



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

1st Session

Day 47

20th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Pages 1951 - 2010

The Honourable Shane Thompson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker
Hon. Shane Thompson
(Nahendeh)

Hon. Caitlin Cleveland
(Kam Lake)
*Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment*
*Minister of Industry, Tourism and
Investment*

Mr. Richard Edjericon
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Lucy Kuptana
(Nunakput)
*Minister responsible for Housing
Northwest Territories*
*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women*

Hon. Jay Macdonald
(Thebacha)
*Minister of Environment and Climate
Change*

Hon. Vince McKay
(Hay River South)
*Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs*
*Minister responsible for the Workers'
Safety and Compensation
Commission*
*Minister responsible for the Public
Utilities Board*

Mr. Danny McNeely
(Sahtu)

Ms. Shauna Morgan
(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Julian Morse
(Frame Lake)

Mr. George Nerysoo
(Mackenzie Delta)

Ms. Kate Reid
(Great Slave)

Mr. Denny Rodgers
(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Hon. Lesa Semmler
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)
Minister of Health and Social Services

Hon. R.J. Simpson
(Hay River North)
Premier
Government House Leader
*Minister of Executive and Indigenous
Affairs*
Minister of Justice

Mr. Kieron Testart
(Range Lake)

Hon. Caroline Wawzonek
(Yellowknife South)
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Minister of Infrastructure
*Minister responsible for the NWT Power
Corporation*

**Mrs. Jane Weyallon
Armstrong**
(Monfwi)

Mrs. Sheryl Yakeleya
(Dehcho)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Glen Rutland

Deputy Clerks
Mr. Alex Mulooki (Acting)
Mr. Harjot Sidhu

Clerk of Journals
Mr. Michael Ball

Committee Clerks
Mr. Paul Mercredi
Mr. Angus Wilson

Law Clerks
Mr. Toby Kruger
Ms. Sandra Mackenzie

Box 10
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
www.ntassembly.ca

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------|
| PRAYER OR REFLECTION | 1951 |
| POINT OF PRIVILEGE..... | 1951 |
| MINISTERS' STATEMENTS | 1955 |
| MINISTER'S STATEMENT 99-20(1): ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE'S BODY WORN CAMERAS | 1955 |
| MINISTER'S STATEMENT 100-20(1): 2025 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARDS | 1956 |
| MINISTER'S STATEMENT 101-20(1): MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE | 1957 |
| MEMBERS' STATEMENTS | 1957 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 522-20(1): HOMEOWNERSHIP IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES | 1957 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 523-20(1): TRANSITIONAL HOUSING | 1958 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 524-20(1): LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS IN THE BEAUFORT DELTA | 1958 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 525-20(1): GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE | 1959 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 526-20(1): ELDER ABUSE | 1959 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 527-20(1): ILLEGAL DRUGS PRESENCE | 1959 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 528-20(1): K'AMBA CARNIVAL | 1960 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 529-20(1): ROLE OF PHARMACISTS IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES..... | 1960 |
| MEMBER'S STATEMENT 530-20(1): RECOGNITION OF ROGER PILLING, RECIPIENT OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OUTSTANDING ELDER VOLUNTEER AWARD | 1961 |
| MOTIONS | 1962 |
| MOTION 47-20(1): STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS FOR NORMAN WELLS, CARRIED | 1962 |
| RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY | 1968 |
| POINT OF ORDER..... | 1969 |
| ORAL QUESTIONS..... | 1969 |
| QUESTION 548-20(1): ROLE OF PHARMACISTS IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES | 1969 |
| QUESTION 549-20(1): ELDER ABUSE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES | 1970 |
| QUESTION 550-20(1): TRANSITIONAL AND PUBLIC HOUSING | 1971 |
| QUESTION 551-20(1): GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE..... | 1972 |
| QUESTION 552-20(1): GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DRUG CRISIS | 1972 |
| QUESTION 553-20(1): FUNDING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVES AND PROMOTION OF MACKENZIE DELTA LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS PROJECT | 1973 |
| QUESTION 554-20(1): HARM REDUCTION INITIATIVES..... | 1974 |
| QUESTION 555-20(1): LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT IN THE BEAUFORT DELTA | 1975 |
| QUESTION 556-20(1): HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS | 1976 |
| QUESTION 557-20(1): PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES | 1976 |
| QUESTION 558-20(1): SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS LEGISLATION AND FORT RESOLUTION LEADERSHIP REQUEST TO MEET WITH RCMP | 1977 |
| QUESTION 559-20(1): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY WORKPLACE MORALE | 1977 |
| QUESTION 560-20(1): CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN | 1978 |
| QUESTION 561-20(1): MEDICAL TRAVEL ACCOMMODATION | 1979 |
| FIRST READING OF BILLS | 1980 |
| BILL 21: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT | 1980 |
| CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS | 1980 |
| REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE..... | 2008 |
| THIRD READING OF BILLS | 2008 |
| BILL 12: BUSINESS DAY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, CARRIED..... | 2008 |
| RECORDED VOTE | 2008 |
| ORDERS OF THE DAY | 2008 |

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 27, 2025****Members Present**

Mr. Edjericon, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Lucy Kuptana, Hon. Jay Macdonald, Hon. Vince McKay, Mr. McNeely, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Morse, Ms. Reid, Mr. Rodgers, Hon. Lesa Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Mrs. Weyallon Armstrong, Mrs. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:37 p.m.

Prayer or Reflection

---Prayer or reflection

SPEAKER (HON. SHANE THOMPSON):

Please sit. I'd like to thank Ms. Gargan for the reflections today.

Ministers' statements. Member for Yellowknife South.

Point of Privilege

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to lay out why I make this point of privilege this morning -- or this afternoon. There's two parts to meet the initial threshold. Question of privilege, as you know, Mr. Speaker, must be raised at the earliest opportunity. The nature of the matter described must show on its face to be a breach of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, I became aware of some accusations made last night only after the rise of House. This is my first opportunity to bring this matter forward. As to the second part of the test, I'd like to read what was written and then detail for you why it is my view that these statements impede my ability as to act as a Minister generally and the finance Minister specifically being the Minister responsible for negotiations in support of an operating budget that reflects the priorities of this Assembly and on behalf of the people of the territory.

Mr. Speaker, when I arrived home yesterday evening, I read on Facebook a post by another Member of this House the following -- I'll excerpt only one part of the second paragraph, which is this: The 2025 Budget is on rails. As long as Cabinet has their supporters in line, the entire process is little more than accountability theater while backroom deals are being made.

Mr. Speaker, for a matter to be accepted as a breach of privilege, there's two aspects and, in my view, this meets both.

First, is that a Member was impeded in the performance of parliamentary functions in the sense of being prevented from carrying out parliamentary duties; and second, that the matter is directly related to a proceeding of parliament.

I'd like to deal with the second aspect of that rule first, namely, that this point of privilege is directly related to a proceeding in this House.

Yesterday, in Committee of the Whole, Cabinet was taken by surprise with the motion brought to the floor seeking to remove over \$5 million from ECE's operating budget. No Member of Cabinet, including the Minister of ECE, had notice of the motion. And as such, it would be impossible for any Member of Cabinet to have spoken to MLA colleagues about the motion or about the budget as it may be impacted by the motion. And nevertheless, when I arrived home last night and read this statement, it implied that the vote on the motion was the result of backroom deals and/or that the advancement of discussions about the operating budget is merely a theater. The allegation that work of this Assembly is nothing more than theater or that there are backroom deals being made in order to advance this budget is very much directly related to the work we do in this House and my role as the Finance Minister.

As to the first part of the test more specifically, namely the impediment -- the impeding of my ability to carry out my responsibilities as a Minister on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, this post, in my view, puts a chill on all relationships as elected officials and on our ability to communicate one on one. Bluntly, Mr. Speaker, this social media post creates a threat that if MLAs do not vote with certain other MLAs or if they choose to speak directly to Cabinet Members, there may be accusations on some type of social media.

The context of social media is important. We are living in an era where social media is being increasingly used as a weapon. It is an unregulated space. There is no fact checking. The risk of cyberbullying and trolls and the like is well known, and it is often a particularly dangerous space for public figures.

The impediment to my ongoing work personally caused by this situation is this: In consensus government, I must have the support of MLAs to pass the operating budget, to pass the capital budget, and also to pass legislation. There are committee processes that support negotiations but one-on-one conversations are not only appropriate, they are expected by the residents who elected their representatives, and Ministers must be able to check in with MLAs informally to get a frank reaction or to hear in detail when an issue impacts their riding.

Mr. Speaker, this public statement on social media undermines the ability to have those frank conversations between MLA Members and myself and other Ministers. I should not have to worry whether I or the person I may have spoken to will find ourselves vilified in some fashion on social media. I should be able to reach out and discuss any matter one on one with an MLA or within a committee proceeding, and particularly as I continue to use that broader committee process for our overall discussions. None of this, Mr. Speaker, is a theater, and to suggest otherwise undermines my ability to utilize the processes of this House.

It is my responsibility as a Minister, and again particularly as the Minister of Finance, to know what individual Members want to see changed in the budget. It is not my obligation to share every detail of every conversation I've had with every other Member of the Assembly, but it has always been my practice to ultimately conclude negotiations through the chair of AOC, to stand in this House and to publicly detail what changes have been agreed to, not in a backroom fashion.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this false assertion of backroom dealings, or being a budget on rails, threatens my ability to discharge my obligation as a Minister in the function of this House and impedes my ability to engage with MLAs freely so that we have a government with a meaningful legislative agenda and an operating budget that reflects the political priorities we set as an Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife South. To the point of privilege. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker -- Mr. Speaker, the privileges of the House -- or of Members -- sorry, of individual Members to freedom of speech are defined in the House of Commons procedure -- procedural guide as the privilege of freedom of speech in parliamentary proceedings is generally regarded as the most important of the privileges enjoyed by Members of Parliament. This right is protected by the

Constitution Act, the Parliament of Canada Act, and extends to our legislature as well. Freedom of speech from its Members to speak freely in the conduct of proceedings of Parliament, such as the chamber, during a sitting or in committees during meetings while enjoying complete immunity from prosecution or civil liability for any comment they make in order to encourage truthful and complete disclosure without fear of reprisal or other adverse actions as the result of their testimony. This right is also extended to individuals who appear before the House of Commons or the legislature. Legislature could not work effectively unless its Members and witnesses appearing before House committees were able to speak and criticize without being held to account by any outside body.

Mr. Speaker, the work we do -- the underpinning of the work we do by privilege is very important and which allows us to represent our constituents freely and without any intimidation or impingement on our ability to speak freely.

Now, what the Minister is asserting is that she feels unable to do her work because of a message on Facebook that occurred after the -- after the proceedings in question, after votes had been taken, while the budget is still underway. Rhetorical -- rhetorical flourishes, even if they are written, should -- are exactly that. When we negotiate in this House for budgets, it is done in in-camera discussions, in committee tables, within this institution. It is not all done in public. It could be one Member's assertion that that is a backroom space and that is deal is being cut there. It could be another's that that is a transparent, organic, wholistic way to do business. It is the interpretation of Members on how things go underpinned by rhetorical flourish which is important in the business of politics that we are all engaged with.

If we are to extend -- if the Minister feels somehow that a post on social media is -- and she's unable to do her job, I don't think she's met that test, Mr. Speaker. There's been no arresting of her ability to speak in this House, in this chamber. There's been no arresting of her ability to walk through the front doors and do her job here. There's been no direct accusations made in that post certainly about any Member in question, nor an officer of the Assembly -- sorry, nor no one specific.

Mr. Speaker, we should be able to express ourselves as well within our own spaces, within our own platforms, within our own discussions. And if the frustrations -- and that expression can include frustrations as well about process, criticisms of the transparency around process,

and criticisms of the decisions made by Members in the House. That's not intimidation. That's a reflection of the record of decisions that happen here and commentary on that. If it is inflammatory, that is something we can address. I would argue that there are better ways to address it than the privileges of this House. I do not feel the test has been made. I feel it is important that we can -- that we conduct our business respectfully, but also, we need to give way to concerns, and we need to be able to express them freely to our constituents as well. That is our right as Canadian citizens as much as it is our -- as much as it is part of the work we do here in the Assembly as Members as well.

I don't -- again, I do not see any way that the Minister was unable to table her budget, to provide a Budget Address, to negotiate with the Standing Committee of Accountability and Oversight, to speak to individual Members. I don't see how a Facebook post impeded her ability to do any of those things and infringed on her privilege. That's the accusation made here. That is -- that is why the point is being asserted. I see no -- in no way that that has been done, and if I'm missing something -- if I'm missing something, that's fine, but to me, this appears that someone didn't like something that was written on Facebook and is now rising a point of privilege. I think that is not the correct way to use privilege. There are other tools in this House.

And I should add that the conventions and protocols of consensus government, which are written down and form an important place in our handbook on how we do our business procedurally -- or not even procedurally, sorry -- how we do business informally are not subject to parliamentary privilege. A violation of those protocols and guiding conventions is not subject to privilege. So any assertions around the element of surprise being inconsistent with consensus, that may be true, but it is not subject to privilege. Any conventions on how standing committees are supposed to speak to each other is not subject to privilege. I encourage you to take that into account as you deliberate on this point.

Again, I do not feel that the Minister has been impeded in any way in the execution of her duties to bring this budget forward. And, in fact, we are set to continue deliberation later today, which I don't think a Facebook post is impeding, and when there's a resolution on the vote -- of the resolution bill, I don't think there will be -- a Facebook post will impede that either. The procedure is moving well ahead. We do it every day. We have been doing it every day for the past couple weeks. So I do not feel the case has been made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Range Lake. Member from Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to support the Member asserting the point of privilege. I think that when you make your decision, Mr. Speaker, I hope you consider the entire context of politics right now and social media. I was just down in Washington, DC, and I can tell you that, you know, when politicians say something inflammatory through social media, it puts a chill on speech, it puts a chill on people's ability to do their jobs. I spoke with lawmakers. I was there in the environment, and you could really feel that happening. That is the state of politics right now. And in this House, when we say things over and over and over again, that has an impact. And so when statements are made about what Cabinet can do, what Cabinet can't do, how they're operating, how they're not operating, and when those statements aren't accurate, that has an impact on how people perceive things and how willing Members are to have open conversations with Cabinet. And from this side of the floor, this post appears to be a continuation of the spreading of false information and a campaign of intimidation that I witnessed here in this House and in this building. And I think that regardless of the decision, I think this is an important point of privilege to raise to call out this behaviour in this current environment we're in. We have a very familiar example of what happens when we allow this gradual erosion of civility in politics, and at some point, it goes too far to be able to be stopped. And so I think that it's important that early on, we call these actions out and so that every Member of this House does feel free to have conversations with Cabinet and work with Cabinet and that there are not wedges being driven between Cabinet and Regular Members who just want to do what they need to do for their constituents and the work their constituents deserve to be done for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. To the motion of privilege -- or privilege. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First by saying I'll acknowledge the Member for raising a concern, first of all. I mean, I always feels it's important to acknowledge that. And the reason I'm saying I'm acknowledging that is her perspective, I can appreciate, I hear, I feel that perspective. And I think it's -- you know, we're in a forum to welcome that. So -- but we're also in a forum to have difference of opinions, as, Mr. Speaker, you know very well. My colleague for Range Lake, his post spoke with passion and perspective, and that's one thing we

constantly balance here. It was only a few months ago I was challenged by a Member in -- and I brought that up, which we won't be revisiting, but I think the resolution of it is, yes, behaviour better, talk nicer, try to work together, but I don't police outside the House. That's a quick summary of the finding of that situation, which I welcomed and accepted as the final outcome.

Mr. Speaker, if you policed -- or I should say if this House policed every Facebook post, I am being attacked today by someone who wishes to say I don't do my job and they're antagonizing people because I supported a community initiative. I'm not even going to name the person, not that it -- we're supposed to name them, but I'm saying I'm not even giving it any attention whatsoever, that they wish to feed on themselves. But if I chose to take every Facebook post personally, that's exactly what this would be, is we'd be asking the House to police this.

I have another Facebook person who's responding to memes as facts and attacking myself, my colleague, and others. And, again, Mr. Speaker, if we wish to extend your authority to Facebook and Instagram, I think we've got some other perspectives.

Interpretation of perspectives and opinions has long been the hallmark of this chamber and every chamber. In other words, you can have more than one truth lie before the House but in two different directions. So, Mr. Speaker, I think the courage of accepting that sometimes this job is someone's going to say something you don't like is part of the reality of it. The fact is that I don't -- I read the statement. It's unfortunate I only heard part of the Minister's comments today, but I read the statement online. And, I mean, I think it's the raw truth of how people feel about the job as being here.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't support -- I support the acknowledgement of the person may have felt disappointed by it, but I don't feel it rises to the minimum of what should be considered point of personal privilege because it was outside the House, because it wasn't as critical as we're trying to drive. And lastly, Mr. Speaker, your precinct, unfortunately and respectfully, ends at the door. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the privilege. Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm just going through the rules and looking at the privilege here and would respectfully suggest that I am not 100 percent sure whether or not this is a breach of privilege

or not and will leave to your -- humbly leave that to your expertise. I just -- I do want to note, though, that in the rules, the privileges of the House include, and there is in 2(a) there, it speaks to affronts against its dignity and authority and the after admission which impedes or obstructs the House. So the Member from Yellowknife South spoke to that. And I wanted to speak to a bit.

I mean, there are the rules of debate which I don't think apply outside of the House; however, the rules of debate are there to kind of guide Members on how they should conduct themselves, and one of the rules speaks to reflecting on any previous vote of the Assembly. And this remind me of a -- I can't remember if it was an actual rule or if it was just a principle that we tried to maintain, but that was one where when I was on council, where I've had the most political experience, it was considered bad practice simply to reflect negatively upon votes of council once they're done. Once a vote is passed, we move on.

And so I did want to note a few things here. I did want to note specifically to the post itself, it referred specifically to the two Yellowknife MLAs who voted against the motion last night. So I myself being one of those MLAs was very clearly implicated in the post. Now, this is another Member's point of privilege, but I was implicated and so felt I wanted to clear the record a little bit.

Something I do want to be clear about is that I've already spoken face-to-face with the Member about this and raised my concerns about it, and that is how I prefer to address issues. I think it's the respectful way to address issues, and I try to maintain that kind of relationship with everybody that if I have an issue with something you've said or I have an issue with something that we need to work out, I will approach the person and speak about them -- speak about it with them personally.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify a few things, just for the record, because it's out there in public.

Mr. Speaker, at least speaking for myself, I don't have backroom deals with Cabinet. There are no current deals associated with the current budget that I've managed to negotiate, nor have I been doing those negotiations. So the implication --

SOME HON. MEMBERS: -- to the point.

MR. MORSE: Is this not to the point?

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Frame Lake, continue, please.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify what was said and, you know, share my own perspective. And I just want to clarify, you know, I don't see my role in this House as always keeping Ministers happy or that the votes that I do, they may or may not agree with a Minister at any given time, and sometimes they don't. In the recent past, I have voted against the capital budget. I brought forward my own cuts. And I wanted to bring that forward because those cuts did not pass. I would have liked for them to but when they didn't, I let it go and we moved on. I don't make a point of shaming anyone for the votes that they made because that principle that I picked up when I was on council, I felt was a really important one. You're not going to win every single fight in politics. You got to be able to take a loss sometimes. And so with dignity, I move on when I don't get a win.

What I do maintain with Cabinet colleagues is I meet with them frequently. I make a point of maintaining relationships. Because I think that understanding the complexities, identifying ways forward, and liaising with the people who carry out direction is key to my ability to be effective in this role. And that's not backroom dealing. It's simply how one is effective in a role like this, understanding that we are ultimately making decisions that give direction to a large public service and understanding the complexity of how that public service works, and working with the people who directly give it direction is how we are effective in this role. And I told my constituents that that was how I would be effective. That's what I talked to people about at the doors, that I would be maintaining respectful relationships.

And I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that when I went to the doors, a lot of people said to me that they wanted to see this House conducting its business, moving business forward, setting personal differences aside, and working for the betterment of the people of the Northwest Territories. And that is what I am trying to do.

