adaptation but there's not a lot there around the mitigation part of this work, and I'm worried that, again, we're being reactive instead of proactive. And I understand now, from my time with the Minister of ENR at COP, around, you know, the difficulties -- and from the time in the House here, the difficulties around us mitigating greenhouse gas emissions in the territory. However, maybe can the Premier speak a little bit to whether or not that work is being done, if we are heavily -- I mean maybe just some thoughts what she thinks about the mitigation versus adaptation and then perhaps I'm guessing I'm going to be hearing from the Minister instead. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Chair, that'll go to the Minister of ENR, Minister Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yeah, so the mitigation there is very much the federal government's being the lead working with them, and I say when the lead, they've given us a lot of the money that we are dealing with it.

What our biggest challenge is right now is the adaptation. They don't -- like, they haven't even developed an adaptation national strategy on it. So we're trying to work with them. So we've been able to access money, whether it's from various departments that help with the mediation of this very difficult issue that's impacting us for numerous years. So, yeah, we are -- there is money there. We're working with them on it. But it's the adaptation that we see that is our shortfall right now. And because the federal government has not developed a national strategy on it yet, they are just in the process of it so we've been working with our federal counterparts and our provincial counterparts on that. So hopefully that answers what she's looking for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: I think that just kind of emphasized what I was saying, is that the focus seems to be on adaptation and nothing around the mitigation part, and I guess where I'm going with this is I'm always -- this comes back to the conversation about putting the money upfront in order to do things right to begin with so that we're not then playing catch up later on. That's exactly what mitigation is. You know, I had mentioned around the flooding last year that I had been hearing for years about erosion of the banks of the river in Fort Simpson. The Minister's well aware himself. And so therefore, you know, nothing was really being done or discussed to prevent that occurrence from happening. I never saw rip rap, things like that. There wasn't talk about protective measures within the Mackenzie. And I'm not saying that maybe those aren't feasible but this is where I get worried that we're not being proactive and we're not looking at mitigation and building that into our process now so it's not something that we have to come back to later. I think a good place for this to sit and needs to be maybe better emphasized is within the Department of Infrastructure with our new builds and our new plans around that, our building maintenance, all of that. And I guess I'd just like to hear a commitment maybe from the Premier and the Ministers that there is going to be a greater look and they will personally look into what's being done under mitigation and emphasizing that more within the departments. I think it is a piece that's missing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to turn that to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Minister Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Okay, yeah, so the thing is is that we are dealing with specific situations. We are looking -- like IE the Tuk situation, we are looking at how it's impacted. We're working with the municipal governments to see if there's funding through mitigation. The federal government has a lot of money in mitigation. They do have a lot of money. What I'm saying is sometimes it doesn't fit into our scope of things. We have been at the table. We've been asking them. We work with Infrastructure on these things. Again, we are the lead on this but we work with our departments. We meet at the national table. We meet at -- the federal minister when myself and you were in COP, I had the opportunity to meet with the Minister from Ontario, and we were actually talking about mitigation and how it -- how the funding works and how it -- and, again, it was about -- our argument is about per capita does not work for us. We -- our situation, we only have 40,000 people but our situations are more unique. And so it was again educating and trying to work with them as well as working with our federal counterparts when I had the opportunity to meet with the climate change ambassador, we talked about that as well. So, yeah, we are working on it. I'm more than willing to work with my colleagues on it. To make a long -- sorry. My longwinded answer, yes, I'll -- we're working on it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that. I guess I'm going to try this from a different approach.

So we all know that if we can reduce our fuel consumption, we're going to save us money. So I think where I'm looking to see a commitment is to build out the capacity within the Government of the Northwest Territories to do mitigation because as I listen to the Minister speak, what I'm hearing is we're focused elsewhere, we are other things that we are having to prioritize because of need, and that a lot of that is being directed by the federal government. And as well too, it's very hard for us to drop our fuel consumption given our specific needs. However, again being proactive, if we could build capacity in the mitigation part and start -- like we do for many other -- like, areas that span all departments and having those people strategically within departments, we will save ourselves money in the long run and we will save ourselves grief in the long run, and perhaps then we become a forerunner and the federal government wants to give us more money as a result of doing well. So that's where I'm looking is just to -- a commitment to look into increasing the capacity within the GNWT for the mitigation piece. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think what I'm hearing the Member saying is that it's bigger than just the Municipal and Community Affairs. It's like an all-of-government issue. I always like to get federal money. So what I can commit to is that I will -- I will bring it to a committee of Cabinet, I think the Member knows that, and so that we can have a more fulsome discussion as Cabinet to look at what we can do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you for that commitment, Premier. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: I'm just going to run with that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So on February the 9th, 2021, it's over a year ago, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources announced that the terms of reference for the NWT Climate Change Council were finished. Council seems to have met a few times but I don't even know who sits on the council. There's no web page. There's no -- nothing in terms of products, communications. Is there actually a climate change council in place? And who sits on it? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's for the Minister of ENR, Minister Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, the committee, they're -- the council sits and it's Indigenous leadership. It is a committee of theirs, and we work with that committee. It is not a sub part of, you know, government. It is a climate change council that we work with. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. Could there not be a web page or some information about the council made available? Like, who sits on it, even maybe the terms of reference somewhere. Is there a work plan? Are there technical committees or advisory committees that have been set up? There's just total absence of any information whatsoever about this body that's supposed to be leading some kind of climate change initiatives. So can the Minister make a commitment to get that work done? Because nobody knows what's happening. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you. We will reach out to committee and try to get this information there. We're not going to do the work. They -- it's been done. We are working with them. I need to really stress we are working with the climate change council. They are not a subdivision or a thing of our government. When I say that, they are an entity on themselves. We are working with them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, just I wasn't clear on what the Minister's proposing. Is he can tell me privately what's going on which is -- you know, maybe I can get more information out of him by wandering down the hall but there's nothing to the public, and I guess that's my concern and issue is what -- you know, can the Minister work with the council somehow so that people even know who sits on this, what they're doing. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Thompson.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: That I can do. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you for that commitment. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I'll be asking the Minister about this in May/June. So head's up. I expect to see something done publicly on this before May/June. And especially if it's reported in this mandate thing as -- progress report as something being done.

I want to move on though. Today the federal government announced a new climate change target of 40 percent reduction from 2005 emissions by 2030. That's an additional 10 percent from even what the pan-Canadian framework says.

So what is happening in terms of our own failed Climate Change Strategic Framework and Energy Strategy that is based on a -- you know, the pan-Canadian framework, which our national government has now moved beyond? Is this new 40 percent target going to be incorporated into our work? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just learned as well that the federal government just released the new reduction plan today, and my understanding is they're going to be

briefing the provinces and territories tomorrow. So until we get a full briefing of that, I can't make the commitment of what that looks like because I don't know. So what, again, I can commit to is that we do have a committee that looks at these things. And so the same committee that I said I'm going to bring mitigation to, at the same time we'll bring the new federal guidelines to and get back to committee, whether that be a briefing to standing committee or what it may be, then we'll do that at the same time. But I can't commit on something I don't know yet. I've been sitting in the House all day. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Premier for that. I'll be raising it again in May/June to find out, you know, if we're going to actually move beyond the 30 percent target ourselves. And I've suggested that we need to have at least net-zero by 2050, that's the emerging global target if we're going to try to save this planet. But I'll have more questions in May/June then for the Premier and the Minister on this. That's all I have for now. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Questions? Are there any further questions on strengthen the government's leadership and authority on climate change?

Seeing none, Committee, we will move to page 30, ensure climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decision. Questions? Questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I know I've raised this before. There's some sort of Cabinet guideline or -- I don't think it's fair to call it a policy document but can the Minister tell me -- or somebody tell me whether that's actually been published and made available to the public at this point? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to turn that to the secretary to Cabinet. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Secretary.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have a public-facing document as our executive council handbook that does describe the processes expected for Cabinet decisions. That is in the process of being updated. This practice has been put in place in advance of that. But the next updated executive council handbook will explicitly make clear this requirement. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So, yeah, this talks about this work being done on page 30. Is the current version, does it -- that's publicly available, does it contain this new tool for the Executive Council and Financial Management Board? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Turn it to the secretary to Cabinet, please.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the tool is in place and being operationalized. There's just been a bit of lag. We're doing other updates to the executive council handbook as well. So the next version will have that explicitly made publicly available as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Sorry, this is very cumbersome. When is that going to happen? When is this new version of the executive council handbook with the new tool for climate change going to be made public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to direct that to the secretary to Cabinet.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I want to say in a matter of weeks, not months. It is still subject to some approvals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. Just one more item on my May/June list to raise with the Premier, so that's now on the list and that's all I have for this one. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm looking at the item on page 31 around increasing the -- you know what, I've skipped myself ahead. Never mind, Mr. Chair. I'll come back for this section.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Questions? Are there any further questions on

ensure climate change impacts are specifically considered when making government decisions?

Seeing none, Committee, we will move to pages 31 to 33, increase employment in small communities. Questions? Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now that I'm on the right page.

I'm looking at the working group that's been established for this purpose, and I note that it says that it's fulfilled and the timeline was winter of 2020. So that's the establishment of the group. However, it does state that they are going to be making recommendations, identifying gaps, programs, all of that in the progress to date.

So can the Premier or the Minister speak to where that information is if this group has been established for almost -- I guess it would just be a year if it's winter of 2020, but when are we going to see some information or data flow out of this group? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just giving the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment a moment. Yeah, I think he's fine to answer the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So the working group has been established. It has come up with some great ideas, doing some great work. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Okay, I'm guessing that maybe the Minister missed my question. It was around when are we going to actually see the work coming out of the working group - the ideas, the gaps, the information that they think is needed, etcetera? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. So there has been some work that has been done already. Each department is pulling together its own information and then the working group will look at that and amalgamate it and the departments have been putting that information together. If they're not already sharing that with each other and starting that work, it will be happening quite soon. There have been some changes that have been made through -- based on the discussions, so. One of the

changes is the communities who have the community labour market development plans will be eligible for multiyear funding through the Small Community Employment Strategy beginning in the new fiscal year. So that's one example of the types of changes that are being made. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The next one I'm looking at is on page 32, the increased seasonal, part-time, and full-time employment in the small communities. The part about amending the Housing Corporation policies to allow for the home-based businesses, it says that it's in progress and that the changes were delayed until February of 2022. Well, we're now in March of 2022 so I'm curious to know if we are moving forward on allowing home-based businesses in Housing Corp buildings. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Minister of Housing, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will have to get back to the Member because there was some, I want to say like complications when we were looking at this and looking at the requirements in these public housing units. They were built for low income families. They weren't built for businesses or childcare to be running out of them so we're still taking a look at those. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that. I think that the Minister's colleague over at ECE might want to have some of this be taken care of so we can create some of those day home spaces that seem to be needed under our new policies. And I'm going to move on here. This one actually has so much in it. And really I feel that I would be remiss to not comment that this is one of the most important priorities for myself. I think if our communities are stronger, then Yellowknife will only be stronger so -- even though it's not riding.

My next question is around the makerspace programs. It does say that it is fulfilled and that they have been developed and implemented, but it's my understanding there has been some delays in that work. Could the Minister speak to whether or not that is correct and when they will be complete. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That would be the Minister of ITI. If you can -- she's online I think.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Wawzonek.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so there is -- there's a few different things happening with respect to the makerspaces. The makerspace project here in Yellowknife did experience some delays, although I think they are on track or catching up as of now and do have funding to see themselves opening up a fairly significant operation.

There are other initiatives that are underway. There is the arts, craft, technology manufacturing centre in Inuvik that was opened in 2019, and they are partnering with a number of regional organizations in the Beaufort Delta to bring the makerspace concept and the makerspace initiative to other regional centres, including for example Tuktoyaktuk and I believe Aklavik as well, as well as I believe a couple of others.

There are also initiatives happening I know in Lutsel K'e, and I believe one other here. I apologize I don't have it in front of me, but. So when they're saying it's complete it's because a lot of these initiatives are already well underway in that regard. But, you know, certainly we encourage communities that are interested in exploring this to come forward because there's -- they just seem to be very successful both from the perspective of starting up the arts, crafts, technology but also just as providing communities spaces where people can start to share entrepreneurial ideas. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you for that. I guess I was just confused how it could be fulfilled if the timeline was fall of 2023. So I appreciate the explanation there. I did have a chance to visit that centre in Inuvik and found it amazing. And one of the things about it is that it does give the people the ability to start small businesses. So I'm -- because, for example, there was a silkscreen or a shirt screening so people could start a T-shirt business. You know, there was the 3D laser printers, all of that kind of thing.

So I guess my next question is part of this work being done to marry or merge the business side of ITI supports in providing small businesses with like accounting skills, all of that kind of thing, in with the makerspaces. If you're already going to have community people coming there to create product,

why not then have that be the space to learn about business as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Wawzonek.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I couldn't agree more, and there is actually some exciting work happening in the space right now specifically with respect to the organization up in Inuvik and looking at whether or not they would be in a position to actually coordinate and provide -- or sorry, the resource so that all the smaller organizations, the smaller makerspaces can utilize their experience and put their experience to use, also looking at different programs to -- to have business mentorship pilots underway and that is -- that pilot is going to be starting this fiscal year. And looking at -- well, I mean, there's BDIC involved here as well. There's funding coming in from the federal government under CanNor as well. There's -- so there's a few different streams here. And, you know, I have to say this is also -- I should actually note this is being coordinated as well with ECE and ENR. So it's an area where there's actually quite a lot happening, Mr. Chair. It's one that I feel quite strongly and quite excited about. And I do think there's -- this is something that we'll have to provide a more thorough update to Members on because, again, there's quite a lot that's expected to get underway in the next few months between the Inuvik group and the mentorship pilot. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair, just a -- oh sorry, I've got -- sorry, I've got really bad feedback right now. So just in regards to this -- this priority here, I see a lot of our priorities of course are very connected, and so in conjunction with increasing employment in small communities from the inside out, there's also a potential for increasing employment in small communities from the outside in. And when I think about our priority of increasing regional decision-making authority and also the drive to ensure that some positions within the GNWT are also returned to communities, that kind of brings the subject of housing into this conversation and something that really might be missing from -- from this priority item as far as targets under here.

We've heard from the Minister of Health and Social Services, for example, that one of the positions that they were looking to fill within Tuktoyaktuk was unable to be filled because of a lack of housing in the community. And so, really, one of the barriers to achieving the success that the GNWT would like to achieve in some of our priorities really relate back to the availability of housing.

And so I'm wondering how the GNWT is tracking housing needs in relation to increasing employment in small communities and where the ability to put positions into communities is further hampered by the lack of housing in our small communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll start, and then I'm not sure if the housing minister would like to expand on it, but I'll begin with it.

I agree that you can't look at employment in small communities or look at increasing employment in small communities without looking at the need for housing. So I'm giving you a heads up on what -- but basically I do know that the Minister is working. We just had a discussion today actually and the Minister is working with the federal government as stated earlier today on a working group. She is also working with the Indigenous governments. Indigenous governments are getting money from the federal government for housing programs. We're hopeful that -- we believe that the federal budget will be released I believe on April 7th tentatively. That's -- so we're hoping that we will also receive money for housing.

I think that the Minister was hoping that the Indigenous governments, again I'd like her to expand on it, would be looking at not only the needs of housing that they have in their communities for their membership but also looking at ways to make it an economic -- economically viable, such as getting into market housing to address the needs of people that might be coming up for business or for healthcare or for teachers or for all of their needs. So Mr. Chair, I think that I've given the Minister enough time, and if she'd like to expand, I'd like to give her that opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And my apologies, I just went out to get some water. But I didn't expect there to be questions, but what I've heard is that increasing employment in smaller communities.

One of the things that I'd really like to elaborate on is that through the 90-unit delivery, we are requiring for the need for apprenticeship and that's built into those contracts. But not only that we've also been requested by the Indigenous groups to acknowledge those Indigenous groups where our houses are being placed, when they are to be built, to give them an opportunity for employment and training as well in their own communities, and looking at partnerships for them as well too if they're not -- if

they don't have the capacity to fulfill these contracts. And we have put at least one house in every single community, 33 communities, and looking at those -- at those deliveries as well too.

And then also working with the Indigenous groups and looking at the -- the influx of funding that they will be receiving. Market housing has been brought up. You know, I always like to, you know, reflect on my riding. I do have one of my smaller communities as Colville Lake that has zero almost -- no, I don't want to say zero but pretty much no government resources in there unless you're a teacher or a -- teacher pretty much I want to say that. And, you know, we have like lack of housing as well too so we need to start working together in partnership with these Indigenous groups. And I want to have the opportunity to expand and give them the updated information that we have as a corporation and what is needed in the community, what we can construct and build, repair, programming in those communities. Like I said, we do have a limited budget as well too, but we try to be very strategic with that budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my question was in regards to tracking. And so I'm wondering how the government is tracking housing needs as it relates to increasing employment in small communities? And I use the example of the communities of Tuktoyaktuk wanting to hire a mental health counsellor but that they could not do that because there was no housing in the community for that person to live in. And so that meant that Tuk was unable to hire that person to work in the community. And so how is that information being tracked by the GNWT and supplied to either Executive or the Housing Corporation so that we know what communities cannot bring in employment into the community because of lack of housing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to defer that to the Minister of Housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Ms. Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will have to get back to the Member because it does fluctuate throughout the territories as well too and looking at those specific programs and services, and I have heard this as well too with the positions not being fulfilled in the communities because of lack of

housing and looking at how we are looking at distributing those units as well.

