



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, March 5, 2013****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Robert McLeod, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER'S RULING

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Before we proceed with the orders of the day, I wish to make a ruling on the series of written questions submitted by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses, on Monday, March 4, 2013.

Mr. Moses and all honourable Members need to be reminded of and respect your rules governing written questions. Written questions may only contain one initial question and four supplementary questions. Members may not circumvent this rule by simply renumbering their questions into smaller subsections. This is contrary to the spirit and intent of your rules.

I must rule Mr. Moses' initial series of questions out of order, as they did not conform to the rules. After I brought these limitations to Mr. Moses' attention, he continued with "new written questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services" which did, in fact, adhere to our rules and I will allow these questions to stand. However, I will ask Mr. Moses to resubmit his earlier series of questions in a proper format on a subsequent day.

I would ask all Members to keep these parameters in mind as you formulate future written questions. Thank you.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 37-17(4):
MINISTER'S FORUM ON ADDICTIONS
AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS**

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, few social issues are more visible in a community than those that stem from addictions.

Not one community in the entire Northwest Territories can claim to be free from the health and social problems caused by addictive behaviours.

That is why prevention and enhancing established treatment facilities in the NWT are priorities of the 17th Assembly.

Homelessness, poverty, violence and chronic disease all become part of the cycle of addictions that destroy lives and communities.

Our government spends over \$9 million annually on counselling and treatment. The department continues to enhance existing programs to provide treatment and solutions to addictions. Unfortunately, many residents still suffer and are unable to break free from alcohol and drugs. Mr. Speaker, it is time for a different approach. We need to encourage more personal responsibility and provide more support to those who make the choice to remain clean and sober.

We want our people to stop suffering and to have access to treatment that works, so that they can become productive members of society and proud residents of the NWT.

That is why we have taken a stand and established the Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness. Mr. Paul Andrew chairs the forum and its 11 members come from across the NWT. Members break into teams to hear from the residents who have firsthand knowledge about the damage addictions can cause. We want people to share their ideas about solutions that will work in their communities.

The forum has already visited Fort McPherson, Hay River, Enterprise, Fort Resolution, Hay River Reserve, Lutselk'e, Fort Smith, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Deline to seek out answers to addictions issues.

Common themes so far are the need for parenting skills, cultural activities for youth, and on-the-land activities for families. We realize that we have to adapt these ideas for each community, as there is no single solution.

This is an important first step in implementing our Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, A Shared Path Towards Wellness.

We will hold discussions in every region of the Territories. The focus will be on what works for our people and our communities. We will talk to people who are sober, people who are struggling with

addictions, and family members who experience firsthand what living with addictions is like.

Communities have developed effective practices and responses to addictions and mental health issues that need to be supported. I want to know what makes people stop drinking and want to live a healthy, fulfilling life.

The forum will make recommendations on the direction of community-based addiction programs by May 1st. The final report will provide advice about how to enhance our territory's community-based addictions programs. I look forward to reporting its results to this Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 38-17(4):
SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY MODEL

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the universal skills required to lead people, champion innovation and manage change are becoming even more important, given the GNWT's complex and ever-changing work context. These skills combine with our staff's technical skills and knowledge to make them strong, capable leaders. I am pleased to announce that our new Senior Management Competency Model will guide the development of management expertise within the public service as we work to achieve the 17th Assembly's vision and goals.

The Senior Management Competency Model provides a description of the patterns of behaviours that are valued by the GNWT and are required for success as a senior manager in the public service. A senior manager means a job with titles such as deputy minister, president, chief executive officer, assistant deputy minister, director and superintendent.

Mr. Speaker, we all expect both leadership and management from the top levels of government. Based on those two qualities, the senior management competencies define how managers can be successful in their roles.

Leadership excellence focuses on personal and interpersonal conduct, how to strategically think about problems and strategies, and building relationships with stakeholders to achieve the goals and priorities that are important to Northerners.

Management excellence focuses on setting a plan in motion and getting it done. That means creating the conditions to allow people to achieve results and maximizing effectiveness and sustainability of our human, financial and environmental resources.

Mr. Speaker, creating an effective and efficient government is a priority of the Legislative Assembly. The new competency model supports

the objectives of the NWT Public Service Strategic Plan, and provides a solid business foundation to transform our strategic human resource processes, from hiring to succession planning. Our expectations for senior managers will be clear and we'll give staff the help they need to develop as leaders.

Training for senior managers on the new competencies is scheduled for March. Our next steps are to develop a competency model for all other GNWT roles that will work hand in hand with the ePerformance module of PeopleSoft. ePerformance, approved through the Department of Human Resources' 2012-13 Capital Estimates, will streamline our manual performance evaluation process and support the performance management process for all departments and agencies.

Mr. Speaker, as we work together to build a strong, sustainable future for our territory, the Senior Management Competency Model is an important public service investment. It will support our staff to meet the needs of all of our residents as they provide critical programs and services throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 39-17(4):
INCOME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATES

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment continues to improve its income security programs to ensure that residents of the Northwest Territories receive the support they need to tackle barriers they face to enter the workforce and meet their financial needs.

In April 2009, the office of the Auditor General began its financial and performance audits of income security programs in the Northwest Territories, completed in September 2012. In anticipation of recommendations coming from the audit, the department has already begun work to improve accountability and streamline services.

To highlight some of the recent changes we have already made, we improved upon the Child Care User Subsidy program by including it as an enhanced benefit under the Income Assistance program. We have increased child care rates, introduced shorter payment wait times, and are supporting part-time daycare. We have also made the program more flexible to accommodate our clients who work more than the standard work week. Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to announce that, as a result, participation in the program has increased by 56 percent. These changes also support our early childhood

development initiatives targeted at raising healthy children.

In December 2012, the department set up a new exemption for clients that receive Impact Benefit Agreement, Treaty and land claims payments up to \$500 per household. This is in addition to the annual \$1,200 exemption. Neither of these exemptions affects clients' benefit levels. This change recognizes that these monies should actually benefit those who are affected by development and not penalize those at a lower income level.

I am also happy to announce a partnership with the Department of Justice to allow fully eligible clients to pay for criminal record suspensions as an income assistance benefit. This partnership will assist clients in attaining valuable employment and help to strengthen the Northern economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the client service officers who deliver this program across the territory. These workers often come from the community and face enormous stress every day to balance the need for supporting people's progress and the need to account for program expenditures. As a rule, they treat people with respect and dignity and diligently focus on promoting healthy and productive choices for their clients.

