



October 13, 2020

HONOURABLE JULIE GREEN  
MLA, YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

**Oral Question 259-19(2):**  
**Responsibility and Preservation of Government Art**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on May 29, 2020 regarding responsibilities for tracking and caring for art owned by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

The GNWT's Financial Administration Manual indicates the responsibility for managing, tracking and caring for assets is with the respective Department that acquires them. Currently there is no central tracking policy for GNWT owned artworks, or guidelines to provide special care for artworks not under the direct care of conservation staff at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. I recognize there is a need to consider art purchased and commissioned by the GNWT as a unique category of asset that may require the development of additional policies and processes to manage and protect these assets.

Officials from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) have met with the Departments of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Infrastructure, and Finance (Risk Management) and are developing a proposal to expand current asset tracking tools to incorporate artworks, along with policies and procedures documents. I commit to sharing the results with you when the proposal is completed and approved later in the fall.

The situation regarding the poor treatment of the Walt Humphries mural is unfortunate. ECE staff members with conservation expertise have advised the Department of Infrastructure on how to properly store and re-install Mr. Humphries' artwork. Assets such as these have cultural and social value beyond what can be measured monetarily. I will work to ensure that responsibilities for the care and management of GNWT-owned art are clarified to improve the way GNWT-owned art is treated in the future.

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Thank you for your questions and interest in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson  
Minister, Education, Culture  
and Employment

- c. Minister, Industry, Tourism and Investment
- Minister, Infrastructure
- Minister, Finance
- Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
- Secretary to Cabinet
- Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
- Deputy Minister, Finance
- Deputy Minister, Infrastructure
- Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs