

Update on the NWT Arts Strategy

Mr. Speaker, in 2021 the Government of the Northwest Territories released the Northwest Territories Arts Strategy, a 10-year plan to improve NWT's arts programs and services, and strengthen the territory's arts sector. The first key action identified in the strategy was to complete a review of the GNWT's arts programs so that we could have a better understanding of the changes required to help us achieve our goals for the sector.

The results of this review were released in November as part of the Arts Program Review Report, reflecting the thoughts and concerns of NWT artists, craftspeople, and arts and cultural organizations. The report identifies areas of strength and weakness, and provides recommendations on how to improve arts programs and services to better serve NWT residents.

The GNWT will soon release its official response to these recommendations, providing a list of planned actions, their expected outcomes, and anticipated completion dates.

Mr. Speaker, a great deal of work has been taking place behind the scenes to advance the territory's Arts Strategy. We are updating departmental arts mandates, implementing a way to continuously monitor and assess the effectiveness of our programs and funding, improving how artists can find and access funding, and making improvements to arts funding programs, their eligibility requirements, and arts funding distribution.

This government invests approximately \$2.9 million in arts funding programs each year, Mr. Speaker, but we know that changes can still be made to funding structures to better support NWT artists.

In recognition of this, we are restructuring our existing funding programs so they provide support to artists and arts and cultural organizations of all sizes and all stages of their careers. Emerging and mid-career artists, small groups, and artists from small communities will be eligible for grants of up to \$5,000 per year for small-scale arts projects.

Established artists and arts and culture organizations can receive up to \$10,000 per year for medium-sized arts projects.

For large-scale arts projects, events, and festivals that bring vibrancy and economic benefits to our communities, organizations will be able to apply for \$10,000 to \$100,000 per year.

Arts and cultural organizations that operate year-round will be eligible to access operational funding that will provide them with \$20,000 to \$200,000 per year.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment partners with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on implementing the Arts Strategy. I am happy to hear that ITI is currently developing Artist Guidelines for the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development, or SEED, funding as it pertains specifically to arts stakeholders.

To bring it all together, Mr. Speaker, ECE and ITI will develop and release a GNWT Arts Funding Roadmap that explains which departments provide funding for different types of activities, making supports more accessible to artists, group and organizations. The announcement of this roadmap is expected in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, the arts contribute to a strong economy and enhance shared community identity and belonging. The GNWT is committed to making meaningful changes to government arts programs and funding to help establish a strong and valued arts sector that benefits everyone living in the NWT.

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