We recognize that we have more work to do to meet the needs of our income assistance clients. With the pending recommendations from the Auditor General and the improvements we are already making, I am confident we are on the right path to ensure we have healthy, educated people free from poverty. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BELL SATELLITE BROADCAST OF HAY RIVER COMMUNITY TELEVISION CHANNEL

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Hay River Community Channel is owned by the Hay River Community TV Society and is licensed for their channel on an annual basis. The daily operation and funding to run the community channel, also known as Hay River's Green Screen, is donated by the Hay River Elks Club.

The Hay River Community TV Society is a member of an organization – and this is where this gets interesting – called CACTUS. CACTUS stands for Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations, which was created to educate consumers to improve access by Canadians to two specific media services: local media, especially

video and television programs, and media production training and equipment at the local level, especially video and television.

CACTUS approached the CRTC a little over a year ago regarding seven communities in Canada that are members of CACTUS and operated a community service channel the same or similar to the Hay River channel. They requested a review of small community channels, suggesting that the community content in smaller communities was being lost. Can you believe the CRTC passed a ruling that Bell Expressvu would take on these seven community channels and order them to run on Bell satellite? Hay River was one of those seven communities and now is being televised coast to coast.

The challenge is that volunteers like Gary Hoffman, who is with the Elks, have been doing this all on their own. It's a non-profit organization; it's pretty low key. If you go on the Hay River Community Channel you can play bingo on Tuesday nights. We have people contacting us, asking us to send them bingo cards down south because they're not from Hay River. The Anglican Church tapes their services on Sunday mornings and plays it Sunday afternoon. Then there are community announcements which rotate on there. It's kind of low key. Town council has a live feed for town council on Monday nights.

I've had friends and relatives from down south contact me for weeks, saying that Bell has been promoting the fact that there is a new Hay River channel coming on. They're going, what's going to be on it? Well, I didn't know it, but it's the community channel that's going to be running and it's gone live. They've already flipped the switch.

We have this amazing opportunity, and would you believe that the channel is 649? We have won the lottery in Hay River with this channel. The Northwest Territories has won the lottery. If we can use this 24-hour channel and we can get some staff into that office to run it, can you imagine how much we can publicize Hay River and the Northwest Territories? I'm obviously going to be asking the government for some money to get this going and get a paid position.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DUTY OF THE CROWN TO CONSULT WITH FIRST NATIONS ON MINING DEVELOPMENT

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last December the Yukon Court of Appeal issued a very important ruling on the duty of the Crown to consult with First Nations. The Ross River Dene case concerned the Yukon court's Mining Act. This act provides for a free entry system by allowing an

individual to physically stake a claim and then record it. The officials have no discretion to refuse to record a claim unless certain technical requirements are not met. The court found that the Yukon government does have duty to consult with First Nations when recording claims in asserted traditional territory. This decision calls into question the Yukon's entire mineral rights system.

Others have also questioned the fairness of free entry systems generally. In the NWT we also have a free entry system which is now governed by the Canada Mining Regulations. The Yukon decision should make us ask whether the federal regulations also fail to reflect the duty to consult with First Nations.

It is my understanding that the Canada Mining Regulations will continue to apply in the Northwest Territories after devolution, possibly in the form of mirrored legislation. It concerns me that we could be taking on legislation that does not reflect Aboriginal rights.

It is critical that mineral development in the GNWT involve consultation with First Nations, by both government and industry. We need to make sure our legislation reflect this and this could mean we need to make some changes. I hope we are prepared for this.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BENEFITS OF HERITAGE FAIR STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to highlight the work of a young Frame Lake constituent. Ms. Jazzy Hans is a 10-year-old student at J.H. Sissons School and she has taken the occasion of the annual Heritage Fair at her school to follow her Olympic dream.

Jazzy decided to do research about her role model, Christine Sinclair. After Ms. Sinclair's performance at last summer's Olympics, hopefully Members know that she is a spectacular Canadian Olympic soccer forward, that she plays for the Portland Thorns Football Club and is captain for the Canadian National soccer team.

Jazzy has been hard at work writing letters to various people in Yellowknife, including me, her MLA, and members of the soccer community in the NWT. As part of her research, she's also asking Ms. Sinclair to come and visit Yellowknife. Jazzy's Heritage Fair activities are a great example of project-based experiential learning, learning that positively engages our students.

Heritage fairs in the NWT are coordinated by the NWT Heritage Fairs Society, and the society is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to encouraging young people to explore and share the

history of their family or their community, as well as the heritage of people and places of the Northwest Territories. The opportunity to take part in a heritage fair is enriched when students explore a personal connection to their heritage, like my young constituent, Jazzy Hans, has done. Heritage fairs present opportunity for students to create projects about persons, places, events and traditions of the Northwest Territories or Canadian history, culture and heritage.

These projects encourage students to develop good research skills using a wide variety of sources. Projects are intended to encourage students to pursue topics that have a meaningful connection to their lives. Research that goes beyond the use of books and the Internet is encouraged and it may involve various skills such as interviewing, collecting artifacts, photography and so on, including writing letters.

Over the years, heritage projects have proven to be a very engaging way to make learning meaningful. Families, multi-generations of community members and students all benefit from the conversations and the resulting projects and displays.

Students can participate at three different levels of fairs. The first is class, school or community, the second level is regional, and the third level is territorial. Jazzy, by taking part in any one of these, can be considered for the territorial showcase, which will be held this May in Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: I ask all Members to join me in wishing Jazzy good luck with her Olympic soccer hero Heritage Fair presentation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COST ESTIMATES FOR THE INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to touch base from what we heard yesterday in Committee of the Whole and what the Transportation Minister, Mr. David Ramsay, said during his opening budget comments on the northern portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway system.

Admittedly, the Minister clearly has indicated that we have reached what he referred to as an important crossroad on this project. For the record, I agree. According to the Minister, the formalities of the environmental approval is imminent for the project to go forward, and with 85 percent of the design of the highway complete, the department has now sent a postcard to the Prime Minister's

office of an updated cost estimate of \$299 million. I guess we better start ordering the party hats, or should we?

I stood in this House on a number of occasions now, and I said I would support this project if the math was sound and if all the risk was clearly laid on the table. I stand firm on this commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories. I wish I could rejoice with the Department of Transportation on this announcement, but I do have some grave concerns on the current math that is before this House, and I further have questions on the lack of the formal risk matrix of the project.