So that's pretty much what I have to say on it, Mr. Speaker, and I'll leave it up to you to determine if the point of privilege does, indeed -- has, indeed, been met, but just wanted to clarify my own perspective on things. And I made it very clear why I voted the way I did last night, and I'll let the record speak for itself on that matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. To the privilege -- the point of privilege.

Okay, colleagues, I will take this under notice, and I will provide recommendations within at least 48 hours. It could be quicker.

Colleagues, yesterday I noticed -- made a correction on we didn't recognize people not being in the House, and we got a little bit joking around, and we need to be respectful. When I make a ruling, it's about the ruling and just be respectful of our colleagues. We're not all professionals here, and as the former Speaker used to say we're not infallible, so we make mistakes ourselves. So please be respectful of that for our colleagues moving forward. So, really, I got to do that? Jeez. Sorry, sorry.

Speaking of other speakers, I would like to recognize Mr. Frederick Blake, Member of the 17th, 18th, and 19th Assembly, and our former Speaker in the 19th, and recently elected as the grand chief for the Gwich'in Tribal Council. Hopefully, I'm trying to catch up to you there, Sonny, so -- or Mr. Blake, sorry. Welcome back to the Assembly.

So let's get back to business. Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 99-20(1): ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE'S BODY WORN CAMERAS

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 20th Legislative Assembly has made the safety of the residents and communities of the Northwest Territories one of its priorities. Many of us have witnessed and been affected by an increase in criminal activities, particularly the drug trade. Successful public safety efforts rely on trusting relationships between the RCMP and our residents.

In November 2024, Northwest Territories RCMP officers began wearing body worn cameras. By the end of March 2025, officers in 17 of 21 detachments will be equipped with this technology. The remaining four detachments in Whati, Lutselk'e, Sachs Harbour, and Ulukhaktok, will be using body worn cameras by summer 2025.

Body worn cameras are now a national standard for frontline officers, with the aim of enhancing transparency, trust and confidence in law enforcement. The Use of body worn cameras is a well-established practice and is widely supported by the public. For RCMP detachments, this tool can improve evidence gathering and build trust in the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, while working to ensure safety in our communities, the preservation of residents' privacy remains an important consideration. As these cameras create footage showing members of the public, access to these videos is strictly controlled. The public can request access to videos of themselves by submitting a request to the RCMP under their privacy legislation.

Each officer will be assigned a camera that is hard coded to their badge number to verify ownership and continuity of evidence. RCMP officers have received training on the rules that determine when body worn cameras should be turned on or off. For example, officers are expected to turn their camera on when exiting their vehicle and responding to a call for service. Cameras can be turned off when there is no expectation of a serious incident and there is a high expectation of privacy, such as inside schools and hospitals, or when conducting intimate searches.

Public education is an important part of this rollout. Posters in all 11 official languages in the NWT have been displayed throughout the communities to raise awareness about this initiative and provide contact information for concerns or feedback. Detachment commanders are contacting local governments, Indigenous organizations, and non-government organizations before body worn cameras are deployed in their community. While on duty, officers will carry and distribute information cards to residents, which will be available in the official languages spoken in their detachment area.

To ensure the proper functioning and reliability of this technology, two positions in G-division are now dedicated to the body worn camera program. These positions will support implementation, monitoring and reporting, and will coordinate requests for access to videos. On a technical level, there are bandwidth upgrades in progress for both fibre and low earth orbit satellite connections to ensure reliability in all 33 communities.

Mr. Speaker, the 20th Legislative Assembly is committed to building safe communities for Northerners and collaborating with the RCMP in its fight against crime. I am confident this tool will be an asset to help RCMP detachments carry out their work and protect our communities, while contributing to strengthening the trust and confidence of our residents in law enforcement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Ministers' statements. Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 100-20(1):
2025 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARDS

HON. VINCE McKAY: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate all nominees for the 2024 NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards and to celebrate this year's award winners. Since the establishment in 1991, the Outstanding Volunteer Awards program has recognized extraordinary volunteers and highlighted the essential role of volunteerism in the Northwest Territories.

Volunteering is a true labour of love, often done without expectation of recognition, but today, we have the privilege of shining a well-deserved spotlight on those who contribute and have an impact on their communities. These individuals exemplify the spirit of service, strengthening the bonds within communities, fostering resilience, and offering support where it is needed most. By giving their time and energy, these volunteers help promote community well-being and create a more vibrant and thriving territory for all.

Mr. Speaker, every year, the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards accept nominations in four categories: Youth, Elder, Individual, and Group.

This year, we received an incredible 53 nominations representing 18 communities, a testament of the generosity and the community spirits of our residents. These included 11 nominations in the elder category, 12 in the group category, 23 in the individual category, and seven in the youth category.

To all the nominated individuals and groups, I extend my heartfelt thanks. Your contributions are invaluable to our communities and the NWT. Without your dedication, countless programs and initiatives would not be possible. Mr. Speaker, this morning I had the opportunity to present the 2024 Outstanding Volunteer Awards at a ceremony held at the Legislative Assembly, and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the award winners:

- The Outstanding Volunteer Award for elders went to Roger Pilling from Fort Simpson for his dedication of leadership to local sports organizations, firefighting, and his community service.
- The Outstanding Youth Award was presented to Tafadzwa Mufandaedza of Yellowknife for her leadership and dedication to coordination at the Folk on the Rocks.
- Melissa Johns of Fort Smith earned the Outstanding Individual Award for

her extensive work supporting sports, cultural events, and community fundraising.

- The Outstanding Group Award was given to the Ulukhaktok Search and Rescue Team for their tireless efforts in responding to emergencies and mentoring future search and rescue volunteers.

Congratulations to all the winners. You are not only making a difference. Your dedication inspires others to step forward, take action, and contribute in their own ways. Your efforts show that even small acts of service can create a lasting impact in our communities.

I would also like to express my appreciation to those who took the time to nominate their fellow residents. Recognizing and celebrating volunteerism is an important part of fostering culture and giving back to our territory. To all the volunteers across the NWT, whether you receive an award or not, know that your work makes a real difference every single day.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to keep the spirit of volunteerism alive as volunteers play a crucial role in building safe communities for Northerners. And nominations for the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards remain open year-round, and I urge residents to recognize those who go above and beyond to serve others. Let us all be inspired by the example set by this year's winners and continue working together to make our communities stronger and more vibrant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 101-20(1):
MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Kam Lake, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, will be absent from the House for the remainder of this week to attend federal/provincial/territorial committee on internal trade meeting in Toronto, Ontario. The Minister will also be away Monday and Tuesday next week to attend the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Conference in Toronto, Ontario.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the honourable Member for Hay River South, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, may be absent for a portion of today's proceedings to deliver welcoming remarks to

the annual general meeting of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 522-20(1):
HOMEOWNERSHIP IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MS. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, lots of people here in Yellowknife dream of being able to afford their own home, but more people in small NWT communities can't even dream about it because the path to homeownership is barely possible. And it wasn't always this way. This is a story that many others in this room know much better than me.

Obviously, people used to build their own homes where they wanted, then the federal government started pushing people into government housing around the late 1950s with the promise of \$2 a month rent. And sometimes the government actively demolished the homes that people had built for themselves to leave them no choice. The government houses were notoriously small, terribly insulated, and quickly started falling apart. The territory took over public housing in 1969. In the 1980s, NWT communities, starting with Fort Good Hope, convinced the government to try a way that would be better for everyone. The government would provide materials, and the people would provide sweat equity to build and own their own homes. This was called the homeownership assistance program, or the HAP, and over the span of ten years, it successfully delivered over 1500 homes across the NWT. It wasn't just a free house, the HAP unit needed to be completed within two years or else the materials could be repossessed. Meanwhile, the government decided in the '80s that social housing was a nuisance to operate and maintain and tried to start pushing people to take ownership over public housing units. The idea was that housing markets would just magically appear in all communities, everyone could just own and then start buying and selling their homes. Well, that was just never realistic.

There were a series of mostly failed programs that never got much uptake from a rent-to-own program, to the HELP, or H-E-L-P program we're currently phasing out. We've had a HAP, a HELP, and now a HIP. Mr. Speaker, we do need better pathways towards homeownership, so we have to learn lessons from why these programs have failed in the past.

First, we've been asking tenants to take on homes that are often in very poor condition and need costly repairs or have high utility costs to maintain. Other barriers include requiring that people take on large mortgages or non-forgivable loans that they can't afford. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. Finally, I just wanted to say that I'm committed to working urgently with all of my colleagues on both sides of the House to find a better path towards homeownership for all NWT communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member from Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 523-20(1):
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in June of 2024, I asked the Minister of Housing NWT about what efforts housing is doing to work with communities to help address homelessness across the territory. Just by happenstance, in the summer of 2024 my riding was home to an encampment, and I became more well versed with how the GNWT is addressing immediate housing and homelessness issues as they arise and what they want to do in the mid to longer term.

Mr. Speaker, after much back and forth with the department on that event, I understand now that EIA is speaking funding to create transitional and supportive housing whereas Housing NWT deals in public housing. Housing NWT as a corporation that builds stock could secure federal dollars and build transitional and supportive housing in Yellowknife and across the territory, but we're all aware that those costs can be prohibitive.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful but not certain if all options are being examined by EIA to increase stock more quickly. In recent weeks, interested folks have reached out to tell me that there has been an offer made to EIA on existing stock by industry at below market cost to the GNWT, but calls were not returned quickly enough and those offers fell off the table. I'm concerned that important opportunities are passing us by. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Members' statements. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 524-20(1):
LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS IN THE
BEAUFORT DELTA

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I began the week with my reply to the Budget Address speaking about energy and economic development, and I'll continue today on energy security, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, non-renewables are still important to the Beaufort Delta, have been for quite some time and will be for quite some time. Given the potential shift in the federal government and their thinking around LNG development and, regardless of who forms the next government, Mr. Speaker, we heard in the Liberal leadership race, again, speaking about the importance of LNG production as we move forward so, again, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier in the week, our energy strategy or action plan has been solely focused on renewable, but the reality is we are still heavily dependent on diesel, and we all know, Mr. Speaker, there are other cleaner renewable options other than diesel.

Given the work that we've seen the Inuvialuit do in the Beaufort Delta around the M18 project which is now fully funded, Mr. Speaker, and certainly well underway, it's time for us as a government to, again, engage with the significant discovery license holders in the Beaufort Delta and make it a priority of this government to have those conversations and to see what we can do as a government to move this industry forward. We have the MDLNG report, Mr. Speaker, that was tabled here, I think, in 2022, and it clearly states that it is feasible to develop natural gas in the Beaufort Delta. But I don't think, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan.

How are we supporting energy, Mr. Speaker; we have to ask ourselves. We are spending millions on renewable energy initiatives. And I understand that that those come with economic benefits as well. They come with jobs, they come with a lot of opportunities. They also come with a lot of money spent on consultants and likely a lot of studies that come with those, Mr. Speaker. But what I haven't seen is how an analysis or what that means for residents who are not able to take advantage of renewable energy, what's it doing to those grids, what's happening in those regions. I haven't seen that analysis, Mr. Speaker, what will that cost be to the people that still rely on non-renewables to heat their homes.

Mr. Speaker, I know we've spoke in this House about working groups for regions. I think this is a prime example of what we can do if we were to put a working group together for the Beaufort Delta, including Indigenous governments of course, community leadership, and find potential solutions to meet with industry, to meet with federal government, to look at what we can do to continue our true energy action

plan that includes all energy in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Members' statements. Member from Range Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 525-20(1):
GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, if you find yourself stranded out on the land beyond network reach and with no alternative method of communication, how would you signal for distress? Do you shout into the air or run around with your arms waving when a plane passes by? The lifesaving facts are without communication or knowledge of your whereabouts, the pilots of that passing plane would be searching for your signal in the form of threes: Three blasts of a whistle, three lit fires, even three piles of rocks, anything in the shortest of patterns with the resources you have available. In a life-threatening situation that requires ground search and rescue, this knowledge can make all the difference.

Promoting that knowledge is why the territorial government must support the role of a highly sophisticated network of ground search and rescue, or GSAR, organizations and volunteers that stretches across Canada. Their partners here in the North provide educational services vital in teaching Northerners and tourism outfitters how to stay safe. But, unfortunately, there's no funding made available to them from ECE or ITI, and now the federal government has clawed back their support as well.

Even MACA, who is responsible for public safety, has cut their fund -- has cut funds to the Yellowknife search and rescue team, an organization of highly trained volunteers who now must dedicate time to fundraising instead of training and saving lives. Beyond YKSAR, the GNWT still relies on smaller communities to organize their own ground and search and rescue operations or get help from the RCMP or the armed forces. But the RCMP has no mandate, and the armed forces take precious hours to mobilize.

Mr. Speaker, despite several year-old reviews, ground search and rescue services which found our territory to be the most unprepared out of any Canadian jurisdiction, there are still no commitments to implementing the recommendations. To make matters worse, budget cuts are taking us backwards. If this government is serious about public safety, the Premier must show leadership and bring volunteers and communities together with the relevant departments and agencies to

finally get a real strategy for ground search and rescue to take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Members' statements. Member from Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 526-20(1):
ELDER ABUSE

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will be speaking in the House regarding the elder abuse.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there's a lot of abuse happening in the Northwest Territories and especially in Tlicho region. So today, Mr. Speaker, we have heard and seen there are many forms of elder abuse here in the North, and not enough is done to prevent it. This abuse can be in the form of financial abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, health care fraud and abuse, elder abandonment. For example, we have young people extorting elders for their pensions or forcibly moving into elders' homes without consent. Seniors are falling victim to cybercrime and scams. Some elders suffer in silence enduring the pain. They don't share about what is happening in their lives. It is difficult for them to take actions to protect themselves because they do not want to feel guilty if anything happens to their abusers who may be their loved ones. Our elders worked hard raising their families. They should be treated with respect and loved for who they are. They do matter, Mr. Speaker, and they should be able to enjoy the remaining years they have on earth with us.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier wrote in his mandate letter to the Ministers, quote, I have not assigned symbolic client-based portfolios for youth, seniors and persons with disabilities. I interpret this to mean that in a way everyone is somewhat responsible to ensure the needs of seniors are met. However, no one is accountable.

Mr. Speaker, what is the government doing to do to intervene, support, and protect our elders? I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Members' statements. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 527-20(1):
ILLEGAL DRUGS PRESENCE

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year we were updated on several new

initiatives that GNWT was spearheading to tackle our out-of-control drug crisis, including drugs strategy, a dedicated RCMP crime reduction unit, and the possibility of SCAN legislation. However, the community of my riding, of the Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding, especially in Fort Resolution, have yet to notice any positive change.

Drugs are still pouring in, stealing away my community's wealth and well-being. There are obviously hot spots in the community of criminal activity that my constituents are constantly complaining about. And worse yet, I am now hearing that some of my constituents are being threatened by these criminals to set up shop in their homes and rope in their vulnerable youth to be their drug runners. I don't want to hear my constituents and community leaders worry every day about when the next assault or overdose will be. The RCMP are doing their best with the resources federal and territorial governments can provide to them, and Ottawa relies on feedback and advocacy from the government here in Yellowknife to make the RCMP more effective.

This is one my constituents' top priorities because they feel the next overdose are just minutes and hours away. Therefore, in order to achieve a more effective RCMP, we need to improve the partnership between the Indigenous governments, federal, and territorial government. I will give the Premier and the Minister of Justice the opportunity to update my constituents on the actions he is taking with the federal government to tackle the drug crisis in my community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Members' statements. Member from the Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 528-20(1):
K'AMBA CARNIVAL

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend is going to be a fun filled weekend in Hay River, Dene, the reserve. K'atlodeeche Reserve is hosting the annual K'amba Carnival this week through to March 2nd. That's this weekend.

Mr. Speaker, carnivals are happening all over the NWT this month and into April. This is a great opportunity to join in community events, take part and show your talent at indoor and outdoor activities.

At this weekend's K'amba Carnival, there will be dog sled races with dog mushers coming from as far as the Yukon and Saskatchewan to compete. It's nice that the community still keeps this tradition as part of their carnival. There will

be talent shows for both youth and adults, and there will be big prizes, Mr. Speaker. A local craft market for handmade goods will also be on site.

Mr. Speaker, everyone is welcome, and I encourage residents to participate, especially to show off their singing, jigging, and fiddling skills. The weather is on our side, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to seeing you all out there. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 529-20(1):
ROLE OF PHARMACISTS IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've spoken and will continue to speak about accessibility of health care in the NWT. This impacts directly my constituents, your constituents, constituents up the Valley, down the Valley, all the way around, Mr. Speaker. Nobody cares more about health care than Northerners I'm sure. But that may not technically be a fact, so I don't look forward to the Premier calling me on my fact checking statement on that. Everyone cares.

Mr. Speaker, not to upset the government but, you know what, I've seen the hallmark of this Assembly so clearly it actually speaks more like the trademark has become we're working on something, we're having discussions, we're -- we don't have enough policy people here, we don't have legislative people here. In other words, I hear a lot of we haven't done a lot.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen so little out of this government as far as policy legislative initiatives, I'm getting worried. Its key policy legislation it's moved forward this Assembly was done 99 percent in the last Assembly. So what has it done other than a few typos and a few corrections here or there? Mr. Speaker, when I hear the government again talk about how they can't do something, I hear delay, deny and, even sadder, do they really care.

Mr. Speaker, there's a phrase used in this type of business that's referred to mirrored legislation. It's actually a keystone to how a lot of Legislative Assembly initiatives get done. So, Mr. Speaker, why is this government not scratching the itch of copying other legislations? Use the incentive. I say don't view it as you've stolen it; use it as you've liberated great ideas from other jurisdictions.

By way of example, as I've already brought up here, Mr. Speaker, we have the Pharmacies Act and the scope of their practice used in so many jurisdictions. As a matter of fact, it's used in almost every jurisdiction where we can have pharmacists issue vaccines, things like for influenza -- I can't say a few of the other words, but I can certainly say HEP A. Well, some of them are pretty tricky. HEP B, you know, measles and mumps. Mr. Speaker, could you imagine if we had our pharmacists, health care warriors, out there helping us with COVID-19? We'd have people cured and maybe protected in different ways, giving vaccines, flu.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we stand now, I had a constituent last night tell me they went to go book a vaccine appointment. They had to wait until April. Well, they'll probably cure themselves at this rate we're moving.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying our health care warriors, known as pharmacists, can do everything, and I'm not suggesting they do everything. But we have willing partners, and we have smart people in the legislative branches, and we have smart people in the policy branches, why can't they go liberate other legislation and mirror it and allow us to have our pharmacists help us? Part of the solution. I mean, it was yesterday, I believe -- if not the day before -- I was asking about changing the Nursing Act so we could allow to find better ways to get nurses here. Mr. Speaker, here is another simple way.

So while the government over there sits on billions of dollars and says -- billions of dollars and says oh, well, the Members should tell us how to do things, well Members with their meager budgets are presenting real solutions. And I'm going to ask, would the Minister be willing to do this and make minor changes to the Pharmacy Act and just get rid of some of the consultation, get the acts in the public, get it out, let's start talking about solutions, Mr. Speaker. Let's show some courage to the public that we care about their health care because I do, and I know everybody on this side cares about northern health care. And as I use the last moments of my very good long statement, Mr. Speaker, which I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough: Pharmacists give a darn and, Mr. Speaker, let's empower them to be the health care providers they so dreamt to be when they joined that industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 530-20(1):
RECOGNITION OF ROGER PILLING,
RECIPIENT OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
OUTSTANDING ELDER VOLUNTEER
AWARD

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Colleagues, today I found out I'm now a senior. Today, I'd like to recognize Mr. Roger Pilling on being selected as the 2024 elder volunteer. He moved to Fort Simpson in February 1988 from Fort Reliance where he was a weather observer for 18 months. Roger quickly became part of the community joining the curling club right away, then the slo-pitch league in the summer, then the Fort Simpson fire department in February 1989.

I had the opportunity to meet Roger in Fort Simpson at a ball tournament in the summer of 1991 and in Hay River in 1992 while my team from Coppermine was participating in the NWT slo-pitch championships. He was playing ball, umpiring, and helping run the tournament wherever he could help. I moved to Fort Simpson in 1992 and saw firsthand his involvement in the community.

