



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee
Report 34-19(2): Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud**

Background

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (the “Committee”) conducted a review of the *2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud*. The report summarizing the Committee’s review was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on October 18, 2022. It included two substantive recommendations.

The following is the Government of the Northwest Territories’ (GNWT) response to the recommendations contained in Committee Report 34-19(2): *Report on the Review of the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Ombud*. The recommendations from the Committee along with the GNWT’s corresponding responses are outlined below.

Recommendation 1

“That the GNWT, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Government Operations and within the first two years of the 20th Assembly, review each of the Ombud’s recommendations in her 2019-20 Annual Report in the context of a holistic review of the *Ombud Act* and amend the Act accordingly.”

GNWT Response:

The GNWT appreciates the Standing Committee’s recommendation to undertake a review of the Ombud’s recommendations in her 2019-20 Annual Report in the context of a holistic review of the *Ombud Act* during the first two years of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

In its previous response to recommendations to amend the Act in the Standing Committee’s *13-19(2): Report on the Review of the 2019-2020 Northwest Territories Ombud Annual Report*, the GNWT had concluded that consideration of amending the Act would be more appropriately undertaken during the 20th Legislative Assembly. The rationale for this was that the Act was still relatively new and sufficient time was required to allow for the development of an amending bill. It was also noted that as the Ombud continued to implement the Act, it was expected that further insights might be gained as to what is working well and where improvements could be made. The GNWT continues to believe this is an accurate assessment of the situation and agrees to a review of the legislation in the first two years of the 20th Legislative Assembly.

The GNWT would also like to note that Bill 61: *An Act to Amend the Ombud Act* was introduced in the Legislative Assembly during the October/November 2022 sitting as a Private Members bill and responds to a number of the recommendations coming out of the Ombud’s 2019-20 Annual Report.

Recommendation 2

“That the Speaker of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures and before the end of the 19th Assembly, review and amend the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly to allow annual reports of statutory officers to be released publicly once they are received, and before they are tabled.

This rule change should, in effect, allow the Speaker to make available to Committee and to the public the Ombud’s annual report upon receipt or shortly thereafter.”

GNWT Response:

The Speaker has referred this matter to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures. The Committee has accepted the recommendation and will be recommending the appropriate amendments to the Rules of the Assembly to allow the Speaker to make the annual reports of statutory officers public once they are received and before they are tabled in the legislature, during the February/March 2023 sitting of the House.