Right now, the delivery that we do have, the priority is public housing and to deal with our waitlists. So I would have to get back to the Member and looking at market housing for GNWT employees. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Yeah, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I think this is a really important subject and really important question because although I know that there is a huge push to increase public housing, and I understand the huge importance of that, there is also a need for us to be -- or for the GNWT to be able to fill vacant positions in communities that they are creating both because the communities need it, this -- and there's a huge push to put a lot of these support services back into communities to serve residents of the Northwest Territories. And so it's -- it's one of those, you know, catch 22s, where you need both, and without properly tracking our needs then the GNWT can't fulfill them.

And so my next question there was going to be a request for understanding how the GNWT is addressing staff housing needs in small communities. And I appreciate that the Minister alluded to providing additional information on that.

And my next question is does the NWT Housing Corporation then have policies that support partnerships for private market rental agreements with Indigenous governments and with community organizations in order to increase those private market rental opportunities for moving these support services into communities so people have a place to live when they take these jobs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Chair, I do know that, from when I used to be the housing minister, that there are regular -- there used to be -- every few years, they kind of did a cross-departmental check to make sure that -- to see how many market housing needs were met -- were needed. I know that ECE has let us know that, you know, the education bodies let ECE know on a regular basis what they're needing, and I imagine Health has the same. I don't know when that was last done. So I think it might be something that needs to be looked at again. However, I would also caution that might not be the time right now until the Minister can actually have these meetings with the Indigenous governments, until the funding rolls out from the federal government to the Indigenous governments and to the Housing Corp, and we figure out what the

Indigenous governments want to do with their money, if they want to get into market housing, which would be something that I would promote them to do to make it sustainable, then it would be kind of futile for us to do that. So I think, though, that -- I'm hoping the Minister would be open to -- yes, good. The Minister would be open to once we have the discussions with the Indigenous governments, find out what their plans are, that she would look at again doing a cross-departmental assessment of the needs in communities.

In saying that, though, I do want to say that when I was the housing minister the issue that I had as well, we asked all the departments what they needed and they gave us a list, and we put houses there. And then when I took over as the housing minister, those -- those same buildings that were identified by departments needed for nurses, teachers, etcetera, sat empty for years to the point that I got upset about it and said give them away to public housing, reuse them. So there's always a fine balance between assessing what the need is and what actually is the need because you might have three teachers -- my son's partner is a teacher and so you would think that you have three teachers and they all need their own unit, but then they get together and they meet each other and they decide to share one unit, and you got two units sitting empty. So there's a fine balance between saying this is the number we need and actually this is the number that we actually do need. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Hello, I have a question. I have a question here. It says in here, in this report, that the working group established a working group, and it says it already established a working group to create -- to review existing employment opportunities in the small communities, etcetera.

I just wanted to ask the Premier if there is a timeline when to complete because the working group is in place already. Is there a timeline to complete and to -- so that there's more jobs created in small communities? You are aware that right now even, like, for Tlicho community and when you look at the health status report, it's not just Tlicho community; it's other community as well, that where unemployment is high. And people are using income support more. So I just wanted to know if there is a timeline because everybody needs jobs, especially in the small communities. And I just wanted to ask if there is a timeline. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this is something that is ongoing. There are timelines listed in the mandate, and there's funding flowing every single year to the tune of over \$4 million to small communities to create jobs. So hundreds of jobs are created each year, and the communities just need to opt in and they can provide those funds to different organizations within the community, even private businesses, to create jobs. We are working on -- in the coming fiscal year, those are going to turn into multiyear agreements so that communities can plan so there's some sustainability with those jobs. It's not just a one-off and perhaps you can plan a few years out and create some sustainable jobs. We need people to create jobs. We can provide money. But if we just keep providing money, it's basically a different form of income assistance. So we need to all work together to support businesses and communities to create their own industries. And so that work is happening.

In terms of some of the other work, the departments - ENR, ITI, ECE, Housing Corporation - are all working together on the working group to come up with different strategies to look at the gaps that exist. They all have -- are creating logic models to determine where those gaps are and then perhaps provide some more targeted supports. Right now it's a pretty -- the major support is pretty blunt. Millions of dollars a year for employment. And it has been relatively successful. And now we need to figure out how do we turn those temporary seasonal jobs into long-term jobs and eventually businesses and industries. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Okay, I just heard about the housing shortage as well. Housing shortage, I know that we want Yellowknife, we want the GNWT decentralize the jobs to the communities, to the outlying regions to the -- right now, is there any commitment from the GNWT to transfer most of these jobs that was taken from the communities, take it back to the communities, and let the community run the program and services? I just wanted to ask the Minister if there is a commitment from the GNWT to decentralize these -- most of these jobs that were moved from the small communities to Yellowknife. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've heard that quite a bit. Decentralization is not one of our priorities actually. It's not in here. It's increase regional decision-making was in here. In saying that, though, I mean, there is a commitment. There is a -- like I said earlier, the Minister of Finance has made a commitment that we all want to see jobs

in the communities. We recognize that, you know, like it was mentioned earlier, the stronger our smaller communities are the stronger Yellowknife is. It was made by a Regular Member, and I agree with that statement actually. And so like I said earlier, one of the things that isn't in here but it's being done by the -- by Department of Finance is that anyone that has a job in Yellowknife that can be done in the communities has that option now. That's never been done before. They have the option, if their supervisor allows it, that they can actually take their job and go into the community, wherever they want, and do that work from there. And like I said earlier, it's a one-way street. We're not allowing that to happen for people that have jobs outside of Yellowknife.

So I'm hoping that many people in the public service will hear this and will take us up on that. That is one way of decentralizing jobs into the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Okay, well, thank you. Okay, the Premier said something about increase the decision-making. So who are these decision-makers are? Is it the local leaders, or is it GNWT? Who are these -- like, who are these people that they are targeting? I just -- I need to know because it's -- increase decision-making is -- I'm not too sure. They need to be clear on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you look at the mandate that was done from this, the increase in regional decision-making, it will be done by the people that are in the regions. There was feedback that they felt that they couldn't make decisions, that they couldn't -- they couldn't be the final say, that everything that they had to do had to come through headquarters, and then when we did the review of their job descriptions, it's not true. So I don't know if that's a perception that's come from they're thinking that or somebody that was a supervisor in headquarters that got too heavy handed, but that is what we're trying to correct, is the misperception by people in the regions, such as local LHOs, education bodies, etcetera, that feel that everything they do has to come through headquarters, because that's not appropriate. People are paid at the same levels, and they are expected to do the same work. So they should have the same level of authority to be able to make decisions as somebody in Yellowknife. So that was what that mandate -- or that priority is about. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. I do agree with Premier on that because there are -- there's people out here that can do the job but it's always the Yellowknife or the headquarters, the deputy ministers, people there, the bureaucrats are undermining the local authority. So that's why -- like, if people are working in that -- like that, within that capacity, other people -- I'm sure they don't feel good about themselves about the decision-making. They are being undermined. And I do agree with the Premier what she said, increase the decision-making should be left, left alone and leave it to the -- to the people in the small communities or in the regions. That's -- yes, I just wanted to say that. That's just more of a comment, and I do agree, and that is very inappropriate. Yellowknife should not be having all the power and control. And right now, that's how we -- we see it like that. We see that Yellowknife have more power and control over small communities, especially small communities in the regions, and a lot of undermining too as well. So I do agree with what she said, and it's not appropriate, and I hope that lot of these decision-making will be done at the local level, and -- you know, and just leave it there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier, would you like to respond?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I'll take that as a comment. Thank you for the agreement. I think it's shared by many Members. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Yes, that's it for now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Edjericon.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just thinking on this subject here anyway. It is good to see that ECE and ITI and NWT Housing Corporation are working together to -- to establish a working group. And I think it's -- I think it's a good idea that, you know, when you start looking at working together. But what's missing there is -- what I don't see there is Indigenous governments. And maybe the Premier could maybe let me know, you know, if we're going to do this, shouldn't we be working with the Indigenous governments on this? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this mandate, the priorities were set by the Legislative Assembly, 19 Members that are in this House. Also the mandate was set by the GNWT.

So it's only an internal document for us as this Assembly.

However, in saying that, I agree that it's really important to work with the Indigenous governments, and that's why we've started the Council of Leaders table. And in my opinion, one of the most progressive things we've done, not only the Council of Leaders, but also the modern treaty and self-government tables that are looking at implementation of their agreements. A big part of those implementations are the economic feasibilities of those agreements. And so those discussions have started in this Assembly, and I'm hoping that they will last for forever, because I think you're right, it has to be all of us together to do this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Edjericon.

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your comments from the Premier.

You know, the Housing Corporation's been -- it's 50 years now. They're looking at a celebration coming up here soon. And, you know, I've been in this field for some time and you know, working in the communities going back to 1986 in Fort Resolution when we were building HAP houses up to 1992 when Canada through CMHC decided not to build anymore public housing and cancelled the HAP program. But, you know, small communities are really dependant, you know, on new construction. And the thing is that what's been happening now is that in the last number of years, you know, the high cost of buying materials and labour and most recent, you know, the COVID and the fires in BC have driven up the cost per square foot cost. And, you know, the communities really depend on this seasonal work. And I know it's been going back to, like I said 1986 to last number of years, and you know, we got some good tradespeople out of -- out of the communities, even including electricians, etcetera. So what's happening now is that we moved away from, you know, stick-built construction to buying modular homes now. And to even think about the modular home going to a community, it doesn't take long to drop a trailer in the community. You could walk out of ten days to finish a unit. And what's the benefit to the people in the community in terms of if you say that we want to promote apprenticeship training, well, there's not much you could do in ten days whereas, you know, if you do one home, it could take you three months to build a home and if you do three units in one community, that's 90 -- that's 270 days I guess. So you got nine months worth of work if you build three houses in the community, and then you could really look at promoting apprenticeship training etcetera. So I just want to know is this going to be the new norm now, moving away from stick- built construction to going with trailers now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Question for the Premier.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do believe that -- there's a couple of things I heard in there and so I'm just going to take it, and then I'm going to transfer it to a different Minister actually.

Housing is one thing, and yeah, so I mean, years ago when we thought it would be cheaper to bring in modular homes is that modular homes don't transport well to the far communities in the North. So that -- you know, it's not going to be a reality for that. However, you always have to do the balance. Is it -- you know, is it -- you can get five modular homes for \$500,000 versus one stick-built for \$500,000, and you got like a huge waiting list of people that need housing. So there's always that balance, you know, jobs versus people and housing.

But bigger than that is, you know, having the housing program for three months and building one stick house in the community, that might answer it for a year, maybe two years, but I think ECE is doing some exciting work around the community labour market development plans. And so if you'd allow me, Mr. Chair, I'd like for the Minister of ECE to talk a little bit about what those are about and what he sees coming from those. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And ECE does support communities, including community governments, so that includes Indigenous governments, in those communities to develop their community labour market development plans. And those contain a lot of information that -- I know we talked a lot today about why we need information to make decisions. And that also allows us to provide funding based on those decisions.

I will say we're also working with the Housing Corporation to better utilize the trades persons that are employed by the Housing Corporation and the LHOs. This is something that the Minister and I had been speaking about since day one of this Assembly basically. We have the SNAP program, the -- I can't remember this acronym. I've always known it as the SNAP program but it is a way for students to learn a trade, earn some money, and earn some credits all at the same time. And we are doing more to promote this program. And we want to promote it in small communities so that those small community students can learn those trades.

We are also revamping the standards for the housing maintainer program which the college has -- hasn't offered for a couple years, but that's also a program that, you know, much needed in communities. And I

will say that in terms of stick-builds and modulars, I know the Housing Corporation does a mixture, but even in regional centres where you might build some modulars, I know that there's a number of people from small communities who work on those builds, and I've seen it myself. So there are opportunities, and we want to take advantage of those as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Edjericon.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, and I only got a few minutes left so I'll just -- couple quick comments I guess and maybe a question.

Yeah, you know, I appreciate your comments and thank you for your response on that from the Premier and also the -- from the Minister of Education. And I understand the apprenticeship program and the programs that you're talking about because I used to be the chairman for the apprenticeship board once upon a time. But at the same time, you know, these trailers that are -- that have been purchased most likely come from down south and, you know, we have a northern manufacturer policy in place, and we should be promoting trailers from the North and built here in the North because what's happening is that that way here can really promote the apprenticeship training in this area.

Also, you know, aboriginal governments in the North here really want to build capacity, you know, and I think maybe this working group should be working with Indigenous governments so that they could undertake a lot of these projects themselves. And because sooner or later, it's going to happen anyway with land claims and self-government agreements, etcetera.

So I just want to just throw that out there. But I think we should be supporting northern manufacturers here in the North, also working with Indigenous governments, and do a proper training program that way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a lot of questions in that and just kind of trying to figure out who to -- best to answer.

I think I'll start with saying it's multifaceted. It's not as easy as that. The working group is done; there's one aspect of it. ECE is doing things around regional plans. EIA is working with the Indigenous governments on their own economic achievements. And I kind of like that model because I always feel that it's not good to always have your eggs in one basket. The more that we branch out, the more flexibility. But I think I'll take the chance because I did hear about the purchasing of modular units from down south. So I think I'll -- if you're all right with that

Mr. Chair, I'll let the Minister of Housing talk about what she's doing with the modular houses that we're -- homes that we're taking into the North. I'll use that one. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Chinna.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So when we had applied and received the federal funding, with that federal funding we were to deliver modular units. And that was the criteria that was build into receiving those additional 30 units for that program. But what we had done as well too is we met with northern modular manufacturers as well too. So we were able to look at northern builds here in the territories. And one of the things that we've done for -- with the corporation is we've done our best to try to keep that money spending here in the North and try to maximize on all that we can here in the North but also emphasizing on the communities as well too, to keep the money for local employment as well. And modular units versus stick-built, obviously there is a dramatic price increase but the Housing Corporation has looked at those builds and those opportunities to try to balance that out through the Northwest Territories.

Right now we have partnered up with one of the companies in the territories as well too. But the other thing that I've noticed is the Indigenous groups are partnering up with local businesses that are here in the North. And that is something that the Housing Corporation works with those Indigenous groups and works with those companies to making sure that we increase local employment as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Weyallon-Armstrong, one question, please. Thank you.

MS. WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The one question that I want to ask, I know that in a small communities, most of the employers are GNWT and the local governments and LHO. So I just wanted to ask if they can hold -- the GNWT can hold a strategic workshop in communities to talk about creating jobs in small communities? Can the Premier answer that, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to transfer that to the Minister of ECE.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I don't think we're going to be doing that at this time. We've seen a reduction in our travel budgets as well as our, you know, contract services are tight, and it is difficult to -- you know, we have to make some difficult choices. So we have many avenues where we work with Indigenous governments and communities. And you know, we're going to continue to do that in the best way possible. But at this time, I can't commit to something like that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on increase employment in small communities?

Seeing none, committee, we will move to pages 34 to 37, make strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy, or reduce the cost of living. Questions? I don't see any questions. Mr. Edjericon.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you again. I guess overall, we've been talking about the high cost of living here in the Northwest Territories for some time and anything and everything we can do to try and help save a dollar for our constituents and our people in the Northwest Territories is -- will go a long ways. I mean, the other day I filled up my truck. It was like \$250 now. I mean, seven years ago, it was like \$85. So everything's going up in terms of the cost of living here in the Northwest Territories. So I guess overall -- and last week I did talk about, you know, the reduce of the gasoline surcharge and -- similar to what they're doing in Alberta that's going to take effect on Friday, and I guess the -- I know the -- there was some -- my response back from the Minister of Finance, I read it a few days later, you know, I wasn't really too happy in terms of, you know, looking at how we're going to address this issue. But going forward, maybe the Premier could maybe -- maybe, what do you have on your radar in terms of how we could address the high cost of the fuel here in the Northwest Territories and what are your plans for the next number of years in this area? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do know that it is one of the issues that we will be addressing at the Council of Leaders coming up because all of the Premiers are experiencing that. We're looking at what we can do with the prices. However, I can't make a commitment on that.

We spend a lot of money in this government and, you know, at some point, we're going to have to make hard choices and so are residents. But I would like to turn it over to the Minister of Finance to see if she's got anything more that she can give to the Minister online. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Wawzonek.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't necessarily have an update. I didn't anticipate this being part of the mandate discussion. You know, obviously two years ago when we did the priorities document and the mandate associated with it, we certainly didn't anticipate COVID, let alone the inflation that -- and that might result in part from that as well as some of the other crises we've continued to see over the last two years.

So I mean, just by way of general comment, as I think I've said a couple times in the House recently, the Department of Finance is paying quite close attention. I'm well aware that this impacts the cost of living and to that extent there are elements in the mandate that do, you know, speak to the -- the need and the desire to reduce the cost of living, and that I think is in the mandate document tied to energy costs.

As far as fuel costs, again there's, you know -- we won't be in a position to do necessarily what Alberta's doing but Alberta, to the extent that there's rising fuel prices, benefits most significantly arguably and most significantly of any jurisdiction in Canada. So they're not going to be necessarily the -- the jurisdiction we look to as our model. But that doesn't mean that there won't be things we can do, things we will look to do once we have a sense of what's happening across Canada, once we have a sense of what options there might be coming through from the federal government, who would certainly have the larger coffers. And as the Premier's already said, once those conversations are being had with all those jurisdictions across the Council of Federation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Edjericon

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the finance minister's comments on that, and the Premier.

I guess what I think about this document here now, and even know it's two years old already, and and going forward, I know we are working through COVID right now as we speak and concluding and hopefully we can start focusing on the economy here in the Northwest Territories and going forward.

We already know the mining industry is -- you know, on the process of being winding down, reclamation, etcetera.

But I'm just wondering if the Premier is thinking outside the box as well for the Northwest Territories to forge new relationships with Alberta given that the Mackenzie Gas Project that fell down back in 2014

and 2015, you know, to really look at how we could build maybe relationships with the Alberta government to strengthen the economy here in the Northwest Territories in oil and gas sector. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm always looking to build relationships with anybody that's willing to bring -- help us with our economy. However, in saying that, Mr. Chair, I'd like to remind Members that we do have time for oral questions when we sit in the House but this is actually a review of the mandate of these items and that item was not in the mandate. So respectfully, ask me that question in the House so we can focus on this and try to get through this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier. And that's a good point. We'll just stick to the items in this document. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I will ask in the House again because the economy in the Northwest Territories should be front and center. But overall, again, it's building relationship. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Agreed. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. Edjericon. Are there any further questions? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess sometimes there's examples in here where it's unclear what's happening. We supposedly are supposed to put the environmental assessment and the regulatory process for the Mackenzie Valley Highway in for fall 2023, and it says here preliminary desktop fieldwork and community engagement has advanced; there's some planning underway. I'm just wondering whether we believe we are on target for fall of 2023 making a submission for the Mackenzie -- or the Slave Geologic -- sorry, I have these -- well, I guess I want to know both of these.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway is fall 2023, Slave Geological Province Corridor is 2024. Are we on target for those regulatory applications? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Archie.

HON. DIANE ARCHIE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in regards to the Mackenzie Valley Highway, maybe perhaps I'll start with that project.

So we are still on track for 2022 developer assessment DAR submission. We are looking at -- you know, there's a lot of work that's involved in order to put the -- the regulatory process in place, and so we are still on target with that. Let me just see what we are at for the...

So the department is working to develop some of the work plans to collect some of the environmental work on the engineering baseline data, and it is focused on advancing engagement with Indigenous groups as well. So on target for the SGP, and we hope to undertake some geotech and environmental and also Indigenous knowledge gathering this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on make strategic infrastructure investments that can connect communities, expand economy, or reduce the cost of living?

Seeing none, committee, we will move on to pages 38 to 39, increase economic diversification by supporting growth in non-extractive sectors and setting regional diversification targets. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we'll move to pages 40 to 41, increase resource exploration and development. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we'll move to pages 42 to 43, reduce the cost of power and increase the use of alternate and renewable energy. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we will move to pages 44 to 45, ensure government procurement and contracting maximizes benefits to residents and businesses. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we will move to page 46, adopt a benefit retention approach to economic development. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we will move to pages 47 to 48, improve early childhood indicators for all children. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we'll move to pages 49 to 50, advance universal childcare by increasing availability and affordability. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we will move to page 51, increase student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada. Questions? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is another one where I'm looking at modernizing the Education Act and review the education funding framework, and then I see it's in progress. And will we continue beyond the 19th Legislative Assembly is what it says.

Can I just get a -- you know, I read that and I'm just a little confused as to whether we're going to accomplish this in this Assembly or when we think we'll get the Education Act. Can I get an update of when we expect a new Education Act and a new education funding framework. It seems that it'll clearly be work beyond this life of this Assembly, but do we have any kind of timelines? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Unfortunately, I can't give a solid answer. We -- we would have liked -- I would have liked to get this done this term. I've said that many times. I can't -- I can't lie about that. But the fact is that everyone was preoccupied for a couple years and not just the government but Indigenous governments. And when we out to just discuss this topic, it was clear that everyone wanted to be involved. There had to be a significant level of involvement from -- from teachers, from Indigenous governments, from, you know, different organizations. And so because of that and because of the fact that we were stalled for a couple of years, we've had to concede the fact that this will take longer than this Assembly.

However, the plan right now is to get it done in two phases.

The first phase I would like to see happen this term. I would like this Assembly to pass some amendments to the Education Act. And those would be much more technical in nature. They would fix some of the outstanding issues that we've seen over the past 25 years with the current Education Act. They would help facilitate information sharing, you know, which we discussed earlier today, and clarify the roles of education DECs versus DEAs which, you know, outside of Yellowknife are -- it's a real issue. So there's a number of those more technical amendments that I would like to get done this term.

We are working on developing an MOU with the -- through the Council of Leaders on this. And some Indigenous governments want to participate in that. Others haven't expressed interest. You know, there's still some work to be done. I think some people don't want to do phase 1 and phase 2; they just want to just do it all at once. But I'd like to see some changes because I expect that the full modernization won't happen until the end of the next Assembly. And so for four years, at least if we can have some positive minor changes in place I would like that, so.

And the funding framework is dependant on the legislative framework. So while we have made some minor tweaks so far, and I hope to make some more tweaks to the funding framework by the end of this

Assembly, the real changes will happen next term. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on increase student outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada?

Seeing none, Committee, we'll move to pages 52 to 53. And before we start, we will break for supper.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness to the kitchen.

---Laughter

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): We are on page 52 to 53, enable seniors to age in place with dignity. Questions? Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. I apologize, without having my spot, I'm just going to ask -- one of the complaints that I'm hearing from seniors is around the processes of being reimbursed for issues and having to pay out of pocket first. And I apologize if this is actually not under the mandate but I'm just going to ask because I can't find my page.

Is there work to improve or change that policy towards making it less burdensome on seniors to get the money for their hearing aids or vaccines, etcetera? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Minister of Health and Social Services under the income -- oh no, Minister Simpson will be for income assistance. I don't see a mandate on it.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Extended health increase.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Do you want to take it?

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yeah.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Okay, we're going to try to stick to the mandate, though, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Who is taking -- Minister Green.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you. There isn't anything in this mandate that deals specifically with that issue. But I know from my own use of the extended health benefits that that's how it works - that I pay and then I get reimbursed. It takes about three weeks. I can appreciate that for some people who have a short -- have a limited amount of income that that is -- that that can represent a hardship but at this point, I'm not aware that there are any plans to change that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you. If I had to try to squeeze it in somewhere, I might say that it was in the program to help to tailor it towards their programs but that would be probably a bit of a stretch there.

I guess I'm looking around the mandate item to help protect seniors from abuse or neglect. Having had an aging parent myself, I am aware of that type of scams and things that can happen.

Can the Minister speak to whether or not -- what sort of work is being done in third party entities where we are providing funding to ensure that this type of abuse is not occurring? For example, I think of the long-term care facilities that may be operated by third party entities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Green.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you. So those are two different questions. So the first question is -- the answer is that the Department of Health and Social Services provides \$100,000 a year to the NWT Seniors Society to do the elder abuse awareness and they're -- we're at a point where we're going to review the -- whether there is more that we can do to raise awareness and combat elder abuse. So that's the one thing.

There's one long-term care that is not government operated but it's operated by contract to the government. And so there is a quality assurance complaint process in place so that if family members had any concerns about how elders are being treated in those facilities, they could start with the complaints process to make those concerns known. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for the answer. I guess that sort of brings up the seniors society. One of the -- they would be obviously a large player in this mandate item and I've noted that their executive director position is up for competition at this moment.

Is that -- is the Minister aware of -- perhaps any chance there may be a delay in that role and therefore impacting care for seniors or impacting the ability to carry out some of this -- this work? I would imagine as an NGO, they also are not super well funded and don't have a ton of capacity, and I'm worried about whether or not they would have an issue with continuity of service and care if that position isn't filled once it's needed. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am aware that the NWT Seniors Society is looking for a new executive director. I don't know how soon they plan to do that or whether there is a transitional period with the current executive director. The seniors society is really at arm's length from government so if they ask for our help, we'll help them but they manage their own affairs. And so that would be the case, as I say, unless the board members choose to ask us for help in some way. But they are funded with a number of different pots of money and so they have their own board to make a hiring decision for the new ED. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that the Minister's open to helping them if they do need that.

I guess my next question is around the employee training that's being provided in the last item on page 53.

Having -- just with respect to that third party -- or sorry, contracted long-term care facility, will they be part of that training program as well even though they're -- they're not HSS itself? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Green.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we treat Avens as one of our own, if you will, where we've provided them with additional funding to manage the stresses and strains of COVID. We're assisting them with evergreening their equipment and so on. So it's not a stretch to think that if their staff wanted training that we were providing that we would consider doing that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: No, thank you, I'm good, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to double check that on page 52 it says that the NWT Seniors Strategy is going to be developed by June 2022. That doesn't really leave a lot of time between now and then. I just wanted to check on whether we're still on schedule for that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

And look, my -- I know that the Member -- the Minister was very passionate about this when she was on this side of the House. I just want to make sure that we allow for enough time to do a good job, not a quick job, and I'm sure the Minister will agree

with me on that. So I'd like to hear about that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's my understanding that the consultation on the seniors strategy is going to begin in April, and it will last for a couple of months of having different kinds of consultation online, in person, special meetings, and so on.