Roger was a hydrometric tech with Environment Canada measuring water levels, water flows, and water quality. His job provided support to the community, especially during the spring breakup time when people worried about the flood. This is only a small impact of what he had done for the community.

Roger has volunteered for many things over the years - curling, ball, golf, ski trails, umpiring, archery, and supporting his children's participation in events. One of his biggest contributions has been as a member of the Fort Simpson Volunteer Fire Department where he has been a firefighter, training officer, lieutenant, deputy chief, and chief. He volunteered for over 36 years and still counting. He has thousands of hours training, fighting fires, rescues, and ambulance calls. Roger's always there to answer the call and to help people.

Roger and his wife Val have two children, Tyler and Madison. Volunteering is a family affair. If one of them signs up, the rest of the family is volunteering too. They believe that you need to not just be in a community but part of a community. Your community will only be as strong as your help.

Recognizing the time, I'd like to have the rest of my Member's statement deemed as read and printed in Hansard.

Roger is retired from his job with Environment Canada but is definitely not retired. He can be seen throughout the community doing a variety

of things - cutting grass at the golf course, driving the school bus, making curling ice, towing people out of the ditch, teaching learn to curl, grooming the ski trails, running tournaments, and much more. Roger's hobbies are golf, hunting, curling, and sledding in the mountains. I'm not sure which is his favorite. He is always willing to help anyone who wishes to take up these activities. Roger contributions make him, and outstanding NWT resident and we are lucky to have him in Fort Simpson.

I would like to congratulate Roger on a well-deserved award.

Members' statements. Motions. Member from the Sahtu.

Motions

MOTION 47-20(1):
STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR
HUMANITARIAN REASONS FOR NORMAN
WELLS,
CARRIED

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. State of Emergency for Humanitarian Reasons for Norman Wells.

WHEREAS the Town of Norman Wells has been requesting long-term solutions from the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the Town has offered to work with the Government of the Northwest Territories on proactive community planning because of climate change impacts on resupply to Norman Wells which has resulted in rising food insecurity, rising heating costs, rising and prohibitive costs of living, and rising and prohibitive costs of doing business;

AND WHEREAS Imperial Oil is transitioning out of the community, which will result in a reduced tax base for the community and territory, diminished opportunities for skilled workers in the community and unknown risks and changes to the community's power generation and transmission;

AND WHEREAS the Mayor and Council of Norman Wells is seeking assistance and is requesting that the Government of the Northwest Territories:

1. Recognize the Town's local declaration of a state of emergency and communicate the matter to the Government of Canada, seeking humanitarian aid;
2. Develop a comprehensive policy and procedure to respond to any

humanitarian state of emergency within Northwest Territories communities;

3. Engage in sustainable community planning with stakeholders in Norman Wells; and
4. Facilitate a discussion between Imperial Oil Resources and the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tlegohti Got'ine.

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that this Legislative Assembly resolve that the current situation in the Town of Norman Wells is a state of emergency for humanitarian reasons;

AND FURTHER, that this Legislative Assembly calls upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to communicate this state of emergency with the Government of Canada, seeking humanitarian aid for the community;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Thank you, Member. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to add to the motion I just tabled.

In recent months, I have brought forward many concerns regarding the town of Norman Wells. The situation is dire, climate change impacts are very real, as we see with the rising food and heating costs and the impacts on the overall cost of living and conducting business. I am thankful to the Ministers within this Cabinet that I have met with myself and other leadership to discuss these issues. However, the outlook remains bleak.

Norman Wells, for example, on this winter road resupply, which is an annual one, has received 30 percent -- 34 percent of the total fuel supply for this season. Another 34 percent is expected in the coming months -- month I should say, Mr. Speaker. But it won't be completed, the complete -- the resupply.

Mr. Speaker, people are foreclosing on their homes. It's a reality. I've met people that are doing that. They are leaving the town of Norman Wells for better prospects, opportunities, for themselves and their family, which will help make it more difficult for the

community to succeed at large. It is time that the Government of the Northwest Territories to step in and declare this state of an emergency and seek humanitarian aid for the community.

To add to that written statement, Mr. Speaker -- and I have some time allowed -- I've seen firsthand and discussed with many parents, grandparents, youth, take the youth community, as said by the mayor of Norman Wells the community is in a state of fear. To describe that, take our children going to school. The parents are living in fear. Are the teachers of the school going to leave because they can't afford to stay there? Take the middle-aged population. They're living in a state of fear. Are we going to have another job? Industry's closing. State of fear. Example, take our elderly. The elder pensioners, living on their low income, can they afford to live there under these circumstances? So that's a wholistic approach to the three categories that make up each and every community.

In our community, we've seen the drastic measures, catastrophic impacts of no water. You can't afford to live there on an annual affordable resupply. As we said numerous times, what if you miss the boat? In this case, what if you miss the winter road? Is your project going to go ahead? Yes, we can fly sugar in, but who's going to afford that retail price? So picture that, and that will substantiate the concern of this motion.

Look at the eight grocers. Now they got to finance to make affordable retail prices based on that affordable winter road going into those communities. Then it begs the question, expiry dates of products, heating costs for warehousing this annual stock. It's an incremental example of taking each and every concern seriously. And with the backing of this Assembly, there is no doubt in my mind that we have the capacity to help that community and that region.

More importantly, the task at hand is the motion at hand. Are we going to step up to help our small communities? People are leaving. I've talked to people. A couple of young people recently just moved out. I'm living in fear, I don't want to live underneath that tension. So the overarching concern is the unknown. Are we going to get a barge? Good choice. It may, and it may not be a choice. It's looking like we won't. But I will not guarantee the businessperson to say okay, resupply come July. I would say guarantee your stock now. We got 32 days, and even that 32 days is unknown. Are we getting warmer weather? If we look at the forecast as shown by one of the leaders, yes, we are. And as we know, the distance of Wrigley north to the communities is long in distance. It may seem

short from Red Deer to Edmonton but drive on the conditions of the road or the winter road is the only factor that takes time to go from point A to point B. It may seem 250 kilometers from Wrigley to Tulita, but you can't drive at the speed north or south on those roads like High Level. Warmer weather creates overflow which deteriorates the road. So having the trucks and tire chains go over top of that road is really deteriorating the surface of the road which prolongs the turnaround of the fuel.

As I said in one of my previous statements, the trucks fuel up at Enterprise, all the way to Colville Lake, offload, a six-day turnaround. Based on road conditions, it may increase to seven days, eight days. And people, Mr. Speaker, the drivers are getting burnt out. I know of several people said, no, my back can't take it anymore. That road is rough. So as I mentioned earlier, with the backing of this Assembly we can stand behind and stand proud after the road closes at the end of this coming month, we resupply the challenges in front of us, but we did it. We supplied 17.8 million liters of fuel to five communities. That's just fuel. It's an essential service to our homes and our workers, our institutions. So I share that with you, and there's many others.

I can go on there, Mr. Speaker, but I think I've highlighted the need for this institution to stand behind this motion, and I look very aggressively forward to working with all the Ministers. And I must compliment my feedback by these Ministers and the Premier for the past several months. Thank you, and I look forward to your support. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Members, to the motion. Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could relate to what's been brought forward to this motion to the House here today and thinking back to 2023 -- sorry, 2023 fire season, and we all remember what happened with that fire season here in Yellowknife, my community Dettah, N'dilo, going all the way down to Fort Resolution, and it impacted everybody. Lessons learned. It was a very tough time for everybody. And we thanked the frontline workers, the fire support that we got for our small communities. It hit home because by the time I -- when I was in -- actually, I was in Hay River when that alarm went off on our phone and asking us to evacuate. My wife and I were there and eating in the restaurant and everybody took off, and everybody was heading south, and we turned off to Fort Resolution at that time. And it was a really scary time for everybody. In particular, after my wife went to Fort Resolution I managed to get back

to Yellowknife and to help the elders in Dettah and N'dilo to help evacuate them as well. It was a very scary time for the elders too as well. And being in Fort Resolution too, I remember being there and, you know, I recall that I don't think I changed my clothes for about a good week or ten days because we were so busy dealing with issues. At one hand, it got to the point where, you know, the community was almost ready to be evacuated but we couldn't because we had a fire in Fort Smith, we had a fire in Hay River, and then if we were to get through that to go south, where were we going to go? Everything was -- all the small towns all down to Alberta was taken up. And so the leadership in Fort Resolution decided just to stay there, and we got lake there, we got the airport there if we had to do something.

But anyways, so when this motion came up, I asked my colleague if I could help maybe second the motion, and I relate to what he is talking about. And I have been listening and watching my colleague bring up his issues in the House where they had a fire season in Norman Wells -- sorry, Fort Good Hope last year, and a lot of that fuel that was used on that fire didn't get replaced. Everything was brought in, was flown in, but people had to pay for that and at a premium. And it was a very tough time for my colleague and his constituents in the Sahtu region. And, again, you know, we had issues with the barging season to bring the fuel in. It was just a tough time. So I relate to what he's been through with his constituents because we've been through that as well. But we spent \$175 million that year.

So I stand up here today to give support to this motion and second it, you know, again calling on the state of emergency for humanitarian reasons for Norman Wells and for the fuel supply as well. Again, it's a tough thing. It's an act of God. Nobody knows what's going to happen even this coming summer. All we could do is to prepare as best we can and -- but, again, we need to give support to our colleagues as much as we can and be there for them because as a government, we all have to -- I'm almost like a -- my Speaker talked about, like, being an elder. I am. I feel like an elder. But at the end of the day is that we all got to work together. And I often -- I say that amongst my colleagues as well, that we need to do that. So I just want to give support to my colleague on this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. To the motion. Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion today.

I don't think anybody in this House could say that the Member for the Sahtu is nothing but not determined, is not speaking and advocating for his region extremely well over these last 15 months we've been together. And fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, a part of why I voted on the capital budget was to support the access that he is -- to projects that he's been talking about on the winter road these last few weeks. So all that said, Mr. Speaker, it's fantastic that he's trying to seek every avenue for his people, to make sure that they can find some sort of reliable way to be resupplied knowing that Mother Nature is not in our favour these last few years. And so happy to support this motion and support the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. To the motion. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too will stand in support of this motion. Last year in October, we put aside the business of this House to have an emergency debate, which is not common practice for us, about this very issue, the humanitarian crisis in the Sahtu. It is with some regret that I support this motion because I would hope we wouldn't need to bring forward -- the Member wouldn't need to bring forward yet another call for a state of emergency in his riding and in a regional centre of the Northwest Territories. We have to do a better job of caring for the people of Norman Wells.

I've spoken with mayor -- with the mayor there as well, and his passion is very clear that this is a crisis. And there are practical things that can be done, and we need to ensure that our government is working with the municipality, the federal government, and everyone else who can help bring much needed humanitarian relief to the community.

There's also a need for long-term solutions. We need to continue to invest in the infrastructure, the Mackenzie Valley Highway that's going and other energy solutions as well, local energy solutions, that can help support this region and not set it up for continued climate emergencies and states of emergency.

You know, and I -- I'm just reflecting on some words that we -- that I -- my honourable friend, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, mentioned this morning that some of the dialogue out there in our community of Yellowknife is, you know, we shouldn't be supporting these motions, we shouldn't be supporting motions that don't relate to our ridings, that don't relate to our community, and that Members who do stand and support our community members are in

somehow doing this for political gain, to score points. These are comments I saw this morning, and I want to stand in this House and say that's having compassion for other Northerners is why we're here. We are not here to score cheap political points. And while our styles may differ, where our approach to this job may differ, and where our passions may differ, does not mean that any of us doesn't want to be here for the right reasons. And it's very easy for people's personalities to be a source of criticism, and it's very easy to become a caricature when you're a politician.

So all I'll say, Mr. Speaker -- because I see that you're getting -- you may be getting advice -- is we stand in support of this motion because it matters to all Northerners, not just one community, and that is relevant to this motion. So I'm very proud to support my colleague. I'm proud to support all of our colleagues as we work together for a better future for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. To the motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I never want to miss an occasion for an opportunity to work with my community colleagues. And I won't go in a similar length as my previous speaker had just mentioned about the criticism, but it's a reminder of we're here collectively and we have to find ways to work together.

It's an unusual concept, you know, that some people feel, but I think it's the fundamental concept of working together when it's outside of your community and riding. And, you know, frankly, the town of Norman Wells needs additional hope. It needs the hope from power from Yellowknife MLAs getting behind a community MLA issue. It's to help a regional issue. When Yellowknife MLAs see this matters so much, we need to lend our voice to this. The people in Norman Wells don't want to feel abandoned. Whether you live in Tsiigehtchic or you live in Lutselk'e, you know, they matter to us. And we try to find ways to ensure that we support initiatives just like this particular motion, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when we see the changes of our territory, it's molding every day, you know, new changes. As our -- my good colleague from the Sahtu had mentioned, you know, Imperial Oil is transitioning, not quite effectively a change as other people transition but I'd certainly say, you know, they're transitioning their business. And I'll honestly say is, you know, business is always changing. If that's the one constant, things are always changing. And we look at the

struggles of that town. That struggle should matter to me. Those communities, whether you're in Deline, you're in Tulita, you're in Colville, you're in Fort Good Hope, or you're in Norman Wells, that whole region needs the support. So when the town of Norman Wells does a declaration, I'm sure it wasn't over a coffee or a bagel sitting in the town coffee shop saying hey, let's do something exciting today. That statement, including the emergency debate brought forward by the Member, is really echoing the cries and passions of a region that see it as we have no choice but to raise the red flag. We have no choice but to yell from the tops of our voices as high as we can that we need support.

Now, we've seen challenges, and I suspect there will be new challenges next year and the year after that. You know, there was a time we'd say we have never seen days like this, or this is the 100-year flood or this is the 100-year drought. Boy, it sure feels like it's déjà vu every year. There's something else we're saying haven't seen happen.

So I think his call for a comprehensive policy and a process to help create this, I mean, it's the framework that really asks ourselves what do we do in times when places in crisis. You know, we need, as he points out, good, sustainable community planning and support. And that has to be done with the community on the ground.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to point out that the government isn't the only solution to this problem, you know. We have good partners. Imperial Oil could be, you know, supporters, the town could be supporters, the community governments could be supporters. We've got Indigenous governments that have expertise. We have a lot of people. So even this motion is directed to call upon the Legislative Assembly to say hey, government, do something about this, you're not alone. There are a lot of people that want to do things. I'd say, government, come into this with an open mind and say how can we do this together. And don't be afraid to say we're going to find a way to support this community, this region, and this territory. And I thank my good colleague, the Member of Sahtu. I also acknowledge my good Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh for helping support this motion. And I think there will be some other wonderful things coming from our colleagues in support. And as a Yellowknife Member as well as my previous colleague here who just spoke -- or a couple colleagues that have spoken, it's an honour to be part of a bigger picture solution because I know they're there when we need them too, and they can probably get the same questions from their communities. And this is what it's all about,

working together in a way that makes things clear but supportive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. To the motion. Member from Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will be supporting the motion for Sahtu calling on this government to go to Ottawa and get humanitarian aid for the community.

Mr. Speaker, I lived in Norman Wells for a little over a year a few years ago, and so I know the community and I know that they're -- I know that the state of stuff that -- the situation they must be going through. They have a seniors' home there, Mr. Speaker, that houses seniors from the Sahtu region. If the community were to close down, it would put them -- a lot of things in jeopardy for people in the community. So I am thinking about that, especially those seniors who want to stay home. We keep talking about how we need things to happen at home for our own people. And so a lot of times I am told, even as a Deh Cho Member, that if Sahtu needs support, help them. They're our neighbours. So that's why I'm here to stand to say I am going to support -- I support the Member for the Sahtu and his motion calling for this government to go to Ottawa and get humanitarian aid. And if they want, I can go and help them too. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Deh Cho. To the motion. Member from Hay River South.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to address the current situation in Norman Wells where a humanitarian state of emergency has been declared not once, but twice. This action is a direct response to the rising cost of fuel, groceries, and essential supplies which have surged due to the cancellation of the 2024 barge season.

I have spoken several times to the Norman Wells mayor, including this morning, about the challenges that the area is facing, and we share the concerns about the increase of costs to the residents and are taking concrete actions to address them. The GNWT has taken a government-wide approach to support the safety and security of the residents, businesses, Indigenous governments, and community governments. We are focused on both immediate relief and long-term planning to mitigate future supply chain disruptions and to strengthen regional resiliency.

Some of the actions that have been taken recently by this government, thanks to the hard work of the GNWT departments working

together, the staff, and the hard work by the MLA from the Sahtu, the government has

- Reduced the fuel costs by up to 86 cents per liter, easing financial pressures on the residents and the businesses;
- Enhancing the senior home heating subsidy with support reaching up to 1,455 per liter at its peak;
- Allocating \$1.8 million through the support funding for businesses and communities impacted by the 2024 barge cancellation program to offset increased transportation costs for essential goods. The deadline to apply for this program is still March 7th, 2025;
- Contributing \$150,000 to the Norman Wells.
- Food Bank to support families through the winter months;
- Assessing financial impacts of the community government and assessing long-term costs through financial planning; and
- Continuing advocacy for long-term infrastructure solutions, including the Mackenzie Valley Highway to reduce resiliency on seasonal transportation and improve supply chain sustainability.

The GNWT has also engaged with the federal government to explore additional assistance options. I have spoken directly to the Minister of federal emergency preparedness to discuss potential supports for Norman Wells and the region.

The GNWT respects the town of Norman Wells's decision to declare a local state of emergency; however, under the NWT Emergency Management Act, a state of an emergency applies only to situations where there is immediate threat to life or critical infrastructure. While the challenges are serious, I want to be clear that they do not meet the definition of emergencies under this Act.

Additionally, declaring a local state of emergency does not unlock federal funding or territorial funding. This has been confirmed to me by the Minister of emergency preparedness and at the department level. Instead, the GNWT is focusing on particular solutions to provide real financial relief and long-term sustainability in the region. The GNWT remains committed to supporting Norman Wells and the Sahtu region.

We continue working with the local leadership, businesses, Indigenous governments, and the federal government to address both immediate and long-term challenges. We understand the urgency of the situation, and we will continue to take action to ensure affordable access to gain goods into the region and services for the residents.

Mr. Speaker, as this motion proposes direction to Cabinet, Cabinet will abstain from this vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Hay River South. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Does the Member from the Sahtu wish to conclude, close this debate? Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thanks very much to my colleagues that provided comments. It's very encouraging to sit in this room designed by the sharing of the circle. Look around us. When I got the orientation in 2015, this was pointed out to me, this circle, the healing circle.

We have issues. We have problems at the community level, many, many. I heard disturbing news from my home community just the other day, Mr. Speaker, as a result of what could be the drug issues and the addictions created by the product. It's very disturbing, Mr. Speaker. And this is about the current problems we have. No water.

Sustainability and planning are essential to management delivery and success of a going concern. Take the private enterprise. The ambitious entrepreneur is committed to producing results. The same concept, approach, is shown here today. There's a need. We'll put our heads together, develop a sustainable plan of recovery, and we will be resilient. I guarantee that there, Mr. Speaker.

Now, if we constant behind this, the GNWT accepts this, let's just predict and assume, we accept this state of emergency. It's a designation; a designation that allows the ability to move ahead utilizing that designation for access. Without that, the federal government's going to say you don't have that door open to you. So there is really many options available once you accept that designation.

I made a trip with my colleagues and leaders of the Sahtu back in October. We had success, fruitful and productive conversations. On the same conceptual approach of determination, Mr. Speaker, that was seen in 2017 when I was

sitting in this very same assigned seat. I took no for an answer. This government produced a business plan; we're going to build a highway from point A to point B, it's going to cost us this much. I was denied by the Minister at the time not to go there. There's no reason. I see no reason, I was determined, got the approval, made two trips that year. In the fiscal year of 2018 this government, in the Great Hall, made a joint announcement by both governments, you have \$140 million for that project. I'm proud to say with determination, you can move mountains, Mr. Speaker. And I think in this case, our mountain's very small. It's not a huge problem. Planning is going to eliminate part of that. And we only have 32 days, as I mentioned earlier, to get our resupply done.