With all the excitement in trying to rush for the upcoming construction season, Minister Ramsay has failed to provide to this House the formalities of what is still unknown about this project such as:

- With 85 percent design completed in preparation of this updated cost estimate, what if the remaining 15 percent of the highway is plagued with design issues or complications?
- Does the cost-sharing agreement with the government take into consideration the already \$12 million spent by taxpayers in doing our due diligence for this project?
- Do we know for certain what total royalties will be paid to the Inuvialuit Land Administration for buying their gravel?
- What should happen to the cost-sharing agreement with the territorial taxpayers if the project exceeds \$299 million of that threshold?
- Are we accountable for 100 percent of the overages?

As well, the Auditor General of Canada was very clear on her analysis of the Deh Cho Bridge that our risk matrix for that project was, indeed, very poorly conceived and practically useless, so where is the risk matrix for this northern portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway system? Have the people had a chance to look at this yet and ask the appropriate questions? One only has to look at our historical report card on projects on the Deh Cho Bridge and the E-3 School to realize that our government's performance and cost overruns on large-scale projects speaks for itself.

All the public wants is a fair and reasonable presentation of all the facts before this government pressures this House to hurry on closing this deal. Therefore, it is with protecting the public purse in mind that I'll be asking some of these fundamental questions to the Minister of Transportation later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENERGY-EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previous programs to help businesses acquire renewable energy equipment and technology have been cut back. These programs promoted business prosperity and success, by cutting the consumption and high costs of electrical and heat energy. Given our reliance on fossil fuel, greenhouse gas production is also cut, an important bonus. But even with adequately funded programs, many businesses can't take advantage because they lack the seed funds to go ahead. Programs provided up to \$10,000 for projects of up to \$40,000, but first you need to have the \$30,000.

The savings available from improved technology are no mystery. Our Arctic Energy Alliance and equipment suppliers can document the savings to be achieved. There's even a phrase, "the payback period," the time it will take for the savings from bills to pay the cost of buying and installing the new equipment.

Other progressive utilities have programs to overcome the problem of business cash flow by upfronting the cost of the new equipment. The loan is paid back from the savings realized over the payback period. The customer continues to pay the same higher energy bill they would have anyway, and the loan is paid down by the amount the new lower differs from the average former bill. When payback is complete, energy bills drop.

This is just one example of the program innovations that are old news across the South, lessons waiting to be learned. Simple, progressive and, above all, tailored to the realities of doing business in the Northwest Territories.

One opportunity is a more proactive and progressive approach by our utilities. We are already bankrolling our wholly owned Power Corporation with massive taxpayer subsidies because it produces power at a huge loss. The Town of Hay River's economic development coordinator was recently quoted as saying that high energy costs are the biggest disincentive to new business start-up and the biggest damper on business success. Families suffer because these high costs must be passed on in consumer prices.

Our new Energy Strategy is still in the works and there's time to do the research, to cost the programs and include some new ideas. The last expensive review of NTPC took us nowhere, we're still shovelling in taxpayer money. Without progressive action, it should be no surprise that as we wait for volatile fossil fuel costs to take off again, we will sink ever deeper.

I'll be looking for a serious, innovative and helpful funded approach to a new energy program for

businesses in the upcoming Energy Strategy. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROTOCOLS RELATED TO
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to continue on today with some of the findings that I had read in the Mental Health Act. What brought me to there is how many people are slipping through the cracks in the Northwest Territories. When I read the document it raised a lot of questions and I tried to get some of those addressed in my written questions yesterday.

Some of the questions that came across to me that I wanted to make sure that our government knew and the people of the Northwest Territories knew about were protocols. What are our protocols in the small communities in the health centres when nurses, lay dispensers, RCMP, peace officers what they have to deal with when they deal with somebody who has a mental disorder in a small community. Specifically, somebody in an isolated community where it takes a lot of time to get into that community to get it addressed.

Another couple questions were in terms of psychiatrists. We heard yesterday that we have two full-time psychiatrists, one full-time psychiatrist who made up of a group of locums that come from down south, and do these locums understand what our protocols are in the emergency rooms, in the hospitals, in the health centres?

Under the Mental Health Act, when we talk about the interpretations of what a psychiatrist is, another question that came to me was whether or not the Minister had approved any qualifications of anybody that can become a psychiatrist and has he made any of those appointments to date or approved them.

Other things that I was really concerned about was the time in which a written report was to be sent to the Minister's office for the detention of anybody that would be going to the emergency, to the jails, to the health centres; that a written report on the detention of certain individuals that would be under the Mental Health or that might be showing mental disorders and that they can be detained; and whether a written report within that 24-hour time frame was sufficient enough to detain that individual; and whether or not these psychiatric assessments could be completed within a 24-hour period, at the same time writing that report, and whether that needs to be looked at and amended in the Mental Health Act so that we are providing the best services and programs. I will have questions

later today for the Minister of Health and Social Services on those issues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK
HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's been well documented, and I'll repeat it again, I certainly support the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project as a project and I believe very strongly in the aspirations of the people of the Beau-Del region. I think they deserve their project in their own way and, in time, I have great confidence this project will come.

So when I talk about the Inuvik-Tuk highway I only talk about it as in the context of the work that still needs to be done. There are many details and many questions that still are outstanding, and no matter how we try to poke away and get to the facts or to the bottom of these issues, the threads keep unwinding and we still are not given the true story of the risk of this project.

I call the government to lay before the House and the people of the Northwest Territories a plain language document, one that discusses the risks, one that talks about the government's plan to mitigate the risks. This is not a hypothetical situation. These are realities before any large, major project. These are jobs that they would do anyway. The people of the Northwest Territories need to know and understand what deal has the Government of the Northwest Territories brokered with the federal government.

We have to understand what happens if cost overruns do not meet the expectation of the \$299 million on sale highway for the Inuvik-Tuk highway. This is not a deal held firm and held strong by targets, this is a deal where the Government of Canada will leave the people of the Northwest Territories hanging if cost overruns skyrocket.

I want to use the opportunity to harken the Members of this Assembly back to January 20, 1985. I received some documents from the Minister of Transportation that reflect this next point. If things are missing, I point the finger at the department for missed gaps. So I'm working, simply, with the information before me. It says, "DIAND shall be responsible for approving and providing funding for..." and if you go to one of the clauses, it says, "the construction of a new bridge at the Yellowknife River," and we're referring at Fort Providence, so we'd be referring to the Deh Cho Bridge.

Well, if I go back to the first statement, "DIAND shall be responsible for providing funding for..." you can see how well that deal worked out for us.

We have a \$202 million project that even they said in their transfer agreement that they would be behind.