It was my understanding that a "what we heard" report would be developed and finished in June, and then the strategy itself wouldn't be ready until the fall. So I think there's -- my understanding and what's written here are not the same. So I am expecting to see it in the fall and so that -- that gives us about four or five months to do the consultation work and develop the strategy.

And as is usual with these cases, we will engage Regular Members in the development of this so that they can provide their input on behalf of constituents. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I feel more comfortable with the schedule outlined by the Minister than what I read here. So, yeah, I think the objective is shared to do a good job, not a quick job.

I guess -- and I don't want to prejudge in any way what might come out of this strategy, but it might seem reasonable to expect that a number of the initiatives identified in this section could be wrapped up and be part of the strategy. Is that kind of a safe assumption? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, thank you. Yes, I believe, Mr. Chair, that that is a safe assumption. One of -- one of the purposes of the senior strategy is to do a gap analysis and to come up with solutions to those gaps. So many of the priorities that are listed in this section of enabling seniors to age in place with dignity do represent gaps. So I would expect to see some version of them in the senior strategy when it's complete. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that response. And maybe the last line I have here is about there's supposed to be some sort of a new program that's outlined on page 52, the second from the bottom row, some new income assistance

program that's tailored to seniors and persons living with disabilities and it's supposed to be launched in 2023.

I've heard about this now several times. So is there any progress that's being made here, and what sort of program are we talking about? Is this going to be through the tax system? Is it going to be a -- some sort of means tested or income tested, you know, payments or direct deposits, or what is this going to be all about? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, and the Member is correct. He has heard about this many times before. This is in our original mandate, and I have been bringing it up time and time again.

This is separating people who are essentially out of the workforce, people who don't expect to go back into the workforce, from people who are, you know, in and out of the workforce. So income assistance has different types of clients. Some of those clients are able-body people who are in between jobs who have fallen on hard times and who just need some assistance, and they will be on income support for a short amount of time and then off income support. And others are people who we don't expect to get back into the workforce. They've aged out of the workforce. They have situations that prevent them from working and there's no need to treat those different groups of people alike. We expect that there would be, you know, less reporting requirements, different reporting requirements, and we would look at different -- different things that perhaps would be funded in different ways. So we really are looking at what are the needs of seniors and how do we better serve them through an income assistance program. You know, we don't expect them to have income from a job that they're going to have to report on a regular basis so why bother making them come in every month to report. So that's one example there.

We also have a number of programs tailored for seniors such as the senior citizens supplementary benefit, seniors home heating subsidy, and so on. And we're looking at ways to tie all of those in together. And what I would really like to do is, you know, create this stream and separate it from income assistance in the sense that, you know, it is there to assist people with their income but it's not what people might consider to be welfare, which is really the negative connotation that the income assistance program has. And we don't want seniors to feel like that. We don't want them to be discouraged from accessing this programming. So those are some of my current thoughts on it and progress is moving along nicely, and we fully expect this to be implemented April 2023. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, thanks. I appreciate the further detail there. Will we get some concrete options or proposals sometime soon to provide some feedback on and, you know, good to talk to the MLAs, but I think probably some sort of a discussion paper or options paper or something needs to be made available to the public. Is there more of a schedule or steps or communications plan or something that's available? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there was a discussion paper. It was sent out. And this was on the income assistance program of which this would be -- you know, we were trying to extract a certain segment of that program and design a different program for them. So that was public. There were online surveys that could be done. There were paper surveys. We've reached out to a number of current and former income assistance clients as well as NGOs, Indigenous governments. So that has happened. There is a summary, "what we heard" report in the works, and I expect that to be coming out in the near future. And I'm happy to keep the Members apprised of progress through briefings and letters. I do my best to communicate when there is something worthy of communication. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Are there any further questions?

Seeing none, Committee, we'll move to pages 54 to 55, increase food security through locally produced, harvested, and affordable food. Questions? Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just looking at the item around the construction of the fish plant in Hay River, and it does say that the timeline originally is fall 2023, and then it says will be completed in November of 2022. I just want to make sure that that is correct and it's not an error. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Chair, to Minister Wawzonek, ITI.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister Wawzonek.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, Mr. Chair, the construction is as -- I believe, Mr. Chair, would all be underway, is underway, and is expected, indeed, to be completed by the fall of this year. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sure that makes the chair of this committee quite happy right now. I think that's excellent.

I note that there are a lot of -- within the progress to date comments around supportive development of the food industry, that recommendations are being reviewed currently by the department for a variety of things like the meat regulatory framework as well as just the developing the food production businesses.

Can the Premier or the Minister speak to when we could start to expect to see some of this work start commencing? For example, the last time there, the review and amend the northern food development program has a date of spring 2021 for the greenhouses and community gardens support. So I'm just wondering if we're going to actually see implementation this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So Mr. Chair, this is -- the area of food -- of the food security does -- is supported by quite a number of different departments. ITI's primary responsibilities certainly are the food -- are the fish plants, sorry, and then some support on some of the other programs.

Now, with respect to I believe it was -- I was just trying to find it. I do have it in my notes, but it's actually not -- I don't think ITI that's the lead on some of this, the Northern Food Development Program. Here -- sorry, Mr. Chair, I just want to make sure I'm getting the right date. I may have to get back to the Member on it in terms of the date as to where that's going to get us to.

Yeah, that might be the best, Mr. Chair, rather than me trying to look for it while everyone's waiting. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, that is totally fine if the Minister wants to come back to me. I guess I'm just wondering when committee will start to see some of the recommendations and where the department is going with them.

My next question is around the working with Canada to increase the flexibility of the Nutrition North Program to better serve NWT residents.

I note that the recommendations were provided to Canada. However, it looks like the result has been more about just adding communities to the program,

not actually looking to evaluate the program and see what changes need to be made. It is my understanding, or there is a perception, that the money that's being spent here is actually just going into the pockets of the sellers versus, you know, actually bringing the cost of food down and the cost of nutritious food down for Northerners.

So could the Premier or the Minister speak about where that's at about the actual changes to the program and not just the addition of new communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do think that -- that having more communities added to it was -- was something that we can't put aside as not important. It was one of the biggest issues. When I went to Tsiigehtchic actually, it was brought up in that community that that was one of the biggest issues. And so I was a strong advocate, and we did get Tsiigehtchic and other communities as well included into it.

It is a federal program. What I can do is I will try, recognizing that I'm only one Member, but I will try to see if I can get it on to the Council of Leaders agenda, and if they don't want to deal with it there, then maybe I'll just send out a questionnaire to the Indigenous governments and ask if there's other parts of the program that they would like changed. That I can do because I work with the Indigenous groups and told them that we're all one when we go to the federal government, and I will carry their needs. So it's not a stretch for me to do that for them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. --

MS. NOKLEBY: I think that I would be surprised if you didn't get support from Indigenous governments to look at this program and do some real evaluation. I do understand that a lot of these programs and such are the feds, and they have their -- their restrictions or their ideas. But yet again, it is our -- our government's responsibility, Cabinet's responsibility to tell the feds why their programs don't work just like, you know, constituents come to us to tell you why your programs don't work. So I think this is one where we really need to take back to the federal government that what they're doing is really just making people in places that are not the North rich. It is my understanding the address for some of the -- the larger grocers is in Winnipeg, or is in Manitoba. So it always struck me as interesting that they've made it on to BIP registries, etcetera, but then that brings up Walmart. That's another whole story.

Anyway, just more of a comment that I really think this is a broken program that needs to be -- we need to push harder than just, you know, waiting for the feds to dictate the conversation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I agree, Minister -- Mr. Chair. Like I said, though, when I did do trips to the northern communities, most of them are northern communities -- communities that are off the grid don't have access or are eligible for it. What I heard was -- was the communities wanting access to it versus complaining about it, so. But I can take it one more step further and ask that question because I've also heard the complaint that you've said as well. I just haven't heard it from the communities themselves. But I'll ask. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Yeah, well, if you're in a community that doesn't have it, of course they're going to want to opt into it. But are you asking the question in the communities that have it about how the satisfaction is. So to me, I wasn't presenting that as an either/or situation. Of course we want to have as many communities getting funding and subsidy from the federal government that we can however that doesn't mean we can't work to improve the program and to really advocate for our communities. Also too, we shouldn't be relying on the communities to tell us necessarily that this isn't working. I think that it's upon us to ensure that our people have affordable fresh food. So more of a comment. Thank you. I'm done.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, that is a federal program. I'm willing to take feedback on it. But, you know, we have problems with our own programs. So a lot of times when we go in, we don't ask them everything. We -- I ask them general, you know, what are your concerns, what do you want me to address, what do you want me to talk about, and then they bring those to me. I could spend the whole four years just asking about our own programs. So this one is about food security. It's something I care in my heart about, and so I will -- I've made a commitment that I'll ask about a federal program to the communities. But like I said, it's not our program, so. I am willing to do it, though. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: With respect, it's a mandate item. So to say that I just find that to be a little bit sort of shunting the responsibility here. Again, if you've put it in the mandate, then you have an obligation to connect with communities and get feedback on that item. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely, like you said, the mandate says that it is about recommendations for improvements in Nutrition North. When we went and we talked, it was communities asking to get on to it. I've already made the commitment that I'll go further with that, Mr. Chair. So I'm not sure what more the Member wants of me. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: Just clarifying, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And I guess just to carry on where my colleague from Great Slave left off there, I am happy that Nutrition North is part of our priorities and made it into a mandate commitment because it is such a key pillar program of food security in the Northwest Territories because food security really, at the end of the day, is about affordability of food. It's a question of income, and it's a question of ensuring that there is affordability in every household for healthy nutritious foods to make it on to the table. And so this conversation about Nutrition North is really a key part of this mandate item of increasing food security.

And while I appreciate, you know, that the whole first page is about developing food industry in the Northwest Territories, and that is certainly very important long-term and about creating, you know, some self-resiliency there, but right now it's about affording food and the way that lot of our communities are trying to do that is relying on that Nutrition North Program through the federal government.

And I have a lot of concerns in regards to how the program was working before a lot of our cost of living increases, and my concern has only heightened with the increase to the cost of fuel, the cost of supply chains, and then also the impacts of climate change on food supplies from the south.

For example, the flooding that happened in BC had a huge impact on where fresh fruits and vegetables, especially vegetables, came from. And then now with the war in the Ukraine, a substantial amount of

the global supply of wheat comes from the Ukraine and Russia. And so all of these, even those these are events that are happening outside of our borders, have an impact on not only of the availability but also the cost of these items to northern communities. And so I think even banding together with Indigenous governments to be able to have these conversations at federal tables is so important right now and probably now more than ever. And so I guess I just want a commitment from Cabinet that these conversations are going to happen because the affordability of food is, even here in Yellowknife, is definitely increasing, not decreasing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, so the food security is a concern for everyone in the North, no matter what your income is. It's one of the highest things that we spend our money on; it's just the reality of being here. And so when you're low income, it's even more dire. So I agree with that. There's different components. The Nutrition North Program is about getting food. It's a federal government program. It's about getting food into the communities that don't have access to highway systems 24/7. And so that is federal government, and that I took on, and I -- when I asked, I mean, we got more communities on. That was a priority. And the first time in years that that's happened. So that's a bonus in itself.

We also have other food security programs that happen. I know Minister Wawzonek with ITI is working on the Northern Food Development Program which is again in priority -- or with the federal government, the Canadian agricultural partnership with ITI and Agriculture and Agri-foods Canada. So they tried to get that to align with legislative priorities and industry needs. Small scale foods programs being rebranded, and it's food security. We have ENR that works with the -- Minister Thompson working with getting traditional harvester support programs, the Harvester Mentorship Program. There's a variety of programs that we're doing to be able to get food into people and -- of all kinds. The Nutrition North is about foods in grocery stores, and maybe it's not the right way I can ask about that. However, we're also looking at different departments and looking at traditional foods as well. So it's as comprehensive as we can get it. And, you know, we're trying our best to be able to meet the needs of people in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate that, you know, variety is the spice

of life and especially when it comes to being able to put together kind of a robust fleet I guess of programs that support food security. And like I said, agriculture programs are important as well long-term, and I fully, fully support those, and I think there's a lot of really, really strong business ideas that have come out of some that funding and that are being developed right now across the North. But when we speak about food security, one -- we're not necessarily looking at all of those agriculture programs. When we talk -- or right away. When we talk about somebody affording to put, you know, milk on the table and somebody purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables, well, the odds of us seeing, you know, a citrus farm in the territory or a fruit farm in the territory are quite low, and I know that we've had a dairy farm before but the idea of a dairy farm is quite low. And so we -- we know that we're reliant on grocery stores and that this is a key part of food security and people being affording -- being able to afford to purchase food from grocery stores is important just as much as being able to also source country foods is also important across the territory. And so given the equal importance between the two, is the Premier willing to have a very specific conversation about the strength of the Nutrition North Program at the federal tables along with Cabinet colleagues? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So to deal with the Nutrition North, I don't believe it has to be at the federal table with the -- with all of Cabinet. I think it's something that ENI can -- EIA can take on. It's something, like I said, I took on when I went to the communities and asked people about it. That's how we got the other communities on. I've already made the commitment I will go further with that work and ask them, you know, that -- of issues that they have with the program and carry that back to the federal government. So I'll follow through with my commitment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, along the same vein as far as affordability of food being a key component of food security across the territory, I'm wondering if the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, specifically income assistance -- like, I've noticed that -- that they are not in this mandate or this list of mandate items under this priority, and really the participation of income security is huge as far as being able to afford to put food on the table. And so given the increase to food costs, is income assistance looking at increasing their own amount that goes towards calculating income assistance to ensure that food

security and inflation is part of that and is inflation automatically calculated year after year as far as income assistance is concerned? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not seeing it on the list of mandates, but I will turn it to the Minister of ECE to see if he has anything he wants to add to that.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I know that ECE, we are not part of this mandate commitment, but humbly, I think that ECE does more for food security than anyone through the income assistance program. We ensure that people can have food on their plates.

To answer the Member's specific questions, inflation, cost of living increases, are not automatically included in income assistance year after year. That is an initiative that the department has to go and seek funding for. It is not something that is done automatically. I don't believe that it's done automatically for most of our programs. But as with most things in the department, it is under review and we are looking at the funding that we provide, and we are looking at the new market basket measure proposed for the North and perhaps tying it to those numbers that are being used by the federal government. So there are options, and we are looking to address the issues raised by the Member, but not today. They're not happening today. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, is the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment willing to share this information with the House or with the Standing Committee on Social Development? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I just shared the information I have to share at this point. But as the income assistance review continues, I will happily keep Members informed and I've committed earlier to this exact same thing, actually. So yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: No more questions, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions on this section?

Seeing none, committee, we will move to pages 56 to 57, increase the number and variety of culturally respectful community-based mental health and addictions programs including aftercare. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we'll move to page 58, increase the number of resident healthcare professionals by at least 20 percent. Questions?

Seeing none, committee, we'll move to page 59, create a polytechnic university. Questions? Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the conversations I had early on about a polytechnic was that in Yellowknife, it doesn't necessarily need to be Aurora College. I think if you took Dechinta, the Mine Training Society, College Nordique, the Centre for Circumpolar Health, and the millions of dollars that Laurier and other universities spend here, and you put them all together, you would have a university without doing anything essentially, just, you know, co-locating groups who are already doing extensive research. So I just wonder if the Minister could update any conversations he's had with those other kind of partners about bringing them into the fold. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: ECE.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And I think the Member is greatly oversimplifying what a university is. It's more than just a collection of different research groups and educational facilities. There are quality standards that need to be met, minimums of research, and all of these different types of things. But I get what the Member is saying. There is a -- you know, we are seeing a robust post-secondary environment develop in the Northwest Territories, and the GNWT is supporting that not only through the transformation of the college but with the Post-secondary Education Act. And there is strong communication, especially between College Nordique, Aurora College, and Dechinta. They have an MOU. They work together. They have good relationships. And it hasn't always been that way. It took some effort. But I can say that there are solid relationships between those organizations. The GNWT also, you know, conducts research. It requires research to be done and not always through the college. So there's discussions about how we can strengthen that relationship as well. So, yes, all of that work is happening. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad to hear that, and I think, you know, perhaps sometimes, you know, some of these southern universities they come up and they do a bunch of work on the tundra or the ice caps, and we never see them. So I think that both through the university and perhaps the oversimplifying of putting them together, we can capture some of the economic benefits.

My other question, though, I wanted to ask about is programming. I know that the department has released essentially these -- the higher level areas of which the polytechnic will focus on. But I'm wondering when we will kind of get some specifics about new programs and what they're going to look like. And I guess I'll note if you ask the lawyers, they want a law school. If you ask the journalists, they want a journalism program. And if you ask the, you know, mining companies, they want a geologist or a geology program. So everyone out there has an opinion on what the university should be. But I think some hard decisions have to be made. And so I'm just wondering on what we expect and decisions on new programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. And that is going to be an ongoing discussion. So the Member's right. People want the college to be everything to everyone. You know, I go around the territory and I talk to people, and they say we need more locally trained teachers. We need more locally trained RCMP officers. We need more locally trained pick your profession. Everything from furniture movers to doctors to anything you can think of people want those people trained in the Northwest Territories. And the fact is that at some point we have to rely on schools outside of the territory to do some of that training because we can't do everything for everyone.