But still that shouldn't stop there. Planning is essential. We've got the fear of our residents looking for leadership. Is this government going to be behind that? We are requesting that. And I smile with dignity and determination; I think we're going to get there. I'm glad to see you're in agreement with your smile, Mr. Speaker. It gives me inspiration. I got 15 minutes. I got 15 minutes to that motion.

In short, to move on, let's move on, let's stand behind this motion and let's move on and show the residents of the Sahtu, not specifically Norman Wells, how it brings in the communities is that resupply our airplane stock with fuel, and it goes to the communities and provide transportation. If that supply is not there like we experience, how can our scheduled service sustain our communities? That's the lifeline after that road's closed. So that's how it impacts surrounding communities of Norman Wells. Thank you.

In closing, I say mahsi cho, and I look forward to working with everybody. And as I said, back in our first state of an emergency, what if it happens to your riding? I will be there. We will be there. As my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh said, the fires. Huge impact. The floods. I will be there to support you. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Member for the Sahtu has asked for a recorded vote. Those all supporting the motion, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Monfwi. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The Member for Deh Cho.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South. The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, to the motion, ten in favour, zero opposed, six abstaining. The motion has been carried.

---Carried

Motions. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize three residents from the town of Inuvik here to attend the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, Mr. Speaker. We have Mayor Peter Clarkson, mayor for the town of Inuvik. We have Cynthia Pihlaja, the SAO for the town of Inuvik, and Melinda Gillis, town councillor, town of Inuvik, chair of the Inuvik Community Corporation, and member of the board of directors for the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Mr. Speaker, all three of these members are a part of the amazing leadership team in the town of Inuvik, and I'm so happy they're here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to repeat all of their titles again but His Worship Peter Clarkson, the SAO Cynthia Pihlaja, and my cousin Melinda Gillis. That's one title that she didn't get. So I'd like to welcome them here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Okay, Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Peter Clarkson. Peter and I have known each other in his role, capacity, as a regional director. So it goes quite back -- way back, so. And also, I'd like to recognize our staff and Mayor Frank Pope from Norman Wells and Cathy Clarke, the SAO for the town of Norman Wells. Mahsi, and welcome to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from the Sahtu. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Hay River North.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, our Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs had to step out so on his behalf, I would like to -- I announced that earlier for those Members who were in the House, that they probably remember that.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Their Worships, Frank Pope and Peter Clarkson, and welcome them to the capital for the NWTAC AGM as well as to this House. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Hay River North. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Kate Cannell. Kate is one of the leading lights of Yellowknife Search and Rescue Team here in Yellowknife, does a lot of very good work and has been really instrumental in bringing this important area of public safety to my attention, and I thank her for that support and thank her for being here today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize the Worship Frank Pope and Mr. Clarkson, and also your staff, the SAO and Ms. Gillis. Also, I just want to say that welcome to the House and nice to see you guys. Mahsi.

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

I am going to jump the band wagon here and welcome Mayor Pope for being here. I appreciate all the work you're doing for members -- or residents of Norman Wells. And Mayor Peter Clarkson who I met in 1988 -- that way I'm an elder now -- on the ice rink. So welcome here. He's still skating, and I'm not, so I appreciate you being here.

If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to your chambers. You put us here. We thank you very much for this honour, and I hope you are enjoying the proceedings. It is always nice to see people in the gallery.

Acknowledgements. Colleagues, we're going to take a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

Point of Order

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I am alleging that the Honourable Premier broke Rule 3.2(3)(i) and Rule 3.2(3)(j); the first being imputing false or hidden motives to another Member and the latter being charges another Member with uttering a deliberate falsehood.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the chance to review the live feed of our proceedings earlier today, and to quote from the Premier's speaking to the point of privilege raised earlier this morning, and I quote: And from this side of the floor, this post appears to be a continuation of the spreading of false information and a campaign of intimidation that I witnessed here in this House and in this building.

Mr. Speaker, it is against the rules of this House to make allegations; but further, specifically, to impute false or hidden motives to another Member and to charge another Member with uttering a deliberate falsehood, which the Premier has done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. To the point of order.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I never like to speak ill of my colleagues or the work that they do, and I know that when we speak in those types of terms in this House, it can cause disorder and it can cause the public to lose faith in our institutions, and so I want to apologize to this House, to all of my colleagues in this House, and I withdraw my remarks. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River North. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 548-20(1):
ROLE OF PHARMACISTS IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today talked about the Pharmacy Act challenges and the scopes thereof, and I also talked about the opportunity this government could have if it would only seize the day of capturing some excellent work done by other jurisdictions. I don't have to name them all because it's all provinces have updated their scope of work for pharmacists.

Mr. Speaker, what can the Minister of Health and Social Services do to either capture,

emulate, create, or borrow the work that's already done to ensure our pharmacists can be a health care partner in our needs here in the NWT? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as of right now, the work that's happening with the regulations under the Health and Social Services Admin Act which oversees the professional specific regulations, the regulations that's been working on right now are the midwives, the pharmacists, the dental hygienists, and the social workers. And all that work is in conjunction with the updating, and the LP will be coming forward in the winter of 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what is specifically holding them back? As I mentioned, the example I gave, a constituent went and was told they would wait two months to get a flu shot, which they could have gone to their local pharmacy and got. So that said, what is holding up this work? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Mr. Speaker, the public engagement proposed key elements took place between July 29th and August 30th of 2024, and a What We Heard report was done December 3rd, 2024. Drafting instructions are currently being developed right now, and it's anticipated that the regulations will be ready to come into force with the coming into the force of the Health and Social Services Professionals Health Act.

The one thing that I would like to add is is that we are not the same as -- like we always say, we're not the same as in the south, so we have to ensure we've been working with our pharmacists in the Northwest Territories to ensure that the things that we are going to put forward in the legislation as part of that working group is that they're going to be able to do those things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I talked about delays; I talked about opportunities; I'm going to ask the Minister what opportunities can we do to accelerate appointments that people need simple, straightforward care. As I said, someone needed a flu shot, they got to wait two months. There must be a better way. What can the Minister propose as a solution?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we're speaking about flu shots, flu shot clinics were openly open to the public when flu shots are available, usually in October/November. There are ongoing clinics. They have space occupied. It's a walk-in. And so now after that time is over, they have to book the appointments through public health. And I'm -- and, you know, even when we have pharmacists, you know, they're not going to have on ready, on hand, you know, there will be times when -- you know, I'm sure that they're going to have to book appointments there. What's happening now is there is a shortage in public health. There was some recruitment challenges going on. They are recruiting. They have recruited public health nurses in Yellowknife to be able to administer vaccinations so I'm hoping that there will be more appointments coming in the near future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Monfwi.

QUESTION 549-20(1):
ELDER ABUSE IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one day all of us in here will become an elder or senior. And even you said it today that you are senior today so, you know, like, congratulations, and a lot of us will be following between 5 to 25 years, we will be there. But, yeah, so with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I just -- I want to ask the GNWT if they are tracking -- if there is a tracking rates of elder abuse in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Monfwi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2020, Statistics Canada reported that the NWT had the highest rate of police reported family and nonfamily violence against seniors in Canada. Unfortunately, Stats Canada stopped breaking out statistics of family violence against seniors and so we're unable to provide more up-to-date statistics. The GNWT is currently not able to track rates of elder abuse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. That's good to know, Mr. Speaker. So what programming is available for seniors that are being abused? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, older adults facing abuse can access the same support services

that other adult victims of crime use. This includes victim services, court orders, emergency shelters, counselling, help lines, legal support. Older adults may not recognize these services are available to them which is why the 2024 Seniors' Society Handbook includes information about elder abuse, warning signs, where to seek help. This handbook was distributed in the summer of 2024 and is also available online. Additional work undertaken by the department includes a territorial-wide elder abuse awareness campaign that was launched in June 2024, resources with information on elder abuse available supports. The department is also in the process of drafting materials to support the development of training for service providers and the public about recognizing and responding to elder abuse.

In addition to this, the department provides funding to the NWT Senior's Society for a variety of initiatives and workshops that empower seniors and community members to identify and address elder abuse.

Also, the GNWT's Office of Public Guardian and Public Trustee under the Guardianship and Trustee Act can support older adults who do not have the capacity to make decisions for themselves if they are experiencing or are at risk of psychological or financial abuse or neglect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Without a Minister or ministry responsible for seniors -- I know she answered some of these questions but I would like to still ask -- responsible for seniors, where is the best source of information for people who want to help seniors bwho are being exploited or abused? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT maintains a dedicated elder abuse web page on getting help for elders' abuse. I would be happy to send these links and pages to the Member or all MLAs. People can also phone the NWT Senior's Society information line for relevant information. People can also call 811. And if it's an emergency, 911. And, you know, I -- Mr. Speaker, I think it takes all of us to, you know, to be keeping aware of our elders in our community, you know, educating, you know, youth, advising our seniors in our community when we witness the abuse. We know that we find sometimes that our elders do not want to push, press charges, and things like that. But there are ways, you know, and I think

reaching -- having them reach out to the seniors' society, the help line, to be able to find ways to support their individual needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake. Great Slave, that's it. Try one of those lakes. Great Slave.

QUESTION 550-20(1):
TRANSITIONAL AND PUBLIC HOUSING

MS. REID: So many lakes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier please explain if our main focus and strategy moving forward with transitional and supportive housing is only with building new stock with federal dollars, or will other opportunities being considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Great Slave. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All opportunities to expand our transitional housing stock will be explored, whether that is renovation of existing units that we come into possession of or whether it is the development of new units, we're open to doing whatever we need to do to make things happen. We're not going to limit ourselves to one, you know -- to one way of procuring these units. And so in -- recently, we've done some more temporary measures. So the on-the-land camp, we are looking to set up a temporary transitional housing unit until we can get something more permanent in place as well. And so I hope to be able to, you know, have something on the ground built here in Yellowknife and in the coming years, and it's -- you know, this is a territorial-wide issue. We've been working with NGOs, and Yellowknife has been identified as a location where we can do this work now and make some serious impacts, and so that's why the efforts have been focused in that region. And we're also exploring opportunities to partner with NGOs and Indigenous governments as well. There's no reason the GNWT has to be doing this work alone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm the daughter of a journeyman electrician, so I know that existing multi-dwelling housing stock in the territory is not always up to snuff or code and can require major upgrades or overhauls. So can the Premier tell me whether in conversations with -- led by EIA with those partners that he just spoke of around existing housing stock, are renovations proving to be cost prohibitive to proceed with more renovation-based housing

projects like Aspen Apartment or Nordic Arms? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so it sounds like the Member's aware that once you start renovating something, once you open those walls, you never know what you're going to find, and there could be extraordinary costs that you don't expect. That being said, if there are units that lend themselves to potential renovations, we can have a look at those and do our best to figure out whether or not we might run into some of those issues, and then they go from there. So we don't want to write anything off without even looking into it.

When it comes to the transitional housing piece -- I don't want to speak to social housing, but when it comes to transitional housing, there could be some more requirements for the builds if there needs to be wraparound spaces, if there are supports, or other types of supports that could lead to some increased costs as well. So that's all very specific about what units we might be looking at if it's something we're looking to renovate and what is the -- how do we want to use those units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Premier's staff have let me know in writing that the regional partnership will be the means used to implement the NWT homelessness strategy here in Yellowknife. So many former members of that -- of an ad hoc working group on the encampment last summer are part of that table. So, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell me if the options that are identified by these partners are also being considered in the near to mid term for transitional and supportive stock? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, and it's actually the regional partnership that really put the focus on Yellowknife. And so, you know, we're already working with them, taking their advice and insight. Of course, when you work at an NGO and you are doing this work on a daily basis day in and day out you have a lot of expertise and insight and, of course, we want to leverage that and work with these organizations. So not every organization's priorities will align with each other's, and so going forward there will be some -- you know, partners who are probably happier with what we are doing and some partners who might not be as happy with what we're doing, but regardless we'll continue to do that work. There will be a meeting in early March of the regional partnership and again in early April, and that will include NGOs, the city of Yellowknife, and we'll be using those

opportunities to build on the work that's already started and discuss the studies that have been undertaken and any plans that might be underway to see how we can better work together and improve any projects that any of us collectively are working on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Range Lake. Got the lake right this time.

QUESTION 551-20(1):
GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE

MR. TESTART: It's the best one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I talked about ground search and rescue in the Northwest Territories. Can the Department of Justice indicate when they're going to provide an action plan to start implementing the recommendations provided in the review of ground search and rescue services that they commissioned themselves? Can we get a timeline and a costing -- a cost of plan so we could get these recommendations in place and improve ground search and rescue in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Range Lake. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple years ago, a few years ago, the federal government offered us some money to undertake a review of search and rescue in the Northwest Territories, and so we did that, and the report came back with a number of recommendations. The responses -- the government's responses to those recommendations have been tabled in this House as part of a response to a written question that the Member made. And so what that written response says is that the government is not adopting those recommendations, so there will be no action plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, that's concerning, and it's concerning to volunteers who are working in ground search and rescue, and it's more concerning to people who might get lost and need ground search and rescue.

Mr. Speaker, at the very least, can we improve -- can we ensure there's consistent recording of data? Because there's not. This data's lost year on year. We don't have a central repository. Can we at least start to implement some of these things that are low cost options like a central repository for search and rescue data. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I believe that would be sort of a difficult task. The RCMP records some statistics about search and rescue. They provide incident command services during search and rescues, but there is no central body beyond that that records this data. So the cost that a community or individuals might spend on a search and rescue, that's not covered. You know, there might be individuals out there supporting efforts that don't let anyone know that they're supporting efforts, and so we can't necessarily record that information either. So because this involves so many different groups and we don't have a coordinated system, I can't make that commitment, but I'm happy to look further into it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Final supplementary. Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope the Premier does because this is life and death stuff, Mr. Speaker. Can we -- can the Minister -- the Premier establish regions at least to organize ground search and rescue efforts with part-time staff responsible for their administration? These meetings could be done via Zoom. They don't have to be expensive things where we fly everyone in, but can we start to see some of those changes where we could get administrative regions in place so we can ensure there's more than just one team in Yellowknife doing work and we have teams in every region of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there is more than just one team doing work in the Northwest Territories. Throughout the Northwest Territories, there's dedicated groups of volunteer who might not be part of a structured incorporated group that go out and do this work on a quite regular basis, depending on the circumstances. But that group is -- you know, we don't have a coordinating body, as I said and right now the report itself suggested that the EMO, the emergency management organization, take over these functions. The EMO does not have that capacity at this time. And we'll be responding to recommendations from the afteraction review when it comes to how to organize themselves and what they need to focus on. And so at this time, I can't commit to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 552-20(1):
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DRUG
CRISIS

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in my Member's statement, I talked about the issues in my community of the drug issues. I just wanted to ask the Premier, or the Minister of Justice, during my Member's statement I talked about a new drug strategy, a dedicated RCMP crime reduction unit, and SCAN legislation. Mr. Speaker, when can we expect that SCAN legislation to be brought before the Legislative Assembly to give the RCMP more tools needed to keep our community safe? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the Member's comments. I speak about this topic quite often, but it's good to get the information out there. Because there is a lot going on. I want residents to be aware that we are doing what we can to deal with these issues.

So the SCAN legislation, which is a legislation that would make it easier to close or shut down buildings that are causing public harm, like a drug house, is going to go out for public consultation this spring. We hope to have a legislative proposal drafted by the summer. That would then go through the normal process where it is sent to Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for their comments. It would then go to Cabinet, and then a bill would be drafted. So hopefully at the February sitting next year we'll be able to introduce legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how is the territorial government working closely with the Indigenous governments, the federal government, to provide feedback on the RCMP new drug crime strategy and the crime reduction unit given these initiatives are just beginning to roll out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, as a Cabinet, as Ministers, we engage with Indigenous governments quite often, whether it's a one-on-one discussion, whether I just get a text or an email or a phone call from an Indigenous leader, or it's through a more formal process like the Council of Leaders or the bilateral meetings that we as Cabinet have with Indigenous governments, and this is often a topic of discussion in those different forums. And so that's how, you know, we get a lot of our feedback.

I'll let the Member know that just the other day I was on a call with the federal Minister of Public Safety, so the Minister who oversees the RCMP, and I talked about Fort Resolution. I

talked about the Member's community and the impact that drug and crime are having in that particular community because it is -- I recognize the severity of it.

The staff from the Department of Justice and Public Safety Canada met with representatives from Fort Resolution in December, with the community justice committee, and we've also offered to go into the community to provide presentations on drugs and the impact of drugs and share information on a workshop that is currently under development that speaks to these issues and brings lived experiences of Northerners, you know, to the communities so people can actually see what the impacts are and hopefully prevent some of the folks from getting into that lifestyle. So I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My third question would be how is the GNWT working to bring the input of Indigenous governments to the table when discussing public safety and crime reduction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So one of the things that I do as Minister of Justice is I set policing priorities for the RCMP G-division, and one of those four priorities is to build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities to understand and establish community-driven policing priorities and services. So the RCMP themselves in the communities are, on at least a month basis, supposed to be meeting with leadership, is my understanding, and they share information, they hear back from leadership, and they develop their own community policing plans using that information. So there's opportunities at that level. And as well, I mentioned a number of other forums where we work with Indigenous governments, and drugs and crime are quite often topics of those discussions, and I always take that into consideration as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 553-20(1):
FUNDING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
INITIATIVES AND PROMOTION OF
MACKENZIE DELTA LIQUIFIED NATURAL
GAS PROJECT

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my Member's statement and my comments around the

energy strategy, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. Can the Minister give me an -- and I understand this will be more than one initiative and there's a lot of -- probably likely a lot of categories, but a ballpark kind of what our spending is on renewable energy -- our renewable energy initiatives, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is quite a variety of items that we do undertake within the GNWT towards improving renewable energies. For example, there are about \$12.3 million put towards greenhouse gas emission reduction projects. This consists of money that goes to Arctic Energy Alliance, for instance, where they do, obviously, have renewable energy systems that they provide supports for. There's another \$2 million that goes to an energy action plan which includes some programming and some supports to residents and communities around energy planning. The retrofit program in GNWT -- or in the Department of Infrastructure. Then there's, of course, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of other initiatives - electrical vehicle stations, low program access for energy property to provide some subsidies to low income residents. And, of course, then there's some of the big-ticket items, Mr. Speaker. There's the Inuvik wind project that was provided a subsidy to the tune of \$38 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my quick math on those is about 49, \$50 million on what was spent on those. Mr. Speaker, does those budget items also include the climate action strategy and the energy action plan included in those numbers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, firstly, the rough math of about \$50 million is correct insofar as what I've listed here. There's additional money that we get from the federal government, so this is not the sum total of all that we spend. And, indeed, there is some further and additional funds that do go towards the climate change framework that is out of my colleague's department in ECC. The energy action plan or the energy strategy that is being renewed right now, some of that I can list out as being at around \$2.1 million, but that does not necessarily include staffing costs that we have associated with that plan or similarly that we would have with the climate change action strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that, for that information.

Just kind of flipping gears for a second, Mr. Speaker, I also spoke about the Mackenzie Delta LNG report that was tabled in this House. I believe it was 2022 but I could be incorrect; it could have been 2021. I guess, Mr. Speaker, my question is have we taken this report off the shelf and given it some dust off, and how are we continuing to promote this amazing opportunity in the Beaufort Delta? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly is related to all of these other initiatives to try to remove our reliance on fossil fuels, and I am happy to say, and really it's -- I passed this torch to my colleague from ITI, Minister Cleveland, with respect to the efforts that she is now taking to indeed dust this off. She's been out all year speaking to the Japanese consulate, to PNWER, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, speaking -- going to be coming up at the Arctic Energy and Resource Symposium in Calgary in March. I believe she's spoken to the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to flag the good work that's happening there. This is an important report that has not perhaps seen as much light as it could have but, as I say, in the last year does seem to be getting some traction. So happy to add that here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Finance. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 554-20(1):
HARM REDUCTION INITIATIVES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, in Behchoko, the MP, Michael McLeod, made an announcement of funding from the federal Government of Canada to announce counselling and coaching and harm reduction strategies for the Tlicho government, and that's really welcomed news, and the money that was announced is \$1.9 million. The theme was no one is left behind. I just wanted to ask the Premier if we could work together with my four communities in Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh riding as to how we could give support to find similar monies to help curb the issues and drugs in my community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Justice, the Premier. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question took a bit of a left turn there. It started talking about wellness. I thought it was going to go a different direction, so I probably need a bit of clarity on what was asked. I think it was about how the territorial government can work with the community to access some of these funds; is that correct?

The community can reach out, and we can have those conversations. That's not a problem. You know, we have a number of departments with relationships with the federal government that have awareness of different potential pots of money, and so either through the MLA or by direct reach out from the community, we can do what we can to work with them and provide that information. Thank you.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, and thank you very much for that. The -- one more, I guess the question I have now is that I know that we have tools in the toolbox in regards to trying to help the RCMP to do their jobs and the service they provide in our communities are very important; however, Mr. Speaker --

MR. SPEAKER: -- We will put you back on the list. Okay, thank you. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 555-20(1):
LIQUIFIED NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT
IN THE BEAUFORT DELTA

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, continuing on my thread of energy and, particularly, the LNG in the Beaufort Delta, I have questions for the Premier. Can the Premier kind of tell me how the Government of the Northwest Territories has engaged or has continued to engage with the significant discovery license holders in the Beaufort Delta. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Mr. Premier.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And there has been engagement between the GNWT and the significant discovery license holders, or the SDL holders, in the Beaufort Delta and specifically to discuss LNG related opportunities and considerations. These discussions included perspectives on next steps and the importance of broader collaboration. ITI has met with the main SDL holders in the Beaufort Delta on numerous occasions over the last few years. They are -- have been made aware of the Mackenzie Delta LNG project concept. They've all expressed interest in learning more about what we know from the pre-feasibility phase. Any interest expressed in advancing the concept

would obviously require collaboration across multiple SDL holders and with the IRC of course, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for that, and that's encouraging that we continue to meet with the SDL proponents in the Beaufort Delta.

The Premier mentioned the Indigenous governments, mentioned the Inuvialuit specifically, of course, because that is in the Inuvialuit settlement region. Can he maybe elaborate a little on what engagement has been, again, ongoing and have been going on with the Indigenous governments in the region as well as it pertains to the LNG development, particularly given that they are now the LNG developer in the Beaufort Delta.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so there's been conversations over the last number of years about the Mackenzie Delta LNG project concept. And, of course, IRC has been busy advancing its Inuvialuit energy security project in the meantime. The opportunity remains for IRC to pursue larger scale LNG project opportunities in the Beaufort Delta; for example, that could result in exportation to Asian Pacific markets where the LNG demand is growing as we know. That being said, this is all happening in the Inuvialuit settlement region so we are following their lead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the Premier for that. And, again, as I mentioned earlier, what a great opportunity perhaps to look at a working group for this development and for ongoing developments.

But can the Premier speak, given what's happening federally, again, there may be some winds of change coming, we're not sure, and I think it doesn't preclude either of the potential new governments, has the Premier been engaging with industry at large, with -- I mean, obviously, preparing, I guess, to make sure that, hey, there's an opportunity could come here in the next, you know, 6 to 12 months, and are we ready for that; are we engaging with industry and potentially with Ottawa as well? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And not me personally but our Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment has been engaging industry all across Canada. This was mentioned earlier by my colleague. But she has discussed this at the -- at PNWER, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Conference, at the Canadian Association of Petroleum

Producers Conference, at the Arctic Energy and Resources Symposium that's coming up in March; I believe she's the keynote Speaker there. And so she is out there engaging with industry, letting them know what the opportunities are in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 556-20(1):
HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND
SUPPORTS

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of housing today.

Following up on my Member's statement, so as part of the latest homeownership program that was recently discontinued, the homeownership entry level program, or HELP, 190 new units were constructed between 2006 and 2011. And does the Minister happen to know how many of those 190 units that were originally constructed actually ended up being transferred to the tenants to allow them to become homeowners? Or can the Minister commit to at least get back to me with that total number that turned into actually homeownership units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife North. Minister of Housing NWT.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the HELP units that were constructed back in 2007, the numbers include 21 units that have been transferred to tenants since the start of HELP. And the breakdown is Beaufort Delta, 4 units; Nahendeh, 3 units; the North Slave, 4 units; the Sahtu, 2 units; and the South Slave, 8 units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for having those numbers on hand.

So 21 out of 190 units is a pretty low percentage I think we can all agree. Can the Minister explain what were some of the barriers or challenges that prevented more of those HELP tenants from actually achieving that homeownership that they set out to achieve when they joined the program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think of challenges in homeownership would include like capacity to pay the utilities. Sometimes they fall into arrears. Sometimes family situations change. And sometimes they don't want to no longer be a homeowner. So upkeep of the unit, again, this is something that homeowners face every day

in the Northwest Territories. So this would be another challenge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Housing NWT. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure we could have a much longer conversation too about all the barriers and challenges. But we have a new homeownership initiative program now that's sort of superceded the old. So how has the current HIP program been designed differently to try to overcome some of those challenges, or what different result do we expect this time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, like homeownership is a challenge in the Northwest Territories. So what housing's doing differently now is they're providing counselling, they're providing budgeting sessions, they're providing those with arrears an opportunity to pay off their arrears so they can become eligible. And also with the HIP program, it is a forgivable loan over three to five years so the tenant would become the owner of the house through a forgivable loan which would zero out at the end of those years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister responsible for Housing NWT. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 557-20(1):
PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I just mentioned that in regards to tools for the RCMP, I just wanted to ask the question to the Minister of Justice.

How can we all work together with the GNWT government, the Indigenous governments in my riding, including with the RCMP, to look for solutions on the interim until the new SCAN legislation and the new strategy on drugs -- new drug strategy and dedicated RCMP crime reduction unit? I just wanted to ask that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Justice.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I stated earlier, a lot of that work has already started. Public Safety Canada has gone into the community. I've gone into the community, met with leadership, along with my deputy minister. The RCMP, as I mentioned, I have -- I've made one of their priorities to strengthen relationships with Indigenous governments. So ensuring that those touch

points are actually happening, that those conversations are happening, is important.

And one of the most important things that the community can do is report things to the RCMP. And I understand that there's times when people don't want to put their name towards a tip. They don't want to testify because of potential retribution. But regardless, we have to make those reports. And when we can, we have to be willing to testify. That really is, from what I've seen, maybe the biggest barrier in the Northwest Territories to dealing with this issue on the enforcement side. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 558-20(1):
SAFER COMMUNITIES AND
NEIGHBOURHOODS LEGISLATION AND
FORT RESOLUTION LEADERSHIP
REQUEST TO MEET WITH RCMP

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister of Justice, now that we're talking about the SCAN legislation, next year, February, is there any way where we could try to help move that date up so that we could get that into action? Thank you.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I received this request about SCAN legislation and civil forfeiture legislation quite often because there is a real concern about what's going on and people want more tools to move things forward. So I will ensure that we're working as fast as we can on this, but I don't want to get anyone's hopes up that we're going to be able to get this done and introduced prior to the next sitting.

SCAN legislation has proven to be controversial in the Northwest Territories. It was brought forward once before, and it did not make its way through this House or out of this House, and so we want to make sure that we are doing the proper engagement, that we are hearing from everyone, and that we're crafting it in such a way that we will be able to get it through this House so that communities can benefit from it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. Final supplementary. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the Minister of Justice if there's a way where we could get the RCMP in Fort Resolution to work with the Deninu Kue First Nation and the Metis Nation to have a meeting to address some of the concerns they have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, I mean, I don't even need to be involved in that conversation. That's a community-level conversation, and the community can have that. Through the Department of Justice, we can relay the Member's comments and the desires for such a meeting, but I think those are the types of things that can really happen at the community level.

Deninu Kue First Nation does receive \$50,000 annually to hire a community justice coordinator. I understand that that position is not filled. But that's the position that would help coordinate these types of conversations among leadership, including the First Nations, the Metis, and the RCMP and the GNWT service providers as well. And the department is also offering to help to support the staffing of that position should the First Nation require it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral questions. Member from Frame Lake.

QUESTION 559-20(1):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
WORKPLACE MORALE

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, last sitting Members raised a number of concerns and passed a motion regarding the health care system, and a lot of the concerns that were raised were about workplace morale among nurses, doctors, health care workers in general. And I would note that with the system sustainability unit and the new public administrator, it's not really clear if morale issues are actually being addressed by those initiatives. So can the Minister clarify for the House who is tasked with improving morale in the health care system, and what are they doing to help our nurses and doctors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Frame Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member has stated, you know, this is not something that comes to a surprise to this House. We've heard it on the floor many, many times. It is in the mandate of the public administrator to ensure that the NTHSSA is dealing with this morale issue. I also took it upon myself, and now accompanying with me within the NTHSSA, the PA attends all of the -- along with the CEO and the COOs of the region, we have

completed -- sorry, we've completed TCSA. We've completed Stanton. We've completed Fort Smith. We have a whole stretch of regions that we'll be doing town halls with staff in March and into April to making sure we're hitting every region and as well as the operations area within the NTHSSA. And all of that feedback is part of the work that we're all working towards ensuring that staff are being heard and that there are going to be, you know -- like, from the recommendations and the concerns brought forward, there will be actions on those for the managers, the CEO to deal with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that answer. And so, Mr. Speaker, I understand that workplace morale can be a bit of a difficult thing to track and to measure. So I'm just curious has the department thought or the Minister thought about how she's going to track progress on this issue? Are they establishing measures? Are they, you know, taking a baseline to understand from staff where things are at now and where things are going? How are they going to be measuring success on this important issue in our health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, with the work that's ongoing in the next, you know, little while, I think that the last employment engagement satisfactory survey that was done from staff that is done every two years, that will be a tool that is measured. But I also -- you know, I think that one of the areas is all managers and staff have to take ownership of making sure that they're bringing their concerns forward. And this is something that I've said in the town halls with staff is that if they're -- you know, if they're bringing the issues forward and they're not being heard, we've heard from COOs to say that, you know, make sure that it's coming to the COOs if you're not being heard as a group, as a department, as a -- you know, as an area so that way that we are aware. There's times where the senior leadership is not aware of some of these things. And some of those things that cause morale issues could be small fixes, but it's actually going up the chain of command to ensure that voices are heard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, you know, one of the ways that we're able to track this sort of thing and determine for ourselves and be engaged with our constituents is to see what's being brought

forward. So does the Minister or the public administrator have any plans in place to establish some kind of a plan or list a set of actions that are going to be taken and, you know, maybe a timeline for how things will go down so that staff can see, you know, what actions are being taken, how their concerns are being heard and actioned? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned in this House, you know, the PA is working with the leadership of NTHSSA right now. But when I mentioned about the town halls, those town halls and bringing those concerns forward, there are internal actions for each of those COOs to go back to their staff to work through some of those issues that were brought forward. So I know that we've only -- like I said, mentioned, we've only done two or three of three different regions now, and we have the rest of the regions to go there. And I encourage those staff to come out and voice their -- you know, their concerns. Not just their concerns, but what's working so that we don't change the things that are working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

QUESTION 560-20(1):
CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, continuing on, and I'm kind of a role of collecting information on what we're spending on renewable energy, and I would like ask the Minister of ECC if he can kind of let us know -- I understand that this year's budget's currently being negotiated but in previous years, what we spent on the climate action plan, what we budgeted for that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you very much to the Member for the question. The climate change action plan budget is not something that I have right at my fingertips at this specific moment, the amount. But I think as we look at our action plan and how we roll that out from the department, it supports an all-of-government approach. So a lot of the work that we do through that climate action plan involves many of the departments and supports many of the initiatives that the GNWT does as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you. And I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure if I'd have given the Minister a little more time, he certainly would have got those numbers for me. But maybe he can speak in general, then, around the amount -- you know, that budget, the amount of that work that's done by consultants and/or contractors and particularly how much of that money is spent outside the territory, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JAY MACDONALD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe just to finish the end of the last question, I'm happy to provide that information to the Member on what we spend in the budget and with a bit of a breakdown just to -- and to the other Members of the House as well.

When we talk about consultants, again, not a number I have off the top of my head but happy to get that information and bring it forward for the Member and the other Members. And with a bit of a breakdown, we can see what percentage of that work is done by NWT firms within the territory and break that out for work that may be done by other firms outside of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 561-20(1):
MEDICAL TRAVEL ACCOMMODATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I talked to some -- in talking with some of my constituents who have travelled to Edmonton, and they've gone to Edmonton for medical travel and they're concerned about some of the medical travel rates and the accommodations at Larga House. I'm curious on how often these programs get reviewed specific to location and the rates. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the Member is referring to. If they're staying at the boarding home, then they don't get -- they don't get -- everything when they're assigned a room there is free. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Fair enough. I'll say it this way: In some cases, they go to the Larga House and I'm curious on how often that opportunity gets reviewed. In other words, is Larga the only location or the preferred location, and if so, how often does that go to competition? I was

referring to the rates as in per diems. Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Larga boarding home, as is the Keskorie, are both RFPs, so that people that are travelling for medical travel, if they're coming to Yellowknife from any of the communities, they stay at Keskorie. There is no fees. There is no -- they don't get per diems. They get meals while they're there. They get a room. If there's no room, then they'd be put into a hotel, their meals are provided to them. If they're in Edmonton and they stay at Larga, that is the RFP that we have. It is a hotel in Leduc. There is transportation provided to and from the appointments. There is meals provided. They will provide them with a lunch if they're going to be away from their -- from Larga for extended periods of time and miss meals. So there is no per diems provided to those who stay there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Final supplementary. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's -- do we ever do any follow-up or surveys of people with respect to their stay at Larga? I've heard complaints from constituents that they don't find it very comfortable, don't find the meals, etcetera. I mean, it goes on -- I won't go on, but it goes on with a lot of further not very happy experiences. That said, do we do any surveys with our medical travel clients to get a sense of how they've enjoyed their stay or may not have enjoyed their stay and ways we can make them better? Thank you.

HON. LESA SEMMLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hear from many MLAs and many constituents when it's not a good stay; however, since Larga has moved to Leduc, there were initially -- there were concerns and complaints. Larga has accommodated many of the issues that were brought forward just because of their distance away from Edmonton, and they provided a lot of different space. People seem to enjoy staying in the hotel, in Larga. Recently, I haven't had a lot of complaints. There are -- Goba Care is working a lot out of there for, you know, providing programming while people are there for extended stays. We do, however, have, you know, concerns with our capacity here in Yellowknife but we are in the process of -- we are going back out to RFP, and we are looking at taking into consideration all of the concerns that we have. Unfortunately, right now, within Yellowknife, the issue is is that the dental travel has really increased the capacity that Keskorie can hold, but we haven't had the problem in Edmonton. But I would -- you know, and I mean,

and any program that we provide to our residents and if there is a way that we can take feedback from residents through our RFP process going forward, I would look into that and commit that to making sure that that's something that we would do with our residents that are travelling. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Health and Social Services. Oral questions. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Replies to the Commissioner's address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Reports of standing and special committees. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Minister responsible for WSCC.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 21:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS'
COMPENSATION ACT

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to present to the House Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, to be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister responsible for WSCC. Pursuant to Rule 8.2(3), Bill 21 is deemed to have first reading 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, Tabled Document 275-20(1), with the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): I now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 275-20(1), the 2025-2026 Main Estimates, Department of Housing Northwest Territories and Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 275-20(1), 2025-2026 Main

Estimates. We will now continue consideration of Housing Northwest Territories.

I will remind the committee that the Housing Northwest Territories is included in the main estimates and information and the totals are not voteable items. We will review these estimates as we have for the previously consider the departments; however, we will not vote for the totals. If Members have comments or questions, they can be raised at the appropriate time.

Does the Minister responsible for Housing Northwest Territories wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Colleagues, we'll just take a five-minute recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): I'd like to call committee back the order. Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right is the president of Housing Northwest Territories, Dr. Erin Kelly. And to my left is Mr. Jim Martin, who is our vice-president of finance and infrastructure.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Committee, we will resume where we left off yesterday. We are considering community housing services starting on page 386. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a few remaining questions. The first is just following up on the last line of questions that I was asking about the HELP program and the disposition of those 51 units. The Minister or her staff people had said that the adjustment is \$408,000. I think there's a reduction there. Can the Minister explain where those savings come from? How are we saving \$408,000 by disposing of the units? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Jim Martin here will provide some insight to

the savings of the \$408,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The savings as a result of disposing of the HELP units is the cost savings that we would realize by no longer operating those units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay. And can the Minister clarify, and maybe this is not all decided or sorted out yet, but who is going to operate the units? So if residents don't want to own them and they don't necessarily need to be kicked out, so -- and we're going to save money by not owning and operating them anymore, who is going to own and operate them and rent them to tenants? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the HELP units, the disposal of the HELP units, what we'll do first as Housing Northwest Territories is we'll talk to the tenants to see if they're interested at all to take ownership of the unit. If they're not interested in taking ownership, housing remains the owner and will continue to operate and maintain those units and perhaps turn them into a public housing unit or a market housing unit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to leave that for now. I'm still confused; if we don't even know yet who's going to own and operate or how these units are going to work, I'm not sure how we can get a very specific number like \$408,000 in savings if we're not sure what's happening to the units. But to be continued.

I had a few questions about items in the business plan that I think are related to this page. So on page 407 of the business plan under -- it's titled initiatives of community housing, it talks about the goal of working with Indigenous governments or NGOs to create supportive or transitional housing or working with ECE to provide market housing for teachers, and the specific goal that's listed is three per year. And I wonder if the Minister or her staff could clarify three of what per year?

Are we talking about the goal of three units? Three communities? Three partners? Three projects? Or what counts as a project? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide some information to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're referring to three units for the example that the Member put forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay, that is good to clarify. So thank you for that. Although that does seem like a pretty low goal, but.

I just want the to finish -- so page 409 of the business plan sets a goal for total housing investment in the territory, and the goal that's written in the business plan is that there would be \$50 million per year of housing investment coming from Housing NWT and then \$50 million a year coming from outside organizations. Now, we heard yesterday from the Minister that the \$50 million per year from Housing NWT, we're not sure if we can find yet because we need to go to outside funders like the federal government to find that \$50 million.

So I find -- maybe the Minister can clarify what it means, then, to say in the business plan that we're going to contribute \$50 million. It sound like of our own money and then \$50 million coming from the outside, but now we're hearing that that \$50 million isn't our own money; it's from the outside. So I'm wondering if that goal can be clarified or, really, it should be just changed to saying we're looking for \$100 million from the outside. Period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide information to the question around the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we have spent over \$50 million the last two years. Much of that money is from federal investment,

and we still are looking to the federal government for increases to that investment.

We're also aware of Indigenous governments and the distinction-based funding which is also contributing to housing in the Northwest Territories in large amounts of money, but we don't have the specifics related to that.

I think one of the things I will comment on is that if you look at the positions that Housing NWT is looking in our internal resources to fund, one of them is a planning and evaluation specialist, and we plan to take a look at the targets and measures that are in the business plan and work to improve them, and one of the pieces would be related to the last question that the Member had as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: I'll leave it there for now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Is there any further questions? Seeing no further questions. I remind the committee that the estimates for Housing Northwest Territories are included as information items only. The committee will not be voting on the activity total.

Moving on to the homelessness program starting on page 389. Are there any questions? Yes, I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize; I lost my hearing piece there. It's hard to hear otherwise. So did you say page 389, please, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): 389, yes.

MS. REID: Thank you very much. So in the item of emergency shelters, I'm just curious can the Minister please confirm that the reason the funding for that line item has dropped since 2023-2024 is because of a change in which department is actioning that line item or a different reason? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly here will provide that information regarding emergency shelters. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the budget has not changed over time for that

line item. What the Member is noticing is that the actuals are much higher than the budget, and the reason for that is for the funding related to the Inuvik shelters. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as I was saying earlier in my Member's statement to the Premier today, it did take me a while to understand the differences between the portfolios been EIA and housing and just clarifying who is in charge of what when it comes to transitional and supportive housing versus where Housing NWT is public housing and homeownership programs that -- and the like.