There are many, many questions before this project. It's not a question do we like the project, we just want to make sure it gets off in the right way. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome a former resident of Inuvik, Mr. Dez Loreen. Welcome to the gallery, Dez.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to welcome a former resident of Inuvik, Mr. Dez Loreen, who also was a student youth councillor when I was on town council at one time, and a very good advocate for Inuvik in terms of reporting the news as well as other information that's happening around Inuvik, Northwest Territories. Welcome, Dez, to the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize today, probably no stranger to anyone, Mr. Kevin Wallington from Hay River, former town councillor now the big push on the Polar Egg initiative here in the North and a close family friend. You know he's a close family friend when he's a groomsman in both my sons' weddings. I'd like to welcome him here today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Today I would like to welcome, too, Dez Loreen. Welcome to the House, Dez. It's always good to see people from back home. Also, Mr. Colin Eade, our good friend from New Zealand, our counterpart from New Zealand. This is his last day here today in the House. Safe travels back home. I'd like to welcome all visitors in our public gallery here. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 176-17(4):

APPLICATION OF NWT MENTAL HEALTH ACT PROVISIONS IN SMALLER COMMUNITIES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and

Social Services. Quite frankly, I'd just like to ask the Minister how the Mental Health Act is being enforced in small communities where there is no psychiatrist and, in some cases, no nurses to complete a psychiatric evaluation or assessment, specifically in the isolated communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mental Health Act is something that we, in the Department of Health, recognize we need to have a lot more resources to be able to address every single issue that can be covered under the Mental Health Act. The act allows us to do a few things within the act. Some with the assistance of a nurse, if there is a nurse in the community, with the assistance of a peace officer, RCMP. Individuals who are reported to have some mental health issues could be apprehended by the RCMP, evaluated by a nurse, if that is what is available. In the small communities we use the resources that are available to try to follow the Mental Health Act if there are mental health issues.

MR. MOSES: The Minister flowed perfectly into my second question in terms of evaluation put on by the nurses. In the Northwest Territories we have eight communities that do not have a resident nurse. When we come up with these issues dealing with someone with a mental disorder, what is put in place for those eight communities where there is no resident nurse readily available to do that assessment? What is the protocol for the communities that do not have a nurse, that can't provide that type of assessment?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Previously, in the small communities, we had used lay dispensers to assist us in all of the physical health and mental health aspects. Those positions have been converted into community health workers. In those communities where we don't have nurses, we have community health workers. Community health workers are used to try to address as many of the mental health issues that may arise in those small communities where there are no nurses.

MR. MOSES: Can I get a confirmation from the Minister that all the lay dispensers underneath the Mental Health Act were actually transferred to the new job term health workers, and whether these health workers are covered under the Mental Health Act to provide those types of services, and whether they're going to amend that changing and add health workers to the Mental Health Act so that they understand they're covered for any type of liability to provide any type of emergency services?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The main function of the community health worker definitely is physical health and the addressing of physical health. Mental health is an issue that sometimes the

mental health worker would have limited knowledge of what to do in a situation and would have to draw on regional resources. In some of these communities, however, we have community wellness workers that can also be used to try to address people that are suffering from mental health issues in the communities. It's very difficult to have all the right resources and all of the right communities to be able to address mental health issues.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When an individual is brought to a health centre emergency room by a peace officer or someone in the community under a mental health disorder, a written report has to go to the Minister's office to ask for the individual to be detained. How is this addressed in the small communities when we have, possibly, communication challenges as well as somebody in the community possibly not being able to fill out the proper forms and allowing these people to get back out into the public when they really do need the help? How is this addressed with these written reports and does he feel a 24-hour period is sufficient enough to get the assessment and the report done?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. I want to remind the Members, short supplementary. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In those situations, although I can't specifically recall receiving any reports from RCMP officers that have apprehended somebody under the Mental Health Act, I do know that we have a director within the system who would maintain a registry of any of these type of encounters or issues that result from an individual that may be apprehended and then the report is provided through the office. The reports don't come directly to me but should eventually make their way. I don't believe that 24 hours is a sufficient time in the small communities to allow that report to go through the director, registrar, and then over to the Minister's office.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 177-17(4):

STATUS OF ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are directed to the Minister for the social envelope committee, Mr. Abernethy. Late last year a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy was released. There has been review and comment on that document from organizations, and I understand public feedback was formally collected through a survey, some focus groups and even street interviews. Could the Minister update us on the

current status of the Anti-Poverty Strategy, and when we can expect to see a new draft and when the completed strategy will be coming to this House?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; a draft came out in December. It was a rough draft and we've taken it out for public consultation and discussion, and we're seeking feedback and input on that. Much of that has now come in.

On behalf of the steering committee, we've got a team of dedicated staff who are actually finalizing a draft. We will have the final product out on March 31st. We will have a draft done before that which, hopefully, we'll have an opportunity to share and discuss with committee and other stakeholders.

MR. BROMLEY: I guess the draft should be coming out very soon, obviously, if the final is expected by the end of the month. This time frame stretches us, I would say, based on that, into the spring, and yes, we want to get it right to have a strategy that public groups can support and be ready to resource the strategy adequately.

The budget address noted that funding for a strategy would be brought forward as a supp before the next main budget, which is good news. Since we're gathering comment on the final draft strategy now, will the Minister commit to contracting peer review from outside experts so that we can get the benefit of experienced input from those familiar with other jurisdictions' efforts and ensure our strategy is the best it can be?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The first step is to get the foundation document done, which will be March 31st. That will be available for public distribution at that point. The second step is with the steering committee that's been established that includes members from the Anti-Poverty Coalition as well as Aboriginal governments and other organizations. We're going to continue to work with them and our working group to actually pull together a response to the framework which will be our action plan which will identify what things the government and other groups need to do to fight and combat poverty here in the Northwest Territories.

As the Minister of Finance indicated, we expect there to be some financial implications of that but we don't know what those are yet and it's too early to assume what the working group and steering committee are going to come up with. Once that's done, we'll be coming back to the House for some further discussion on what we need to fund in that area.

As far as a peer review, we are but a partner in this project. We are working with NGOs and different organizations, and we are relying on the steering

committee for a significant amount of direction on moving forward. If they are interested in peer review, it is something that we would certainly be interested in talking about, but we do have a desire to get this out as quickly as we can. We have done a significant amount of research with our partners and they will be involved throughout the whole process. They are the stakeholders out there who are dealing with people on a day-to-day basis. I'm not 100 percent sure that a peer review is going to be 100 percent necessary, but we look to the steering committee for some advice.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister's comments. I'd say that's being a responsible partner, being willing to discuss that idea. There are a number of strategies out there, as the Minister knows, that are very successful and others that are not. We'd prefer to be in the former category. We know this strategy needs to be not only an action plan for integrated cross-government action to reduce the alarming poverty and growing inequity in NWT society. It also needs to fully involve Aboriginal government partners and the business community. I know the Minister has a particular interest there. The need to raise the awareness of society at large, the benefits of reducing poverty is clear.