There is of course the review of the social work and education programs that are, you know, essentially pretty close to being something that can be discussed publicly and it can be responded to by the college and the department. And so the work to -- you know, if those come back and in different forums where to implement things like that has to happen, the work to ensure that we have -- we're offering all of the trades that the college has traditionally offered and can continue to offer, the work to ensure that the programming we're offering now is robust. So there's a lot of work to be done with, you know, what we're doing and what has been done in the past. And when we talk about, you know, new innovative programs, we're still looking some years off in the future. We want to start developing our own degree programming. But that is a lot of work. I mean, the amount of work it really is I think a lot more than people anticipate. And so we need to

focus on doing what we can and not stretching ourselves too thin. And that goes for everything in government. And the longer I'm here, the more I realize that. We really need to pare down what we're doing and focus, and the same is true for the college. So I'm sorry, it's a longwinded answer. And I don't know if I answered anything. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see here that we kind of changed the capital plan to be an overall facilities plan which, you know, is going to be very large looking over multiple years, and then I think the goal is to be able to take that and bring it to the federal government and hopefully they are going to give us just a whole lot of infrastructure money and we can build new campuses and new buildings across the territory.

My question is can the Minister speak to the -- in this planning that's being done, whether we are considering the need for more housing, both for student and faculty. I believe, you know, the Fort Smith campus is long overdue for new housing. But, you know, the university of -- Yukon university as an example is about 6,000 students. You know, even if we get half as successful of what they're doing, you know, that would double the population of Fort Smith but we wouldn't be able to house the students. So I was just hoping the Minister could speak to, you know, whether we are prioritizing the need to essentially build more housing if we want to make this successful. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so what the facilities plan is -- you know, it's essentially a capital plan but it's where -- it's long-term. You need to look at all of the campuses as well as the community learning centres, and we want to make sure that we're starting from a place -- we want to make sure we have a plan from the get-go and that ensures -- we want to ensure everything is integrated, everything works together. And I actually just had my first meeting with the contractors who are -- have been going out and speaking with the communities and Indigenous governments and the college to do this work, and it was pretty exciting what they're coming back with. And, you know, much like the comments the Member had, I went -- I spoke at length about the need for housing. I know that we can -- sometimes we can't fill one position in a community because there's nowhere for someone to stay, and we don't want to set ourselves up for failure. We don't want to say in ten years, well we should have, you know, had more room on this campus for housing. So I've been driving that point home to the point where they're probably -- I'm sure

they were tired of hearing it. But I take the Member's point because I've been, you know, in my portfolios, that issue is a live issue and it's holding up the growth of the territory. So yes, I'm well aware of that, and I'm pushing that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I'm very happy to hear that. And, you know what, even at the scale that Aurora College is operating now, I've heard that concern. That people struggle to find housing whether they're at the Inuvik, Yellowknife, or Fort Smith campus.

I guess my last question is, you know, we're doing this facilities plan, which essentially is a capital plan. We will hopefully get some big dollars out of the federal government to build buildings, but, you know, I would welcome the Minister's thoughts on how we are going to find the programming money, because clearly to take the step as, you know the Minister's pointed out, which is very complicated to establish a university and make sure it has academic freedom and lots of exciting research opportunities that will actually attract, you know, faculty from across Canada, you're going to need a lot more programming money and the Aurora College budget line item is going to need to grow. So I'm just hoping the Minister could speak to, you know, the work being done or his vision of how we actually, at the end of the day, get that programming funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. The question of how we're going to afford all this - it's a big one. And right now there -- from what I can tell, many aspects of the college are funded arbitrarily by the GNWT. There hasn't been a -- there's no formula by which we fund the college. And so one of the key steps that we are taking is developing a formula so we actually know how much things cost and we know how much we should be funding for programs, and we know how much we should be charging students for programs.

Another key aspect is increasing the student body, whether that is students from the territories, students from outside of the territory, or international students which are key to successful universities around Canada.

So those are the steps that we're going to have to take. And the government at some point will also have to ask itself how much do we want to spend. Is our labour shortage at the point where it's worth investing in -- in these programs and to what extent? And so that type of work has to be done. But, you

know, if the Member wants to know exactly where I'm going to get this money or, you know, how we're going to pay for this, you know, that's all yet to be determined. But it's -- it is a commitment in the mandate to make sure that we advance this work. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It was quiet for so long, I promised you I wasn't going to say anything. But, you know, it's -- I'm happy that my colleague here thinks that everything is going to be coming to Yellowknife again, but I'm sorry. The headquarters is going to be in Fort Smith. And the president will be located there. And, you know, we've already started the transition -- we have a lot of incredible staff at the college already in all three campuses. And building on all three campuses with the headquarters in Fort Smith is -- the one thing I want to mention is about the college facilities, of course Fort Smith has the old residential school complex that is a major problem, and I think you saw that when you came to Fort Smith, and it's -- you know, the -- there's a lot of people that would like to have that upgraded as one of the first steps in the capitol plan because you got to get rid of that old residential school.

I've been involved with the Aurora College for many years, from 1970 I think it was until -- it was about 40 years. And I remember when the students were -- like, there was lineups for 375 students at -- at all three meals every day, 365 days of the year, at the beginning what happened here is that there was -- you know, for the amount of population we have, we've got to decide where the main courses are going to be and all these things, because if you think you're going -- you have to look at the dollars, and you can't divide three courses into three different campuses because that doesn't work either. And that's what happened with that -- with the way the college went.

But you know, I'm very pleased to say that the people at the college are -- all the staff working there, including the administration -- I just want you to commit, Mr. Chair, for the Minister to commit that he would come to Fort Smith and meet with the mayor and council and meet with the staff at the college with the -- with the preliminary plans so that they all know where everything stands because I think -- I read everything but a lot of stuff I can't share because I'm limited, right. So it will be just nice to reenforce those. And you can do at this college here, and you could do it in Inuvik. But we have to have some discussion also with the communities that the main campuses are in. And with that, that's all I have to say. I'm just very happy that the headquarters is going to be in Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Minister Simpson.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I've said that many times that we're not going to build a new headquarters, we have one, so why bother. However, I will say that we obviously need infrastructure in all the communities. In Yellowknife, you wouldn't know there was a university -- there was a college here. You know, it's -- you kind of have to know where it is to know that it even exists. And we have a real housing -- there's a real housing shortage here as well, and so we need to ensure that there's adequate facilities here. Of course, as the Member points out, Breynat Hall is one of our priorities for replacing and it's one of the -- you know, the big infrastructure projects that we have identified as being at the top of the list.

You know, in terms of the courses for the different campuses, you know, I hear many times that we need every program in every community and to some extent we do need to make education more accessible. We need it at people's doorsteps. But the Member's correct, we can't split every program between every campus and every campus is going to have to have its specialties. And we have to ensure that they are -- they are robust in their own rights.

And yeah, I will also commend the staff of the college. You know, early on, a lot of the planning was done by the GNWT for the transformation but the bulk of the work has now been taken over by the college, and college staff are driving the transformation and they are responsible now for the transformation. And you know, I know there's some really passionate committed people who are doing that work on top of the other work that they would normally be doing at the college. So this is above and beyond what they're doing. So I did make a trip to Fort Smith and unfortunately it was -- no one was working, it was the break. But I will be back at some point to speak to staff there. And I know that the president, even he conveyed that message to them as well, about their importance and the priorities we have. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Martselos. Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My questions in regards to housing and funding were asked and answered by my colleague so I won't ask them again. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Are there any further questions?

Seeing no further questions, Committee, do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Minister's Statement 202-19(2) and Tabled

Document 567-19(2), Annual Status Report - 2019-2023 Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): And thank you, Premier and Ministers and Members. And staff.

What is the wish of the committee, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, I'm sure we could clear some of these other items from the agenda. No, more seriously, Mr. Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour, raise your hand. All those opposed, raise your hands. The motion is carried.

---Carried.

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: May I please have the report of Committee of the Whole. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 23; Bill 29; Minister's Statement 202-19(2); Tabled Document 561-19(2); Tabled Document 567-19(2), and would like to report progress that Minister's Statement 202-19(2) and Tabled Document 567-19(2) are concluded. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Do we have a seconder? Member for Range Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third readings 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 30, 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. Acknowledgements
 7. Oral Questions
 8. Written Questions
 9. Returns to Written Questions
 10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
 11. Petitions
 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 14. Tabling of Documents
 15. Notices of Motions
 16. Motions
 17. Notices of Motions for the First Reading of Bills
 18. First Reading of Bills
 19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 48, Arbitration Act
 20. 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 39, An Act to Amend the Post-secondary Education Act
 - Bill 41, Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act
 - Tabled Document 561-19(2), 2022-2023 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 26-19(2), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act – Lifting NWT Children, Youth and Families: An All of Territory Approach to Keeping Families Together
 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
 22. Third Reading of Bills
 23. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 30th, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.
- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:28 p.m.