Can the Minister please clarify how she sees the relationship between EIA and Housing NWT working in lockstep to create more options for transitional and supportive housing or if, indeed, Housing NWT is involved. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. An important question, especially around the transitional housing piece. But, again, like the Premier stated earlier, these homelessness and housing solutions, we need comprehensive and sustainable solutions around housing and homelessness in the Northwest Territories. So what we do as a department is we work with EIA together and have these discussions around shelters in the Northwest Territories and work in partnership, have discussions, have working groups around the homelessness transitional housing piece. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the Minister for that. I was trying to relay an example of urgency and decision-making, and I know that more cooks in the kitchen sometimes slows thing down, but is the Minister finding that there are clearer targets and pathways forward for these kinds of transitional and supportive housing pieces? It's -- I recognize there's lots of work going on in the background that we may not see as Regular Members, if it's -- you're basing your work off of the homelessness strategy, the Premier is basing his work off the homelessness strategy. But I just want to make sure that everybody's pulling in the same direction. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide some more information around that question because it's important that we get to specifics. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's important to envision the role of EIA as a coordinator. There's many departments that work on the relationships, in particular for specific clients, and the focus from an EIA perspective is to ensure that we're doing the best for the client and trying to make sure that we can all work together. So I can say that there's a lot of work that's being done to look at client specific needs, determine who in the departments needs to work on those issues, and getting them working on those as quickly as possible and as effectively as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Okay, so just for -- thank you for that. Just for clarity, then, if there are industry partners or private multi-family dwelling property owners that are looking to partner with Housing NWT and/or EIA to start developing more options for both the homelessness and transitional supportive housing piece but also just more units available in Yellowknife for public housing clients, who do they go to? Because it just doesn't always seem to line up for clarity around who is holding specific reins on any particular file. Thank you Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll refer that to Dr. Erin Kelly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my understanding is if it's related to the building of the units that they can come through Housing NWT, and we would, of course, engage with EIA on those conversations. If it's about client needs specifically, my understanding is you would go to EIA and they would determine who -- the integrated work among departments on who would support them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Would that also include renovating units? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member for Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That helps. I have nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you very much. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, what strategies does Housing NWT have in place to meet the current base budget shortfall related to funding emergency shelters in the NWT? I note that there's been a pretty significant drop in the funding over the years, so can the department -- or Minister, sorry, speak to this.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide us some insight to those strategies. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you look at page -- the page that we're referring to, it's not that the budget has decreased. The budget has been the same. The challenge is that we have been running the shelters as a government, as Housing NWT in Inuvik, and it's costing additional funds to do so. Governments are not the best suited all the time to be doing this type of work, and our strategy is to try to find others who are interested in taking over the work to manage those shelters in community where they know the folks and they're better suited for that action. So you'll be aware that in Hay River, we've been successful in that regard, and we're still working on that in Inuvik, trying to work with partners for them to take over, properly funded, to work and manage those facilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And actually that was going to be my next question was just so -- if the department has any details on any progress they've made on that item that, reestablish a third party operator for the Inuvik

shelters, would appreciate knowing it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Of course we can share that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure if this is actually the right spot to ask this question, but it's one that I wanted to ask. Mr. Chair, how is Housing NWT collaborating with the health and social services to enhance support for transitional housing for individuals in recovery or addictions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide some information around the third program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Mr. Chair, we're currently working in Inuvik and in Yellowknife on housing for folks when they come back from addictions treatment for transitional housing, and our hope -- there's some buildings that are being renovated to accommodate this, and our hope is that there will be other communities that we'll work together on as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me just check my notes here.

Yeah, if I could, Mr. Chair, I would just ask, this is a pretty high level and general question but falls into this area. I'd be curious how Housing NWT is doing in terms of making efforts on filling gaps in the northern housing continuum. I note -- have noted already that this is an item that Standing Committee on Social Development has been doing a lot of work on with their housing as a human right project and very much look forward to the recommendations that come out of that project. But how is Housing NWT supporting programs across government that move individuals along the housing continuum? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's a big question, especially for Housing NWT, because we're focused on public

housing, providing social housing in communities, but also market housing. We have the, like we've talked about before, the HELP units, and we also have RCMP housing.

So one of the things I've noticed, and especially when I went to Behchoko recently, was going into a transitional housing, there was an individual in there for a number of years and the reason why he was in there for a number of years was there's no housing available in the community for him to move on. And he's ready to move on but considering the 135 people on the waitlist, there is no housing to move on to. So these are difficult discussions that housing has on a continuous basis, especially with the other departments and partnerships. But we do what we do, and we do what we can with what we have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe to give a bit more of a specific question, I do want to note that, you know, I've heard from constituents, and I certainly experienced when I was on the -- when I was on the board of the Yellowknife Housing Authority, that we're still working on perfecting the housing first model in terms of ensuring that there's adequate wraparound service, that it's a model that is getting people into housing. And, you know, one of the issues I heard about recently was a constituent who is -- got themselves into housing first and they're now homeless again because they were kicked out and it's -- the hope with housing first, of course, is that it moves people up, you know, and gets them out of housing first and into, you know -- as I asked in the first question about the housing continuum, we want to be moving people kind of along.

I'm just curious if the department can discuss any improvements or changes or enhancements to the housing first program to kind of address some of the hiccups that have been happening and to better support residents to ensure that, you know, there are systems and supports in place to ensure that the housing first model isn't just simply, you know, sticking people in a home and we're done but that there's supports in place to help people succeed with housing first and use that as a stepping stone. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and this is something we can discuss further. But, you know, in my FPT meeting this morning,

another province was talking about the different models they have with their public housing units and that's interesting because there's about five or six different models just within that one department. So I'm interested to know what other provinces and territories are doing. But in terms of what we're doing with housing first here in the territory, Dr. Kelly will provide more information to that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that we recognize that there's some growth to do with respect to housing first, and we're trying to make sure that we're learning lessons from past experiences. But I think one of the challenges, as the Minister put forward very clearly, is that we -- because of the lack of transitional housing, we are putting people into public housing that sometimes are not ready to be in those units and the support for them is less than what we would like. So our preference is to try to work, and that's much of the work that we're doing, to support some of these transitional housing projects across the board, with Indigenous government partners as well, and hopefully increase the stock that we have and the supports -- the folks can go to those units instead to get the support that they need. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Okay, thank you. And I'd just like to build upon what the president just shared there. So if the goal is increasing stock and, you know, making sure that we've got enough resources to move people through the spectrum, can the president or Minister discuss what is being done particularly within the term of this Assembly to do that, to achieve that goal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll pass that to Dr. Erin Kelly to provide for information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So as I mentioned already, we are working with health and social services on some transitional housing with respect to folks that are returning from addictions treatment. We also have the Northern Pathways units where we're -- that are transitional housing units. We have a funding proposal that we're working on currently that

would increase transitional housing in the Yellowknife area. And we're always looking for opportunities in other communities to build on the transitional stock that's there with the resources that we've got. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that is -- that's it for me on this page. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Next on my list I have is the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is on the emergency shelters. Can the Minister confirm if this activity is in support, or is there a contribution agreement between this program and the Fort Good Hope shelter? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Jim Martin will provide more information to the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Housing NWT has a number of agreements, contributions, with various organizations that are supporting the delivery of emergency shelters. And we have two in Inuvik, one with the YWCA, Yellowknife Women's Society, Salvation Army, Hay River shelter, and in Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister help me out here -- and maybe it's not this department that is providing the assistance there for the Fort Good Hope shelter, but is there another program that is in partnership in funding contributions to that shelter in Fort Good Hope or another department? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Jim Martin will provide information to that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Housing NWT is providing support through the Northern Pathways to housing program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you. So it's Northern Pathways that is supporting the Fort Good Hope shelter, yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is confirmed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Is there going to be renewed funding in this budget for that shelter in Fort Good Hope through Northern Pathways? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is confirmed. There is renewed funding for that program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Mahsi. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to -- next on my list is the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, my first question is, so the Minister had previously indicated that the extra, like, \$2.3 million that showed up in the 2023-2024 actuals under emergency shelters was due to funding the Inuvik day shelter. But that money doesn't appear after that. It goes back down to about \$3 million both in terms of the program and the contributions. So can the Minister clarify how the Inuvik day shelter is being funded now and whether the GNWT is still running it directly? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification, there are two shelters in Inuvik that are operating, for clarification there. But more information with Dr. Erin Kelly here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So what's reflected on the sheet is the budget that we have across the board. So the budget hasn't changed, but the expenses are higher, which is why you see for the 2023-2024 actuals that higher number. And what means is that we do have a smaller amount that is budgeted for the Inuvik shelters, but we're spending much more to support those shelters. So what's happening right now is that Housing NWT is finding that money from within and we're working with local organizations to try to find a provider that is relevant to the community and would be able to do this for a more cost effective price. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So just to clarify, some of the cost of the shelter is included here or the assumption of what the cost would be if it was contracted out to a non-profit, but it's just the extra that's coming from within? My concern is that currently we're funding the actual amount that's needed from within, and it's not showing up, but is that a sustainable way to budget for providing this service that clearly needs to continue being provided? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So in the budget that we have, there is an amount that used to be spent with other providers to fund the Inuvik shelters. It is costing us additional funding, mostly because of the overspend is because of compensation and benefits because we're hiring the staff through the GNWT. We recognize and in our discussions with folks in Inuvik have discussed that there will need to be an increase in the amount but not to the same extent that we're seeing here if another organization was to take it over. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And on the same subject of sustainable funding for

shelters and non-profits, I mean, we see under the contributions for these various kinds of shelters and initiatives that support homelessness, the numbers haven't increased over time. It's the exact same, right? And so we're not incorporating inflation which we know has been a big -- a big rate of inflation over the last couple of years. And yet, I mean, across all other aspects of GNWT operations, we see the budget increase due to forced growth inflation. So I guess the question is why don't we see the numbers increase? Why do we expect our non-profit partners to continue year after year, no matter how much inflation there is, to continue offering services around shelters, homelessness, for the exact same as the year before and especially when we're seeing increased numbers of people accessing these services and increased need? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide that information.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I completely understand what the Member is bringing forward, and I know that there's ongoing discussions about that and that EIA has been leading some discussions with end goals related to it. In this case in particular, we're challenged by the fact that we're an organization that's being -- there's a lot of want to build new units and to spend the budget on items like that, and we're trying to balance the budget across all of the needs that folks have for Housing NWT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, I do understand that, but I also think that by trying to spread the money thinner or sort of take for granted that we can keep this number the same and do other things instead, we're endangering the current relationships and arrangements that we have and then we could end up in more situations like the Inuvik situation where, you know, we -- the government has to take over operating a shelter and realizes that it has to spend much more money than it was paying before to the non-profit. Anyway, that's another soapbox for another day.

But my final question on this item is so the rapid rehousing last year had a line item of 400,000, and there's nothing in the 2025-2026 Main Estimates for rapid rehousing. My

understanding was that the contributions that had previously been distributed under rapid rehousing are now going to be distributed under Northern Pathways to housing, but then I don't see that number going up in terms of contributions coming out of Northern Pathways. Can the Minister explain where that \$400,000 has gone? Is it that we're giving out \$400,000 less in total, or it's coming from somewhere else that I can't see on the budget here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide more information to the budget adjustment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You're correct about the budget adjustment but, unfortunately, I'm going to have to ask if Jim can speak to this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. These funds are being -- have been reallocated to the Northern Pathways program; however, at this time that \$400,000 is being funded internally within our internal resources. So funding will remain at the same level for next year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Is there any further questions from the Member from Yellowknife North? None? Thank you. Is there any other Members? I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Yeah, I just want to ask about this Northern Pathways. Many of these programs are very important, especially to small communities where there's limited facility. So Northern Pathways to housing, shelter enhancement fund, emergency shelters, I want to ask the Minister if all these funds get used up within the fiscal year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can confirm that all the funds get used up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yeah, you know, shelter enhancement funds, okay, if it

gets used up because like I said it's very important, especially for small communities where we rely on many of these programs and these funds. For example, the shelter enhancement fund, \$100,000, is it going to increase anytime soon? Because I'm sure there's -- you know, there's facilities out there in small communities, they -- you know, they access these funds. So is it allocated based on first-come/first-serve basis, or how does this money get allocated? Because it's not a lot of money. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. From what I understand with the shelter enhancement fund, it is an application-based with Housing NWT. It's not a lot of money. But perhaps Dr. Erin Kelly can provide more information related to that fund. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my understanding of the question is will this increase. And the answer is this is what we've got in the budget. But if you look at the actuals versus the budget, often you'll see that there's increases above what the budget is. And when that happens, it's Housing NWT using our internal resources to augment what we have. So where there is need, we try our best to try to help to support that. We also try to look in our internal resources -- and you were provided with a page that shows -- and try to project where we need to put some more money because we know that there's going to be pressures there with our internal resources. But we don't have enough money to increase everything over time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you for that information. And I'm grateful that, you know, the Minister and her team went to Behchoko and looked at some of the programs and see how hard many of these -- the people that are working there or the program and the organization are working hard to house their people, you know. I mean, these funds are very important to many of them. So I would like to ask too is that, you know, emergency shelter, I don't think we have that. We have a warming shelter, but it's not the same as this emergency shelter where there's -- there's a facility in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, and Inuvik. It's good, you know, because in small communities where we don't have too many

emergency shelters in small communities from the most northern communities all the way to, like, to Tlicho region, you know. We need more of this because you've seen the number of our unhoused people and during the day, you know, if friendship centre is not open, then, you know, like, I mean, they're kind of wandering, you know. So we are trying our best. We're doing our best. The community is trying their best. You know, like, Tlicho government are doing their best. Friendship centre is -- they're doing their best, and I'm very grateful, thankful, to the recent federal government announcement, you know, so to help many of our people that are suffering with addictions.

So with that in mind, THARP, I mean, it's a transition housing for addiction recovery program. I know that we didn't get one last -- you know, last fiscal year. So is there a plan in place where Tlicho region might get funding for that program? As you know, many of our people are -- you know, like, they are in -- a lot of our young people, they go for treatment. Some of them, they come back, they don't last long. Like, maybe a day or two or a week, and then they're back to what they were doing before because they're back to the same old situation. And we do need a safe place for them. And, you know, Tlicho government with the warming shelter, they are doing their best. And then even I know that the friendship centre, they said it to us too that, you know, they are doing their best to accommodate many of these young people to stay sober, you know, so -- but it's just that it's a place to stay that they're having problems with. So I just wanted to ask that if there's a plan in place anytime soon that, you know, Tlicho region will get some -- a program to help our young people returning back from the addiction program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Understanding that THARP is led by health and social services, that's one of the questions that we do have is right now we have THARP units, both in Yellowknife and Inuvik, and many other communities are looking at the same type of supports in place for much of the people in the community that need that transitional housing after they attend addictions recovery program. So it's a big question, and the MLA is right, this is happening in many of our communities where supports are needed in place, and THARP is one of those key supports. So perhaps Dr. Erin Kelly could talk a bit more about a THARP and the planning going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the role of -- and Housing NWT is to help to support the renovations for the building of the location. Health and social services is the lead on selecting the location for that. But I do know that there's several communities, and Behchoko is one of them, that are on the radar for that.

I would also note here that of these line items, Behchoko also gets money for Northern Pathways, and the Northern Pathways is what fund the transitional housing in Behchoko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Yeah, thank you. Thank you for the information. Yeah, we had a real good visit, and we were told about all these programs that, you know, the facility use, and it's very important to them. And Northern Pathways program was mentioned by the transitional housing program. So I am quite pleased. But it's good if it is on the radar. I am pleased because I know many of -- many of the people have been asking about it, that we need something for our young people. You know, some of them went out to treatment two or three times, you know, like they -- we know that they really want to get better but it's just that they're going back to the same old situation. So I do feel for them, I do sympathize, and we all want our community, our young people to get better, you know, do as much as we can while we're here. So I am glad that it's on the radar. And that's it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Are there any further questions from the Members? Seeing none, no further questions. We will proceed to the next activity summary.

Moving on to the homeownership assistance program starting on page 392. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My first question is about the seniors aging in place program to provide financial assistance to eligible households, seniors, I assume, to support repairs or upgrades that helps them stay in their home. Can you tell me if this is eligible for people who do not live within a municipality? So, for example, people whose home might be in a rural area, are those people still eligible to get this funding for seniors aging in place? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that there has been a request in the past to Housing NWT for applications for aging in place, and what we can do is we could provide more -- the information to the MLA regarding this question. We can provide her something in writing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you for that, Mr. Chair. I know that there are a number of seniors, at least in my riding and I'm sure in many others, who don't live within the boundaries of the city of Yellowknife but really want to stay in their homes and, in fact, we need people to stay in their homes where possible for the betterment of the whole territory. We don't want them to leave, and we don't want them to need to, for example, have to move to a long-term care facility if they could be accommodated at home. So I hope that we can make sure that that program can serve seniors who want to age in place everywhere in the territory.

I'm also wondering about the preventative maintenance program. Is it -- has it been fully subscribed? I notice that it was increased a bit from 2023-2024 and then -- but between that and 2024-2025. I assume it's on an application basis, whoever applies to -- for that funds? So is that program fully subscribed I suppose in -- out of last year, the 2024-2025 budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide more information about the program itself. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Mr. Chair, it was slightly undersubscribed in 2023-2024, which could have been related to some of the things that were going on in that year related to fire, for example. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay, thank you for that. And do we have numbers yet for 2024-2025 in terms of whether it was fully subscribed? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Jim Martin will provide information with the number of subscriptions for this current year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of approved applications, as of September we had five. To be completed, however, in progress, 231. So the target would be 240 to date. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go back to the Member for Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay, I'm going to have to maybe get that in writing to get the math straight. But it seems that this is a really valuable program to help people prevent, you know, their, like, larger problems from developing over time and the need for larger repairs and renos if they can just do that preventative maintenance early on. So what is Housing NWT doing to, like, raise awareness about this program and its availability and that people can take advantage of that to help prevent problems later on? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide information related to the coms piece around this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the things that we've been working on recently is a review of our communications and areas where we can improve and get the word out, and this would be one of the problems that we would look at with that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all my questions on this page.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Next on my list I have is the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just going to ask a question within this activity here. I know I raised it, and we're all quite aware of the Fort Good Hope construction investment

that's underway and mobilization of materials for construction of the centre during this winter road season.

Is the department having discussions to form some dialogue on how to support the project which will ultimately produce modular homes which we know is a crisis throughout the territories? And I guess quite simply, Mr. Chair, is the department having discussions with the leadership in Fort Good Hope? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. During the housing symposium, the NWT Housing symposium, there was initial introductions with the Fort Good Hope construction centre team, and President Kelly here had further meetings with them, so she'll provide some insight to that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At the housing symposium, I had a separate meeting with Arthur and Crystal, and we talked about the timelines and what they're looking at, and I expressed interest in meeting with them as soon as they're ready, through their work, to discuss what their timelines looked like so that we can have an understanding and look together for the future of how we could work together. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I want to thank the Minister and staff for that reply. And it's a -- I'm going to say a multi-year approach, affordable access to Fort Good Hope for materials and fittings and mechanical items, and then, you know, in preparation for financing those supports is, in my view, a two year. So I understand this budget is for this year, but I'm glad to hear that there's talks in preparation because we got to annually supply and have talks because it's only a winter road season accessible to Fort Good Hope. But all in all, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister and staff for that reply. I look forward to helping out any way I can. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And yes, understood. And this is part of the discussions that President Kelly had with the Fort Good Hope team, was looking at the construction centre and some of the construction down the line with the capital plan

to align all of that in preparation considering the transportation costs, winter road access, barge access, so all of these things are in consideration, and we have to look long term rather than short term, but we want to support them in their endeavors. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. And I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Next on my list I have is the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask about the homeownership initiative program. You know, it's one that receives a relatively small amount of funding, so I'll just start first question. Is the program fully subscribed every year; do we max out this funding? And if not, why not?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Jim Martin will provide information related to the homeownership initiative program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, this program is not fully subscribed. Housing NWT continues to promote the opportunities with existing tenants to assume ownership of their units. And that work continues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister or her staff kind of elaborate a bit further on that. Like, what are the real barriers that are getting in the way because -- and I wanted to talk about this one because it comes up very often. Some of our community MLAs in particular, you know, speak to -- and we heard about this a lot when we were doing our priority setting. We heard it from Indigenous governments. You know, people want to have a sense of ownership with their homes. And it's just -- it seems to be a goal that everybody agrees is a great goal to have, and yet here we have even quite a modest program that just isn't getting enough uptake. So can staff kind of help MLAs understand, you know, what's getting in the way, and are there things that we need to

change about this program, or are there barriers that we need to reduce in order to get the program fully subscribed and perhaps even expanded? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of barriers with the homeownership initiative program -- and I spoke about this in the House earlier. But many times, people are not prepared to take on the homeownership initiative and apply to the program. That's one of the barriers. The second barrier is this is related to coordinating of thresholds, so there is a salary threshold for people to be -- applicable to this program and you have to reach -- you have to be below that threshold to be -- to apply to the program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So can the Minister help me better understand this a little bit better. So there's an income threshold that you have to be below in order to get it, and I'm assuming if you go above the threshold you're not eligible anymore. But wouldn't we think that people who were above a certain income threshold would be even better able to kind of own and operate a home? And so I kind of -- is that threshold really helping us in this program? I mean, certainly the idea of people starting to own a home, I mean that's the goal that we're trying to achieve here. So why do we even have a threshold which would prevent people from accessing the program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide more information related to the thresholds. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So my understanding is the reason you would want to have a threshold is because there are folks who make enough money that they would be able to access in a market community the market on their own, and so you need to -- you would have a threshold. I will comment here that one of the things that the associate deputy minister at Housing NWT is working on right now is the renewal project, and we'll be looking at the organizational design and which will lead to some program design work, and homeownership programs have already been flagged as something that we need to look at.

And so there will be work to assess the program details for the homeownership programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go back to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And really appreciate that information and certainly encourage the department to pursue that work, which they're already doing. So I guess, yeah, appreciate that that work's taking place. Because -- and I guess I would just say, I mean, yeah, in a market-based community, that makes perfect sense to me. I'm wondering if do we need, then, to maybe think about splitting up the requirements of this program because, you know, again, I can't stop highlighting the work that social development's been doing and some of the great presentations that committee's been receiving about this sort of thing. But in some of the nonmarket communities, programs like this are really a great way to help people kind of not just develop a sense of ownership but, in fact, actually achieve ownership of their homes. So is there maybe a need for a different stream or maybe that already exists or a different set of criteria for communities where market-based solutions just aren't available? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide the information related to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I will say that we are -- we have definitely been having conversations about the fact that some of our programs are across the NWT when they should be looking at the difference between market communities and nonmarket communities, and that is something that will be looked at when the review of these programs is done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate that. And just -- I wanted to highlight it because I just -- I have a feeling that these kinds of programs are certainly going to be a part of what social development ends up coming forward with its recommendations. Not to preclude the committee, but it's just based on the presentations I've been seeing at that committee, and what we've been hearing from

Indigenous governments, it really is the trend that I think we're heading towards, and I think it's a good one. I think we want people moving in this direction, so I wanted to highlight that. And, you know, really all I'll say further on this is, you know, it's a relatively modest aspect of the GNWT budget. Out of our \$2.6 billion, we're putting, you know, \$9.3 million into these homeownership assistance programs, and certainly this is something that I would be very excited to see grow. I note that some of these -- like most of these items have either received, you know, very small reductions or are just kind of proceeding along status quo. And as Emily Morgan -- or I'm sorry, the Member from Yellowknife North pointed out, you know, there's been pretty high inflation over the years, and if we don't keep up with inflation in programs like this, we're going to be falling behind. And just similar to what the Member for Monfwi was saying with programs like this, you know, they're so crucial to people in the communities, to the housing continuum in the NWT, and I certainly want to express my support to the department and to Cabinet, for the Minister's who are listening, to be putting more money towards our housing programs. It's one of the top priorities of the Assembly, and I'm very -- you won't hear any complaints from me if we start to see these budget items increasing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll take that as a comment. Did the Minister want to respond to?

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No complaints from me either. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, we're going to stop there. We're going to give the translators some time. We'll take a 30-minute break, and we'll come back. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Welcome back, everybody. And we'll continue on. We're on the page 392 homeownership assistance programs. Are there any further questions from Members? Seeing no further questions. Oh, I'm going to go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: I know for senior aging in place retrofit and repair program, I know the budget has been the same from 2024-2025, and I know it's a popular program, and this year alone or just this -- yeah, this fiscal year, I mean, they exceeded the fund, you know, because there's a lot of elders that apply for the program and some of them got a denial letter because they used up all the funds that -- for that program. So I just wanted to ask

to find out to see if there's going to be any increase to that budget because there's, like, a lot of our elders who are, you know, aging in home. I'm sure this 1.6 is for the whole of Northwest Territories. So -- and if they exceed it, then it was like greatly needed, and this year alone was focused on that program alone.

[audio] – to be replaced – ed.

So I just -- so I would like to know if there's going to be an increase in the budget for this coming fiscal year since the program is very popular among our elders, seniors aging at home. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Erin Kelly will provide more information to the seniors aging in place budget item. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there's no funds to increase the budget, but the reason that you see these additional costs is because we've been able to find other funding and some of those internal resources we've been able to put towards it, so we'll definitely continue to have a look where resources are able to augment the programs when we see that they're oversubscribed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: The emergency repair program (audio) my constituents (audio) this repair program. How does this (audio) emergency repair program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The emergency repair program is an application-based program. (audio) district office the local (audio) the district office to apply for this program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. (audio) program (audio) together (audio) preventative and emergency repair program. That budget is low compared to emergency repair program. (audio) because a lot of is (audio), so (audio) there's a lot of people that are, you know, (audio) especially living in the community where everybody is flown in.

So preventative maintenance program, a lot of people need that program to -- from further -- especially now with the climate change and things are changing and, you know, it does have a major impact, the house is -- the climate change. So how popular is this program? Like, are you getting a lot of applications? Does the housing get a lot of application for this program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the program was undersubscribed. But, again, as President Erin Kelly mentioned earlier, in an earlier question, one of the things that Housing NWT plans to do is how they communicate these programs throughout the Northwest Territories, the availability of the program, who is eligible for the program, and the different programs that are available too. Because coming into housing, you know, I thought one or two, but there's a number of different programs available. So how we communicate that to people that really need this program support, so we're doing more communication efforts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Monfwi.

MRS. WEYALLON ARMSTRONG: Thank you. Thank you for that information. Okay, so that the eligibility, is it based on income threshold? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the eligibility is an income threshold. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Is there any other Members that have questions? Okay, I'm going to continue on. Seeing no further questions, we will move -- we will not be voting on activity total.

Moving on to housing operations and support, starting on page 394. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask about the work with the LHOs, the local housing organizations, on apprenticeships. I'm hoping this is an okay segment to bring that up, but. I know that Housing NWT has an in-House apprenticeship program and have been trying to support up to 12 apprenticeship assignments each year. Can the Minister tell us whether or not they manage to actually find 12 apprentices in the last year or how many apprenticeships

did Housing NWT actually support? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, Housing NWT has ten apprentices on hand. We're working to 12 and hoping to increase that to 15 in the next fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you for clarifying. So that is good to know and that we have plans for the additional three. Does the Minister have any insights on what is -- what are some of the barriers to trying to fill up all those positions and whether there's opportunities for broader partnerships with ECE or Aurora College to try to make sure that we can fill up all those apprenticeship spots? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide more information about barriers and other opportunities working within. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would say that in general this is more of an ECE lead question but from a Housing NWT perspective, training and a smaller number of tradespeople in communities has been something that has been a barrier. We did just recently have a conversation with ECE about trying to improve and support folks to want to go into the trades from a housing perspective. It's really important, in particular, because of the distinctions-based funding and the funding that we have to build and there only being a certain number of trades people, right, so there's more work than we have for the apprentices. One thing we're also doing is putting apprentice work packages into the contracting that we're doing for some of our builds. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Great. And I also noted, so in the business plan -- and here I'm looking at page 421 -- there's a goal to work with ITI to foster the development of innovative

approaches to housing construction and expand capacity also in the repair and renovations sector. And so the specific goal there that Housing NWT has set for itself is 16 training sessions. I assume per year but maybe the Minister can clarify. And some of the examples so far are some sort of basic training sessions conducted with LHOs. Can the Minister explain what is the vision here, because it seems like a one-off training on safety or is not going to necessarily get us to the innovative approaches to sort of boosting our housing construction or repair and renovation sector. So I wonder if the Minister or the Housing NWT has sort of a vision here of what kind of training we actually need and what kinds of sessions will get us there. That might be a bit vague, but I wonder if the Minister or her staff can comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide more information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There have been nine training sessions to date with the local housing authorities or organizations. Some examples are things like maintenance, biomass training, and safety training with respect to the types of training for the -- for housing stakeholders.

With respect to work with ITI to foster the development of innovative approaches, I just met with ITI recently to have some discussions, but I can certainly speak to our work with METCAN in Hay River and how we're working together on pilots. For example, a core and then a -- a core that has all of the mechanical pieces in it and then an envelope that would be sent up to a small community for example, and there's a pilot that's going on with that right now. So there is work that's being done on innovative building technologies that's ongoing right now, and that's just one of the examples. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you. And so can you clarify when you're talking about these nine training sessions, is that with staff that are already working for the LHOs and they're gaining additional skills, or are these -- is that training people so that we can hire new people or training people who work for other organizations such as Indigenous governments

to -- like, who are we training, and are we hoping to get them, like, certifications out of this, or what is the -- really the expected outcome from those trainings? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide more insight into that question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it could be any of those things, but where we have been focusing right now is on training related to kind of these new units that are coming in. Some of them require additional expertise, like biomass for example, or training on other pieces. So we've been focusing on training the folks that are going to be doing the maintenance on those to make sure that they're up to speed on those elements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So it does sound like perhaps the focus is on training existing staff to sort of up their skills for what is coming and what's needed, which is super useful I understand. I think we do need sort of a more ambitious strategy around how we're going to ensure that we have people with the right skills in our communities to do the kind of repairs, renovations, housing maintenance, that we need to actually take care of our housing. And I know that goes beyond Housing NWT, and it requires working with other departments. I'll just put it out there now. I do think we need clear and more ambitious goals within our business plan of how we're going to get there. Right now we're, I think, just sort of doing little bits and pieces here and there and working around the edges. But I do look forward to further conversations with the Minister in the future about how we might be able to come up with a more ambitious vision and in coordination with other departments around that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So on page 388 of the business plan and at the end, the legislative initiatives, it speaks to revision of the Housing Northwest Territories Act, and substantive amendments are anticipated. But

in the business plan, it speaks to the fact that there would be information gathered on potential areas for change to this Act at the housing symposium, and I'm wondering if the Minister can elaborate on how those discussions went and what particular changes are being identified. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide more information about the changes around the legislation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The associate deputy minister Saturnino has been working with the forum, and they're at the stage of initial scoping at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. So in terms of scoping, I suppose, how are we contemplating how that process will look like? I recognize it's early days; you probably don't want to speak to specifics, and I can respect that as things are underway. But if there is anything that you can elaborate on at this point, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide more specifics to that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So during the renewal, a number of areas were brought up, including the relationship between the LHOs and Housing NWT. The intention is to work with the housing forum and then engage more with other partners on that legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thanks. Well, I'm hoping that's hinting at more collaboration, more ability to be locally appropriate for Housing NWT and the LHOs. But I -- again, I don't want to preclude those conversations; I just want to sort of understand the vision. So unless the Minister has anything further to add, I'll leave it there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to elaborate on that, and with Dr. Kelly here, the one thing that we have discussed with Housing NWT and our strategic renewal approach was working with Indigenous governments. And part of the mandate for the Government of the Northwest Territories is working more closely with Indigenous governments, especially concerning their distinction-based funding and having that as part of the change in legislation for Housing NWT. So, again, like the president indicated, there's initial scoping, there is ideas, but we will provide that more to the committee when we have more information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Was there any further questions from Great Slave? Thank you. Next on my list I got the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just switching gears here. Oh, thank you. I just wanted to ask about the pretty significant, almost million dollar, reduction to the policy and planning division. Can the Minister and her staff explain what those reductions entailed. Is there a reduction of capacity of that division as a result? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Policy and planning division, so \$748,000 decrease. This is primarily explained by additional staffing for the homelessness section, plus \$370,000 in addition, federally funded training and development for shelter staff. So there was some federal funds to the policy and planning division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I do apologize, I'm a bit confused by the Minister's answer because what I see in the budget is a reduction from 2167 to 1305, and the Minister just described increases.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: My apologies, Mr. Chair. Yes, I was in the wrong line item here. It's been a long day. Anyway. So sunset for internally funded positions, initiative positions, including the manager for community housing planning, community housing planner, homelessness specialist, and a manager of

communications. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And these are funded again -- Mr. Martin just indicated these are funded internally. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member for Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And so, yeah, just to be crystal clear on this, have we lost these positions, or are they -- just the way that they're being funded has changed? So -- okay, Ms. Reid is over here -- sorry, Member from Great Slave seems to be confirming. But I just want to make sure that we haven't lost that capacity because certainly we -- you know, when I look at the policy and planning division description, we definitely need that going on in the department, housing being such a high priority of the Assembly. So if the Minister can just confirm we haven't lost the capacity within the department. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to be crystal clear, I'll give it to Mr. Martin here to provide that answer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the vice-president.

MR. JIM MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the adjustments from 2024-2025 mains was to remove the manager of community housing planning, the community housing planner, the homelessness specialist, and the manager of communications. These were previously included in the prior year mains, and we moved these initiative positions to internal resources to be funded internally. Now, the position's so that have been carried over to 2025-2026 to be funded internally, we now are going to be funding six positions out of internal resources. And the six positions include the associate deputy minister, senior advisor to the associate deputy minister, senior planning and evaluation specialist that was mentioned previously by our president, manager of communications comes forward, manager of community housing planning came forward, a policy analyst, and the final position for 2025-2026 is a pathfinder position, integrated services delivery for housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Excellent. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate those answers and understanding better what's going on within the division.

I do note that the president kind of mentioned in her answer the community housing plans, and I am curious is that -- was updating the community housing plans, has that project been completed? Is there -- or is that ongoing work?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. President Kelly will provide an update on the community housing plans.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the community housing planning initiative predated some of the funding that was provided to Indigenous governments, and so -- for housing. And in some cases our focus with Indigenous governments and communities has shifted. So what we've done is those that want to continue to work on those community housing plans, we're working -- working with them, and if they want to work on different -- and focus on different options, we're focusing on those. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all my questions for this page.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Are there any further questions? Okay, seeing no further questions. We will move on to non-residential building operations starting on page 396. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask whether Housing NWT is considering getting out of the business of leasing buildings, I mean, to other GNWT departments or other community-based organizations and whether, for example, this activity would be better housed under, like, Department of Infrastructure. I guess -- okay, I'll just leave that as my first question to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Kelly will provide an answer to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're not considering that at this time, and we would

prefer to keep them with Housing NWT because the revenues fund some of the repairs and other things that the housing corporation does. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I don't -- under the expenditures related to this, I don't see anything listed by way of, like, the staff costs of managing these leases unless I'm missing something in the list there. But is the cost of staff time managing this included anywhere in this budget laid out on page 397? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. President Kelly will provide information around the staff costs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Any costs from a staffing perspective would be in the section that -- where we just came from, where it speaks to the staffing costs for the corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay. I mean, I'll just -- I'll just point out at this point, I understand that housing gets revenues from this that it can recycle into its other operations and that that is a benefit. But given that, you know, most of the funding for Housing NWT is coming from the GNWT, if it was determined that, like, leasing of commercial or non-residential space could be done more efficiently by another department that's doing a lot more of this and that somehow the revenues from that could still be guaranteed to go to Housing NWT, I would just urge that that could be something that might be a worthwhile measure given that I'm not certain how it fits with the mandate of Housing NWT to be managing, you know, commercial or non-residential leases. But I'll just -- I'll leave it there for now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Any further questions from Members? Okay.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: You want to answer that?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): You want to answer that then, Minister? Sorry, I'm ahead of myself here.

HON. LUCY KUPTANA: Yes, thank you. President Kelly will provide you some information, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the president.

DR. ERIN KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. These are nine buildings that Housing NWT owns, and we lease -- we lease out to others. So we get the revenue from those owned buildings, and we're supporting government operations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Yeah, it's been a long day too. Thank you. I'll -- any further questions from the Yellowknife Member? Thank you. Any further questions from Members? Okay, moving on. Seeing no further questions, we will move on to the rent subsidy program starting on page 398. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, we will move on to unilateral CMHC and other programs starting on page 400. Any questions? Seeing no further questions.

Moving on, we'll move on to the lease commitments on page 403. Are there any questions?

Seeing none. Committee, please return to the Housing Northwest Territories summary page on 383. Are there any further questions?

Nothing, I see nothing. No further questions. Does the committee agree that consideration of Housing Northwest Territories is now complete?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the chamber.

Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 275-20(1), Main Estimates 2025-2026. We will now consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Yes, I do. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right, I have deputy minister Gary Brennan. And to my left, I have Catherine Boyd, director of corporate affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Does the committee agree to forego general comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Does the committee agree to proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Committee, we will defer the department summary and review of the estimates by activity beginning with community governance starting on page 343. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 344.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community governance, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$3,104,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to the community governance, learning and development, beginning on page 347. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 348.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community government learning and development, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$1,697,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to the community operations beginning on page 351. Are there any questions? No further questions -- oh, sorry, my apologies. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So under community operations, I'm just noting under active positions, all 14 of the positions for community operations are located in headquarters in Yellowknife, I assume. Can the Minister explain why all of the positions related to community operations are located in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A lot of these positions are, like, the deputy minister and stuff like that, so they're the positions that are related to servicing the regional centres. But I'll also ask the deputy minister to add to that, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so those 14 positions are mostly technical positions consisting of designated accountants, engineers, and the like, and because they're technical positions they're difficult to staff outside the region, and they tend to work closely together on a daily basis in Yellowknife. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, overall, looking at all the active positions in MACA, it seems that this year we have 69 out of the 113 in total which are based out of headquarters; however, I am noticing that from last year, there's two that seem to have been transferred from headquarters to the regional offices, if I'm interpreting that correctly. Can the Minister explain what they managed to do to transfer at least two positions to regional offices out of Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of them is a training position at the school community governments. That's moved out to -- from Yellowknife. And the other one, I believe, is the one in Inuvik which is the climate change initiative position.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay. I mean, just to follow up on that line of questioning. I wonder is the Minister considering any other possible strategies or ways to try to recruit or find qualified people who either currently live or willing to live in some of the communities outside Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. So we're always looking at ways to get

positions into the communities. You know, some of the most recent positions were the emergency management coordinators to assist with the regions for the position -- or for emergencies and stuff. So we have currently those two positions that are one in the South Slave and then one in the Beaufort Delta that are relatively new, and we're constantly looking at ways to getting more positions in the smaller communities through training initiatives or anything like that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Yellowknife North.

MS. MORGAN: Okay, I'll leave it there for now, that's fine. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister explain a little bit more about the school of community governments. How is that -- is it a department or a division of the organization? If so, how many people work there, and what are the duties of this group?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you. I'm going to pass this off to the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so the community government learning and development division is basically a division that organizes and supports training for communities. I think there's about four to five people located in Yellowknife, and four regional TDAs, or training and development advisers. So what they do is develop and deliver training programs. So, for example, water treatment plant. We do firefighting training. We organize public works type training, teaching people how to operate arenas, pools, offer finance governance, and a whole host of other community training. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Sahtu.

MR. McNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all I know, it was just a little more explanation of -- on that division of services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Are there any further questions? I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Further to my colleague's question here, the school of community governments, you do training for the people that run the arenas, organize staff, they organize community -- well, I guess they would need training for all of that. Are there qualifications that they need to have specific to this job? Like, the qualifications for the job, to do the job when they get hired on? Because you're training them how to use all this other equipment, but is there training they need for this? Like, schooling for -- to apply for a job in this area? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For those positions, you know, being the technical part that they are, they would need certain qualifications in order to train, like facility maintainers or, you know, the firefighter training, stuff like that. So those -- the trainers would need the training, and also the people on the ground would need the training to operate the water treatment plants, the facility maintainers, and the other programs that are offered. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: I was just wondering about, like, even recreation coordinators. Like, if you hire a recreation coordinator, what is their -- what do they do? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is that a recreational coordinator hired by the municipality or by the GNWT?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: By the municipality.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: I would have to say that's depending on what the job description is for the facility, rec facility maintainer. I mean, some facilities or some municipalities like Fort Simpson, for an example, you know, being a bigger facility would need a recreational coordinator or recreational facility maintainer more qualified than some place like a recreational coordinator in, let's say, Jean Marie River for an example. So, yeah, depending on what kind of facilities they're operating is the type of training they would need. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: I don't have anything further on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Is there any further questions from Members? No further questions, please turn to page 352.

Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$2,333,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to the directorate beginning on page 355. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from -- Great Slave. Sorry about that.

MS. REID: That's okay, Mr. Chair; we're getting late into the evening.

So my question for the Minister is around the legislation for MACA. Will we be seeing an amendment to the Property Assessment Taxation Act in the life of this Assembly, and will it be developed under the legislative development protocol? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Finance is leading that section.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): All right, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: I just thought it might have some interplay with MACA due to your assessments. But what input will you be providing? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department is supporting the working group for that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Next on my list I got the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So under the partner contribution funding, it's \$460,000, and it's provided to them NWT Association of Communities, the Local Government Administrators of the NWT organization, and the Arctic Energy Alliance. I understand the contributions to LGANT and NWTAC. Can you explain the nature of the contribution to Arctic Energy Alliance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: I'm going to ask the deputy minister to respond to that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so we do pay a nominal amount to the Arctic Energy Alliance just because of the work that they do on climate change in the North, and we utilize some of their services at times. So I'm not quite sure of the amount, but I think it's around \$20,000 per year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. And is this a defined contribution, or is it a -- is it something more like core funding? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you. I'll pass that to the deputy minister to respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: I believe that's core funding. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. I'm on a continuing mission to find out who we core fund and who we don't. So that's helpful.

As to the 2023-2024 actuals compared to the revised estimates, financial services, policy planning and regional management are basically cut in half. Can you explain why that is the case.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to ask Catherine to respond to that. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the director.

MS. CATHERINE BOYD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify the Member's question, I believe you're referring to the actuals are twice as big as the budget. So it's over expenditures due to such things as unfunded positions, various other -- I think it's unfunded positions. I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. So you've -- so the -- is this part of the sustainability exercises? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: I'll ask the deputy minister to respond, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so, no, that's not related to fiscal sustainability exercises or any other type of reduction. It's just an overspend in 2023-2024. As Ms. Boyd alluded to earlier, some of it was basically unfunded positions, and also during that year we had the incremental expenditures related to some of the disasters, including the fires that year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. So these -- so we're not anticipating that we need to maintain the same level of resource for this upcoming year I guess on -- like, hopefully we're not anticipating another evacuation or something like that. I just want to make sure, like does the department have the resources in these functions that it needs to maintain its level planning and preparedness in case there is an emergency? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. We do feel comfortable that we have the right amount of staff right now. We also have standup staff available that we've recruited for in case of emergencies, and think that's still an active posting on the GNWT website there.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Next on my list I got the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake. No further questions? Okay, thank you. Is there any further questions from the Members? Seeing none, please turn to page 356.

Municipal and Community Affairs, directorate, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$4,407,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to the emergency management beginning on page 359. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member of Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I continue to recognize that we've just got too many darn lakes in this Assembly.

Mr. Chair, has MACA considered assuming responsibility for other departmental emergency disaster programs such as hunters and trappers disaster compensation, fire damage compensation? These are both programs that are currently contained under ECE to perhaps -- or sorry, ECC. Thank you, Member from Great Slave -- to integrate service delivery and streamline emergency response responsibilities within the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We haven't, but a lot of those programs are related essentially with that department. For an example, like hunters and trappers with ECC, yes. That follows along that line of -- you know, the regulations and the, yeah, hunting and trapping rules and regs and all that stuff, so.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad I'm not the only Member that stumbles over our EC departments.

Mr. Chair, are there plans to update the disaster assistance policy? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Yes, thank you. There is plans to update that following the release of the after action review.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. On emergency management, something that was brought up to me when I was going door to door during the election is -- and pointed out to me is that emergency management operations tend to be managed in other governments, or at least are managed in other governments in some cases, by kind of a separate emergency management organization. Is this something that MACA's ever looked to whether there would be any benefit to it? I mean, I think certainly considering in a time of fiscal responsibility if it required setting up different structures, it may not be the fiscally responsible thing to do, but I am wondering if MACA has looked to other jurisdictions how they kind of structure and manage emergency -- sorry, how they structure the organization that manages emergencies and see if there's anything we can learn from what other jurisdictions are doing to help improve our effectiveness. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sure the Member can appreciate that a lot of the other centres are a lot bigger and can have the capacity and the resources and the people to do that whereas we don't. So we do, essentially, have a separate entity within MACA that is able to stand up and set up in case of an emergency. So we have our EMO court manager, and they have the resources to stand up a team separate from essentially MACA with some people essentially filling roles within that to stand up during an emergency, like our casual or relief EMO assistant people that we're advertising. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Frame Lake.

MR. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's it for me.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Next on my list I have is the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm going to ask about the ground search and rescue. Apparently, we do not

provide support to ground search and rescue through the emergency management organization, and this is something that was one of the recommendations of the audit that was held -- or the report that was held to review things. Is there any reason why we can't make changes to the emergency management organization to bring ground search and rescue under its umbrella so we can better coordinate these efforts in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, a lot of it relates to capacity. You know, a lot of organizations that do ground search and rescue are volunteer organization supported and, similarly, that's what we do in the GNWT, we're supporting ground search and rescue volunteer organizations. Like, today, for an example, with our volunteer awards, we had an organization from Ulukhaktok that was being recognized for their work with search and rescue. So there are organizations out there that are set up and like other provinces, have ground search and rescue groups that are essentially on their own fundraising and with the ability to do ground search and rescue for if needed. So we do support them essentially financially for a community up to a certain amount -- and it states all on the website -- with the ability to support them for, like, standup expenses like food and such things like that. So there is a government support for local communities during standup of a ground search and rescue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. So -- and I do know that, and it is volunteer driven, and I want to commend the volunteers who do this work in our communities and recognizing the award that was given today. That's great to the recognition from the department as well so I commend the Minister and his department for that. But I have been in contact with the Yellowknife Ground Search and Rescue Team, and there are some concerns here that are concerning, to say the least.

Right off the bat, I mean, they had funding for training, around \$5,000 -- which isn't very much money -- that was cut, and I'm wondering if that money could be reinstated so they can continue to do things like the adventure smart program I mentioned earlier today. This is a great program. The training materials are out there. They just need a little bit of resources to keep

the training going. They do it on their own time. \$5,000 isn't very much. I don't expect a commitment today -- I'd like one but can -- I don't expect it, but could the Minister at least work with the team, the YK Search and Rescue Team, and find ways that we can provide a little bit more support because some of that's been pulled back, and if he has to work with the Department of Justice, what have you, but this is something that I think is really important that we continue to support these volunteers in our communities because it's tough work, and they take a lot -- it takes a lot out of them to commit the time and energy into these lifesaving activities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. And no question this is tough work, and a lot of it, you know, again is volunteerism. Like any other NGO, I believe there's programs out there that they can, you know, try to attract and maybe support themselves, and I think there's a few departments that have funds available that could potentially be useful to that NGO. But right now, a lot of the funds that we have are available for local governments when they go to stand up in a ground search and rescue incident and get things going. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Frame Lake. Sorry, I'll go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Best lake. Okay, so thank you, Minister. I'm probably going to bring some questions to you tomorrow in question period around this so we can get more of that out on the floor.

So obviously, there's been a big decrease in the funding for this activity because of the extraordinary events that happened in 2023-2024. My concern is we have an imminent afteraction review that's being done by a third party that we should expect this fiscal year. Presumably it will have recommendations. How does the department intend to act on those recommendations? Because if there's no money put behind it -- I mean, I can't imagine we're going to see a situation where there's recommendations that are just change policy here and there and make minor improvements. Like, is there a plan or contingency being set aside to meet those? I'm not looking for details of that report or anything like that. I'm happy to wait what's coming, it's just is there a -- is there a plan in place to be prepared to act on those urgently, or are we going to have to see sups, or is this going to

wait for future years, or is it just not going to be funded? I guess I'm looking for clarity on that, because this is still something that's -- when we got elected, this was a top issue. It has kind of not receded into the background because we had -- we've had to move on as global events have taken us forward, but we still can't forget about it because it is fundamentally why many of us were elected to -- including the Minister, to bring this heightened level of scrutiny to emergency management in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, and I -- you know, I agree with the Member. There's definitely -- once the afteraction review is completed, there's probably going to be some changes. But we also can't speculate what those changes are so we obviously have to wait to see what potentially the identifying costs are going to be and how we're going to act on them. Some of them may not be costs. Some of them just may be operational. So you know, once the afteraction review is complete and we're able to see what we have to do, then we can start putting feelers out there for costs in regards to what we have to do for the recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: I'll conclude my saying I would support any of those costs, even if it means shifting other priorities or making adjustments to infrastructure for whatever, whatever it takes, because this emergency management system, you know, needs the resources it needs to be effective. We know that things are going to get more difficult in future years with the ongoing climate emergencies that we are experiencing as a territory and, of course, an increasingly hostile geopolitical environment. So we need to be prepared for any outcome. So this is my blank cheque to the Minister to support anything his department needs in terms of emergency management and public safety going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess just to share some information with that. You know, with the anticipated afteraction review coming in, the departments have already aligned a working group that is already set up to start actioning some of this stuff. So the working group is already being formed to

work on the afteraction review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go back to the Member from Range Lake. No further questions? Thank you. Going to go to the Member from the Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Just waiting to hear from -- just kidding. Emergency management. Okay, you said there's probably going to be the updates to the disaster assistance policy. What will be the updates?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. So the federal government did do an update to the disaster federal -- the DFAA, and that is the federal government's policy, so our disaster assistance policy somewhat aligns to that, so that's going to be updated a little bit to align to that or -- yes, so, but what it comes down to -- I'll just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the Member from Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Okay, for community, MACA funds the building of community fire guards. Do they fund it? So fire guards are not funded by the community, so this is not part of your emergency?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. So the -- any of the funding, when it comes down to mitigation like that, a lot of that lies with NWTAC and ECE -- ECC. So the community have to have their emergency plans updated and then work with those departments and that agency to apply for some funding for that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: Okay, yeah, given that all of the wildfires we went through in the last couple of years, it's top of mind for every -- with a lot of people, top of mind, thinking about the spring is coming. So have all the communities finished their emergency -- community emergencies plans in my region? I'm asking for the Deh Cho because I'm worried about things for the springtime. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is a very good question. I don't have that

handy in front of me right now, but I'll -- I know I sent out the community fact sheets, and they're on there, but I'll ask the deputy minister here.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, so it looks like most of the communities in the region have had a community emergency plan updated in the last two years. The most recent one I see is from June 2022 -- no, sorry, that's a different community. Yeah, Enterprise, Fort Providence, and KFN all have had a plan updated in the last two years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Member from Deh Cho.

MRS. YAKELEYA: No, that's good because I -- that's what I wanted to know about. And just continue to work at helping communities update their community emergency plans. That's top of mind because if things happen, it could get really chaotic in some places. So having our plans is always a way to make sure residents and communities feel safe. Thank you. More of a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Minister.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of being proactive -- I don't even remember when it was. This spring or last fall we sent out letters to all the communities, you know, basically informing them that it's a good time to be prepared and get ready and update their community emergency plans. So every community government in the territory should have received that letter and, at that time, if they felt that they needed some assistance, they could have reached -- they could reach out to the regional superintendents, and the department could assist them in making sure their community emergency plans are up to date or anything else that they required. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. Is there any further questions? Seeing none, please turn to page 360.

Municipal and Community Affairs, emergency management, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$1,029,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to public safety beginning on page

362. Are there any other questions? Yes, I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Chair, as I've spoken about in this sitting, there are a lot of folks in the territory who are struggling with extremely high property insurance renewals and, unfortunately, my inquiries to the Department of Finance and the Minister of Finance have not proved very fruitful in that regard. We don't really have a lot of legislative levers under the Insurance Act. However, we do have, in this section, consumer affairs and MACA has this really fun brochure that says, hey, that's not fair - a Guide to Consumer Protection in the NWT. And I was reading through it, and I'm not really sure if when someone gets an extreme hike from an insurance company that that could be covered by this consumer affairs protection part of MACA, and I thought I'd let the Minister clarify. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE MCKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is a good question. I think we'll have to take that back and get a response for you if that's okay, to get that clarified and see if we can get that for you. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Well, thank the Minister for that, and I hope that there is some levity that he might be able to offer residents of the Northwest Territories. I recognize many of our insurance companies do not operate in the Northwest Territories so it might be -- prove very difficult for the department but any information he can share, greatly appreciated. More a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to continue on. I'm going -- is there any other Members that have questions? Okay. Seeing none, no further questions, please turn to page 363.

Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$3,208,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to the regional operation -- operations, beginning on page 366. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 367.

Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operation, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$105,543,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Moving on to sport and recreation and youth beginning on page 370. Are there any questions? No further questions, please turn to page 371.

Municipal and Community Affairs, sport and recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$7,199,000. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. There are additional information items on page 375 to 377. Are there any questions? I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Madam -- or oh, my gosh, I'm used to a different Member. Mr. Chair. My apologies.

Can the Minister please explain the difference -- how they go about estimating revenue from the lottery revenue on page 375? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: I'll ask Gary to respond to this, the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. GARY BRENNAN: Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the lottery fund revenues, I mean, a lot of it is based on historical information of what we've seen and also trends in Western Canada, so we're part of the Government of Western Canada Lottery Act, and essentially, you know, our sales tend to stay fairly static in the North. We see marginal increases when there's significant jackpots. So you see a lot more jackpots at 50, 60, \$70 million, and that brings more money into the coffers. However, we're also seeing increase costs related to delivery of the program, similar to other areas that we've heard of. Transportation has gone up, and we're mailing stuff all over the North, so we do see our expenditures go up as well. And even in the rent costs that we're seeing an increase. So the numbers have stayed fairly static. You'll see that in 2023-2024 there was a significant decrease which is directly related to the evacuation of Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort

Smith, three of the biggest users. So other than that, we do use basically historical type information for estimating the revenue going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's a lot of information and great, that explains everything I wanted to know.

I do have one further question. I note that the clean water and wastewater fund on page 377 has been deleted, similar to other departments that have participated in this work. I know HSS has found money to continue and is looking for continued funding around that work. My question to the Minister is will MACA still be participating in assisting HSS with this work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are, yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Great Slave.

MS. REID: That's great. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Next on my list I have got the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am keenly interested in gaming in the Northwest Territories and how we can expand our gaming revenues in particular because there is unregulated gambling going on in -- online right now as we speak, which is unprotected, the consumers are not safe from potentially bad actors who are offering those services online. Many of these are offshore operators using dark money, etcetera. It's a very -- it's a very shady space, and we could be in the business of regulating this stuff that's already going on in our communities and bringing in some additional revenues to be used to, you know, fund our addictions programs, for example, or our youth and sport programs or arts programs or whatever have you. Is there any desire from the department to pursue taxing and regulating gaming in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I hit the bonus question here. I'm happy to continue to work with the Member on this initiative. I mean, this is a -- this is something

that has been brought up already and having gone through a couple little information sessions, it really opens your eyes at what's actually happening out there. So the department is working with -- sorry, the department has reviewed the information, and we're continuing to investigate it, if you will, so we're going to see what's next steps and where to take it. And I believe the department has -- is it Ms. Barber? I'm trying to remember -- yes, Ms. Barber, to reach out and work with -- or get more information from her or talk to her about the next steps kind of thing. So looking forward to more discussions on that topic. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for that. I am appreciating the collaboration on this.

Now just so that the public's aware, this could be worth as much as 7 to \$8 million of additional revenue for basically turning on a switch, a regulatory or legislative switch, with no cost to the taxpayer. And that's revenue, again, that could be used to deal with any matter of things. Of course, there are some social issues related to gambling in any jurisdiction, and these revenues could be used to address some of that in addition to providing much needed supports to other programs. In the Minister's correspondence, which I appreciate that the Minister maintains, Mr. Chair, an open mind to this and wants to continue to work, there is some concern around resourcing and potential costs in developing this initiative and consultations. Is there sufficient resources in the department to conduct this in an expedient manner? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments and, you know, to be honest, no, we don't have the resources within the department. But that being said, if -- I mean, if it shows that we have the opportunity to take in some, you know, good revenue, I'm sure we can find a way to stand up a position. But that's something we'd have to bring forward after investigating more of this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Is there a timeline that the Minister can provide when they expect to be in a position to make that decision? I'm just -- it doesn't have to be exacting but just a range of, you know, six months, a year. I'm just

getting a sense because I've been working on this with my own kind of independent researcher, including Ms. Barber, for about a year now, and -- or less than a year, but, you know, a period of time, and we've made a lot of good connections. We've done a lot of good work in pulling options together. So if I get a sense of that, again, I'm happy to continue to work with the Minister, but I'm just wondering what timeline I could expect, and our friends we've engaged with can expect, so we can continue to support the department in this work. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'll go to the Minister.

HON. VINCE McKAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I don't have any timing, and I can't give any timing. I think right now with the department, you know, we're prioritizing what we're doing, and with the anticipated release of the afteraction review, I think we kind of have to watch where we're setting ourselves or putting ourselves thin and staff, so there is no timeline right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Range Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. No, I appreciate the honesty there. And as I said previously, that's exactly where I want the department's focus to be, so I'll just continue to encourage the Minister to reach out, and we'll continue to work on this. There's other ways to move public policy forward in our system, including working with Regular Members. I'm happy to provide whatever support to the department to make this initiative a success and, again, to tax and regulate what's already going on, keep people safe, fund the fight against addictions, and bring some much-needed revenue into government coffers. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Okay, thank you. I'll take that as a comment. I'm going to continue on. Are there any further questions?

Seeing none, Members, please return to -- return now to the department summary found on page 399 with information items on page 340 to 342. Are there any questions?

Seeing no further questions, committee, I will now call the department summary on Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditure total, total department, 2025-2026 Main Estimates, \$128,520,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you, committee. Committee, do you agree that we concluded the summary for Municipal and Community Affairs? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. I'm going to go to the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. RODGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Edjericon): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness from the chambers. Committee, we will now move to the -- or sorry, that's it.

---Carried

---SHORT RECESS

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole. Member from the Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. EDJERICON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 275-20(1) and would like to report progress. And Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member from Tu Nedhe-Willideh Can I have a seconder? Member from Yellowknife North. All those in favour? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carried.

---Carried

Third Reading of Bills. Minister.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 12:
BUSINESS DAY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT,
CARRIED

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Minister of Justice, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 12, Business Day Statute Law Amendment Act, be read for the third time. And, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister of Justice. The motion's in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The Member from Hay River North has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): The Member for Hay River North. The Member for Hay River South. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. The Member for Nunakput. The Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. The Member for Deh Cho. The Member from Sahtu. The Member for Yellowknife Centre. The Member for Range Lake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. The Member for Frame Lake. The Member for Great Slave. The Member for Yellowknife North. The Member for Thebacha. The Member for Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. Colleagues, vote: 15 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions. Motion has passed. The motion is carried. Bill 12 has had third reading.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Glen Rutland): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, February 28th, 2025, at 10 a.m.

1. Prayer or Reflection
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
 - Oral Question 530-20(1), Senior Envoy to Government of Canada
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
 - Written Question 13-20(1), Physician Staffing

10. Replies to the 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 Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
 - Tabled Document 275-20(1), 2025-2026 Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 28th, 2025, at 10 a.m. in the morning.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