How will the Minister enhance the energetic participation of Aboriginal governments and business partners, and how does he intend to sell the benefits of poverty reduction as the strategy moves to being released?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member is right; that is pretty much exactly what we're going for, which is why we've engaged a steering committee that does have Aboriginal government representation as well as NGO engagement. We have been, and I have personally been, sending letters to the different Aboriginal governments and organizations of the Northwest Territories seeking additional input. We had Aboriginal governments involved in the working groups as well. I will continue to do that. We know that is critical. We know we have to engage all of our partners.

With respect to industry, our steering committee does have a member of the NWT Chamber on it and I have had a discussion with him personally, indicating how important this is to us and how important it is that we have business engaged. We maybe haven't had as much engagement from business and industry as we have hoped, but we will continue to push and I will continue to talk to industry representatives and Aboriginal government representatives at every opportunity. We are developing a comprehensive communications plan which we will use to get more of that information out and seek input, and the next step is still coming, the development of an action plan which we plan to engage all of our partners on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a comment. I found in these sorts of things that local businesses are the ones that are the real workhorses in this area of social responsibility. Keeping all departments coordinated in the development of the strategy has been a major challenge.

Will the Minister build in the creation of a funded secretariat to introduce the strategy, guide its integration into our programming, and do the evaluations we'll need for continued improvement, working with our partners, of course?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The government will have a continued involvement in the implementation of any action items that come out of the foundation. I won't commit to a secretariat, but I will commit that the government will maintain being actively engaged. We will work with our partners as we move forward and we'll continue to monitor the results. Without seeing the final plan, it's a little hard to say exactly how that's done. We expect some recommendations on how to monitor it and move forward with it to actually come from the steering committee as part of the action plan.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 178-17(4):
MINING REGULATIONS AND GOVERNMENT
DUTY TO CONSULT WITH FIRST NATIONS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the circumstances of the time for the NWT kind of moving toward devolution, at the same time, economically speaking, we're trying to develop a strategy. Part of that is to develop a mining strategy. My question is to the Minister of ITI.

Given the concerns raised about free entry mining system in the Yukon and elsewhere, has this government started any research into what we will need to do to make sure the NWT mining legislation reflects the duty to consult with First Nations?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories is monitoring the situation in the Yukon. We have to continue to analyze the implications of this decision over the next little while, and we certainly have to be cognizant of the implications that it could have here in the Northwest Territories. We are following this and we are paying close attention to what's happening in the Yukon.

MR. NADLI: Has this government started any research on what alternative approaches to the

mining regulations are out there other than the free entry system?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As I mentioned to MLA Nadli earlier, we continue to analyze this decision. We have to make sure that we know what the full implications are of that decision, and of course, the Government of the Yukon has appealed. We are following this along as it happens, and we need to pay very close attention to decisions that are made in the Yukon and how they may impact us here in the NWT.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 179-17(4):
POLICY GOVERNING INCREASES
TO MINIMUM WAGE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I'd like to go back to something that I've been talking about for quite some time. Since the 16th Assembly, I've been after the Minister and the government to increase minimum wage and to bring us on a par, or at least close to par, with the rest of Canada. We did have an increase in our minimum wage on the 1st of April of 2010, and then again on the 1st of April of 2011. They were, thankfully, not an April fool's joke.

Since 2011, I've been anticipating the development and the publication of a department policy to guarantee regular increases to minimum wage so we don't have to lobby for it every three years. In 2010, the Minister specifically said in a Minister's statement, the department is considering ways to implement future increases that will see regular and reasonable increases linked to other economic factors such as inflation and cost of living. I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not the department has acted on that promise.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When we first introduced the minimum wage increase, there has been a very positive vibe in the Northwest Territories. Although it's just a small increment, at the same time, we're trying to be compatible to other jurisdictions. We have been working on this incremental comparable to other jurisdictions, as well, what kind of mechanism do they have in place, so we've done our research in that area. The standing committee also provided some suggestions to the department on the recommended method. We are working on that and also working with employers and employees, just various representatives on this particular topic. It is anticipated that a committee will be established to

begin work in the spring of this year. That's the target date.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for the update. The Minister said that a committee will be established and start work in the spring. I need to ask the Minister what this committee is intending to do and what work they will be undertaking.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we first discussed this particular area where we should have a format where on an annual basis the increment to the minimum wages, how it's going to be reflected and when is that going to be happening. The committee will be established to look at those areas and how we can make those changes, and working with various provincial counterparts as well as territorial. Those are some of the anticipated discussions that will be taking place. It will be established in the spring of 2013.

MS. BISARO: I'm struggling to understand the Minister's response. I think I heard him say this committee will be established and it will be looking into how to set up something to have regular increases to minimum wage. Could I get him to clarify for me? Is that the intent of this committee?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This Assembly wanted us to set up a mechanism to reflect on the wage incremental on an annual basis, a wage increase. We're trying to establish that through our networks, through our research, through various discussions with employers and employees, and also the representatives of the Northwest Territories. That's what we're embarking on, and we're going to be establishing a committee to deal with that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I'm hearing that this committee will be established and I gather that it's a permanent committee. It will look at increasing minimum wages on a regular basis, I gather.

I'd like to know from the Minister how many people are part of this committee. I would think it would be rather cumbersome, and I'd like to know what kind of an expense this committee is going to cost us.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we talk about committee, we want to be cost efficient and effective, as well, so just a small group that we can move forward and we can make decisions right away, part of the recommendations that will be brought to my attention. I want this to be, of course, a small cost to our department. We have to use it internally. Those are just some of the factors that will come into play. We want a small group that will provide recommendations to us that represents the Northwest Territories as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 180-17(4):

VARIABLE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH INUVIK
TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as this is formally the second time we have heard from the Department of Transportation on a shared cost estimate proposal with the federal government on the northern portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway system. It appears, once again, that we have been given a glass-half-empty program that appears now to have been formally fast-tracked to the feds for review.

I have said on more than one occasion in this House that I support this project only if the math was sound and a full risk matrix was on the table. It is clear that the project glass is, again, half empty. Questions still remain unanswered, yet it appears that the department is hastily, once again, taking an untested number to the federal government for a decision on cost-sharing and playing guesswork with the public purse.

Can the Minister of Transportation indicate how certain the department can be with only 85 percent of the design work for the highway being completed? What contingencies does the department have to address the unknown variables for the remaining 15 percent of the design/build and the cost estimate that was given recently to the federal government?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member knows that we haven't gotten the approvals back from the federal government, and the Member also is well aware of the fact that the Department of Transportation appeared before the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning two weeks ago, and provided a thorough update on what the risks were and where the project numbers were at.

MR. DOLYNNY: I do appreciate the Minister's reply, but this is why we're still asking the same questions. The public has yet to have seen these.

It appears that the Department of Transportation almost forgot about the \$12 million that has been advanced to this project in preparation for such a cost estimate for the federal government. Can the Minister of Transportation indicate if this \$12 million is included in the \$299 million cost estimate? If not, why?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The briefing to the standing committee was a confidential briefing because we haven't got the formal approvals from the federal government. There is a reason the briefing was confidential. We're hoping to get the

approvals in quick order so that we can make some decisions so that Members can ask some questions. Right now, the questions the Member is asking are hypothetical.

MR. DOLYNNY: I think the question is not hypothetical. The question is whether or not the \$299 million is including this \$12 million. Again, this was opened up in your statement yesterday in the Minister's own words.

We've heard a number of times of the granular royalties involved with this project are due to the Inuvialuit Land Administration. Can the Minister of Transportation share with this House what is the percentage of royalties and the total dollar cost to taxpayers within the cost estimate of this \$299 million?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I just didn't want to, and I don't want to, divulge confirmation information that was provided to the committee two weeks ago. In answering the Member's question, those discussions are still currently underway. We are trying to sort those out. We're working with the Inuvialuit on getting answers to those questions, and when we do have those questions fully answered and we have a package from the federal government, we'll be back in front of committee and ready, willing and able to answer all the questions the Members have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing again, from the Minister's own words, we have a lot of unanswered questions. How do we come up with the \$299 million? It's beyond me.

We all know that this government has had its hurdles in dealing with cost overruns on many of our large-scale projects of the past. The Auditor General of Canada has confirmed this. Can the Minister of Transportation indicate to this House what will happen to our cost-sharing agreement with our federal counterparts should the price of this road project exceed \$299 million? Are taxpayers left holding the bag? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: First off, we haven't made any decisions on the project. We're still a ways off on making those decisions. Secondly, that is a very hypothetical question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 181-17(4):

SUPPORT FOR HAY RIVER COMMUNITY
TELEVISION SOCIETY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement today with this very exciting news about a community channel for Hay River going on to Bell Expressvu, as I

mentioned, currently the community channel is managed by volunteers from the Hay River Elks Club. Now, there is a TV Channel Society, but it is all based on volunteers. I would imagine that now that we have gone live nationally that there will be a lot of people interested in having some input into the local content of that new TV station.

We have many photographers, videographers, media, people with interest in our community that do amazing work that would really promote the North. I would also say that we have events in Hay River that I think the rest of Canada would like to see. Just this past weekend we had dogsled races, snow machine races, we had the Kamba Carnival with every kind of traditional and northern activity you can think of. This could have all been videotaped, and this could be broadcast now right across the country and it's local Hay River content.

I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI if he can see the value of this in terms of promoting Hay River and having a very positive effect on our economy. But the downside being that, right now, is it's all being undertaken by volunteers. Is there any money allocated or earmarked within the government, within ITI, that an organization like the Community Channel Society could access to get some help to now orchestrate this amazing project? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for her statement and questions today in the House. I think it's a great opportunity, not only for Hay River but for the Northwest Territories, and if we can plug in the tourism angle, and arts and crafts, and a number of other things around the territory into that channel in promoting the Northwest Territories, I think that's a good initiative. We'd be more than happy, at ITI, to sit down with the Member and see what support the community needs to have a staff person located there to maximize our opportunities through that channel. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That's what I wanted to hear and I'll look forward to working on this with the Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 182-17(4):

COST OVERRUNS RELATED TO INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that the \$299 million was not hypothetical; those are the Minister's own words. So let's roll down to some of this.

It's not hypothetical when the GNWT is brokering a deal with the federal government. So maybe the

Minister can enlighten this House, and educate the public, on what the risks are with this particular deal if and when cost overruns do happen. And that's not hypothetical because there's not one single GNWT project that hasn't had cost overruns. These are real risk matrix problems that the department will be working on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That confidential briefing was provided to Members two weeks ago. It included a risk matrix. I also committed during that meeting to provide Members with an updated risk matrix.

We don't have a funding agreement with the federal government. We haven't wrapped up negotiations with the Inuvialuit on royalties and land tenure. There are some things that we have to finalize before we can get that number into committee and get another presentation before the standing committee. No decision has been made on this project. We are still awaiting word from the federal government. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I can't argue with the facts that the Minister just said. He's right; no decisions have been made. But I can tell you, clearly, that there is a deal being brokered that sounds like a decision made by Cabinet.

Speaking to the risk matrix, would the Minister be willing and certainly be innovative by providing a plain language document of the risk matrix based on the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project so Northerners can fully understand what their territorial government is taking on and what burden they may be burdened with? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, that would be pages 9 and 10 of the briefing that was provided, the deck that was provided to the committee. The Member is well aware of what the risks are. We laid them all out on the table two weeks ago.

As the project moves forward, we will continue to lay out the risks associated with this project. For a project that's close to \$300 million, there will be some risks. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, when it goes \$299 million and you say it's close to \$300 million, that is pretty well \$300 million, so we can't undersell this. I do not have the authority to release the risk matrix, but the problem is that the public is being denied the facts of how risky this project is and how scary it looks from this side of the House. Only the Minister has that authority.

Will the Minister release a plain language document, the details, the risks that have been identified and what potential burdens that Northerners may be taking on similar to what just

happened to the Deh Cho Bridge? They need to be fully informed.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we will have a project soon. Hopefully sometime this week we'll get answers back from the federal government. Our objective is to have that risk assessment, the risk matrix out for public consumption hopefully by the end of this week.

For the Member to stand up in the House and say that it's only going to be Cabinet's decision on this project and that we are brokering a deal, he's making it seem like we're doing this behind closed doors. That decision will be made on the floor of this House by Members of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister's light on detail when it comes to how risky the risk matrix actually is. It talks about potential problems.

Will the Minister fully commit to this House in a clear answer as to all the particular risks in a plain language document so Northerners from north to south, from east to west, all Northerners will have a full opportunity to realize what risks are involved in this project and how serious the GNWT is in ignoring some of the risks and what we may be taking on as taxpayers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we are not ignoring the risks. The reality is, in a project this size, there are risks. There are risks in everything. There are risks when you walk outside the door. We will, like we provided to the Members of this House, provide publicly the risks associated with this project. We are still trying to put this together. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 183-17(4):
INCREASES TO MINIMUM WAGE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a few more questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and try to clarify what he's describing in terms of steady increases to our minimum wage. On that process, I'm a little confused.

I think the Minister has explained that there will be a committee and that this committee will do some investigation. They will then make a recommendation to the Minister. If that is correct, he can clarify that for me and confirm that.

The other question I have is: Who will be on this committee? He said it's a small and efficient group, but how many members and who will they be? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The recommendations will be brought to my attention to factors in setting up a minimum wage for the NWT. As you know, we increased our minimum wage in April 2010, another one in April 2011 and we're still working on 2012. So those are just some of the areas we're currently exploring. The people that will be part of the standing committee, I don't have the actual list in front of me, but I can provide that to the Member once they're established. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thank you. I hear the Minister saying that this is going to be a committee. I didn't hear how many members. I'd like to know how many people are going to be sitting on this committee. I presume it's going to be GNWT employees and I worry about the added workload that it's going to mean for them. I gather this committee will be a permanent committee. So all these things I'd like the Minister to clarify. How many members on the committee, is it a permanent committee and how much time does he expect this will add to their already heavy workload? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. This particular committee, obviously, will be established. Definitely we'll have some staff on there because we deal with the minimum wage, cost factor and so forth. But we have to minimize the hours, the costs towards the committee.

Again, I don't have the detailed information because this is all new. We're just establishing the committee in the spring, within the next couple of weeks. So once I have all of the information, I will be providing it to the Members. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I guess if the Minister is looking to be efficient and to reduce work, I really don't understand why he's establishing a committee. We are committed to death, I think, in this government.

I'd like to know from the Minister why we would not simply do something as simple as tying minimum wage to the cost of living and do increases to the minimum wage when our cost of living increases. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Obviously, that will be taken into consideration, as well, and I want to hear from the employers, the employees and the representatives, not only my staff telling me this is good. I want to hear from the general public. So that's why we're establishing this committee. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess if the Minister is going to establish a committee, then that's going to happen, but I think we could canvas our employers once, agree to tie it to the cost of living and then we're done.

My question to the Minister now is, if this committee is established in the spring, when are we going to see our next increase to the minimum wage? It's been two years since we've had one. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Once the committee is established, they do their work and get their recommendations to me, I'm hoping that either the spring session or early this year I want to reintroduce that to this House. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 184-17(4):
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK
HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To no surprise to the House, and certainly the Minister, I have a few more Inuvik-Tuk highway questions. I've been getting feedback from people in the Beau-Del region that the GNWT, in this Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project, will be buying the equipment and turning it over to the contractor. Would the Minister be able to provide some highlights as to what type of contract and deals are being put together for the potential proponent who will be building the Inuvik-Tuk highway? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If we haven't made decisions in this House on whether to move the project forward, we haven't got the funding agreement from the federal government and the approvals from the federal government, that hasn't happened. So, obviously, we have not made a decision on procurement for the Inuvik-Tuk highway. That will happen after we get all the approvals. When we get the decision to move forward in this House is when we will make decisions on procurement and not until then. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. The Minister has an interesting point, but the fact is, it doesn't preclude the opportunity to do and work out some of these deals informally, or even formally, until the final decision is before the House.

So has there been any deals worked on by the Department of Transportation with perspective proponents who will construct the Inuvik highway and whereby we buy, as in where the GNWT buys, the construction equipment and we turn it over free of charge at the end of the project? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. I have no idea who the Member is talking to, but it's not the same people we're talking to. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. In the stewardship of good taxpayer spending, will the Minister commit to this House that the GNWT will not be buying any construction equipment for any particular proponent who ends up with this contract if it does proceed, and there will be no giving away any GNWT assets we purchase through our government, and we will not be supporting a contract that buys the equipment so they get it for free? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. That's a hypothetical question, but I'll allow the Minister to respond. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have nothing to add aside from echoing your comments that it is a hypothetical question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your guidance on that being hypothetical, but that's also a reality that's coming to my office as a phone call to be afraid of. So it's important to get these issues out.

My last question is: Will all of this information be before the public long before a final decision is made in this House? Citizens need to see these facts and understand them and be able to talk to their duly elected officials here and have the good discussion with them before they make the final decision, because if it comes after the decision is made, it becomes useless information. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. That's a very open-ended question. The Member referenced this information. Not knowing specifically what information the Member is talking about, I can't say yes to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 185-17(4):
RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH INUVIK TO
TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking to the risk matrix, if that helps the Minister for a bit of guidance, even though we spent a lot of time last time, would he be willing to publish all that information? As to the potential risks the GNWT and the citizens of the Northwest Territories would be taking on as a risk, would he be willing to publicize all that information on our website long before a final decision is proposed in this House? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier during question period I did commit, like we've committed to Members when we were before the standing committee, we provided the risks, we've been upfront with Members on what the potential risks are. Likewise, we intend to be as fully upfront with the public here. We will get the information on our website as soon as we have a deal.

We do not have a deal, we do not know where all those risks are today, we've shared all the risks that we know with Members of this House two weeks ago during committee. So as we move along, we will continue to share the information with Members and with the public.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. The Minister keeps speaking to this as if a deal has already been formalized and it's just a matter of it being signed off to the feds.

What new construction technology has been advanced that we will guarantee a solid construction of the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project? I liken it to the Highway No. 3 that has been invested in for many, many years and millions of dollars and we continue to always be in bad shape. So what new construction techniques has the Department of Transportation innovated to guarantee it as a real, good, solid, quality piece of work? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. The Department of Transportation is not going to construct the road. I'm a politician and not Bob the Builder. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Maybe the Minister forgets his role. Quite frankly, the department is in charge of the project, the department is paying for the project. Maybe my next question to the manager of this project is: Who is in charge of the construction of the Inuvik-Tuk highway and who will be responsible for the quality of work?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That would be the Department of Transportation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, now that we've narrowed down that the Department of Transportation is Bob the Builder on this particular reference, what innovative construction techniques have been found by the Department of Transportation to ensure that this highway will be built and maintain a decent standard? I liken it to Highway No. 3 as we've all seen fall apart over the years after and even during its building.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe it was the same Member who was critical of the \$12 million spent to date trying to plan the highway, employing local knowledge, getting that work done on the geotechnical side to ensure that best practices are

followed, that we know where the granular sources are so that we can build the best road that we possibly can in that environment.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 186-17(4):
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK
HIGHWAY PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has proposed a \$299 million construction project that we all know is the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project. What is the Government of the Northwest Territories proposal on commitment on spending division? In other words, we had a 75/25 plan spoken about before. Is that the same proposal being forwarded to the federal government?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we get a response back from the federal government, we'll be sure to share it with Members. As soon as we get word back from the federal government. Our ask was 75/25 and that's the ask that went to the federal government.

MR. HAWKINS: In order to ask for the \$299 million, the Government of the Northwest Territories must have a plan. Knowing that no project has been under budget, or even at budget, what is the territorial government's plan to assess if there are overruns? That's not a hypothetical. We need a plan in order to proceed.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We have a contingency. We don't get into any project with the belief that it's going to go over budget, so for the Member to ask questions about the what ifs, what if you go over budget, that is a hypothetical question.

MR. HAWKINS: Knowing and understanding the project is not hypothetical. It's part of the risk of any project.

What is the upper limit of what the territorial taxpayers can afford even if we follow the 75/25 split? Is the potential of \$75 million on the taxpayer the upper limit of what they can pay for this project and will that be clear before any highway project is initiated?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We're going to get word back from the federal government on the approvals for the funding agreement hopefully sometime this week. Members of this House, when the project is going to be approved, will approve this project and they'll have all the information available to them so that they can make a decision whether or not they

support the project moving forward. That should happen, hopefully, very soon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the process of getting into bed with a project, and becoming a partner in it, and understanding the project is knowing where your upper limit is. I'm asking the government what our upper limit is on this particular project, because once it's started, it's too late to stop. We need to help identify these things. That's all part of the process of our original ask, which is defining the project as almost a \$300 million initiative. Clearly, the taxpayers, the citizens need to know what the government's upper limit is, what is the cut-off point we cannot proceed with this project. It's a simple number. It's a simple ask. People want to know where the cut-off is.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As I mentioned numerous times in response to questions today about the Inuvik-Tuk highway, there are risks associated with the project. Those were shared with committee two weeks ago. As we move forward, we will be providing Members with updates. It is this Assembly that is going to ultimately make the decision on whether the project moves forward or not. All this information is going to be available to both Members and the public.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 187-17(4):

STATUS OF DIAVIK DIAMOND MINE SALE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't going to ask any questions but I have to just not listen to another set from Mr. Hawkins. My questions today are for the Minister of ITI. It has been very well publicized that Harry Winston is becoming a larger player in the diamond mining in the Northwest Territories with interest, and potential interest, in at least two diamond companies. I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI if he is able to update this House and the public on what the status is on the purchase of the Diavik Diamond Mine at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as we know, the sale is moving forward. There were some legal issues earlier on but, for all intents and purposes, the sale is progressing. We have recently met with Harry Winston, soon to be Dominion Diamond Mining, and we wish them well in their pursuits in the Northwest Territories.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Of course, because of the importance of diamond mining in the Northwest Territories to our NWT economy, I am sure we all

wish them well. When the Minister says he had a meeting with them, I have a question about what our government is saying with regard to the socio-economic agreements that were put in place with the original companies. How does that work? When we have those agreements, the mine's up and running, we don't have the same kind of leverage. Now we're talking about changing hands from one owner to another.

How is the interest of the northern content, and northern employment and northern benefits in those diamond mines maintained when the operation changes hands?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The agreements would stay in place with the new owners. We're very encouraged with what Harry Winston has been discussing with us in terms of northern workforce development and also the provision of perhaps having a rough supply here in Yellowknife for local cut and polish companies to avail themselves of. It's all very encouraging and I think we have a lot to look forward to with Harry Winston, Dominion Diamond, being involved in the diamond industry here in the Northwest Territories. That agreement the Member spoke of will go with the sale.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So just to be certain then, I want to confirm with the Minister, the transfer of that socio-economic agreement to the new owner, is that accomplished by any kind of legal instrument or is that just by their commitment in the way of good will?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe it would just be through commitment and willingness to take on that agreement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'll be interested in monitoring how that goes, that agreement, that commitment that the Minister is talking about, because I have already started to hear rumblings, some very strange rumblings with regard to the commitment to the socio-economic agreement.

I would like to ask the Minister, when he talks about commitment, is that something that is in writing? Because you understand that when you're trying to open a mine, you're going to be making a lot of commitments to the folks you're dealing with because that's when we've got more leverage. I'd like to ask the Minister what makes him feel assured that this is actually going to transfer over.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That would come from the ownership at Harry Winston and their commitment to the Northwest Territories to see diamond mining be a success here in the NWT. We've got every assurance from the ownership at Harry Winston that will happen. We have known them for a number of years now, having been partial owner at

the Diavik Mine, and we certainly look forward to their continued involvement in diamond mining here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Moses.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 22-17(4): MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT DATA – PART TWO

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have written questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the NWT Mental Health Act for treatment data for the fiscal year 2009-2010 to the present.

1. In accordance with Section 6.(a) and (b) of the Mental Health Act, how many voluntary patients applied for hospital admittance in the Northwest Territories and how many of those voluntary patients were denied admittance due to a lack of beds and/or space?
2. In accordance with Section 8.(1) of the Mental Health Act, in how many cases has a medical practitioner had to make an order for the detention of a patient for a psychiatric assessment?
3. In accordance with Section 8.(3) of the Mental Health Act, how many reports has the Minister's office received?
4. In accordance with Section 15.(1) of the Mental Health Act, how many times has a medical practitioner had to apply to admit an involuntary patient?
5. Under Section 16.(1) and (2) of the Mental Health Act, how many applications has the Minister examined, and how many of those were approved and how many refused?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-17(4): REDUCTION IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING FUNDING

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 14-17(4) asked by Mr. Hawkins on February 20, 2013, to the Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, regarding reduction in inclusive schooling funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the spring of 2012, the Members of the Legislative Assembly encouraged me to use the

information from the program review office (PRO), and other studies to develop more effective strategies for the development and education of our children. On February 16, 2012, the PRO had noted that Inclusive Schooling funding was well beyond legislated levels.

On May 31, 2012, the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning (SCOPP) recommended to the Premier a number of actions respecting Early Childhood Development, including the transfer of some resources from Inclusive Schooling to Early Childhood Development beginning in 2012-13.

I agreed with the Members about the need to take immediate action to reallocate Inclusive Schooling funding in order to invest in early childhood programs.

On June 7, 2012, the Premier informed SCOPP that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) would re-profile \$1 million from Inclusive Schooling to increase Early Childhood Development funding for 2012-13.

The ECE strategy chosen was to move \$1 million from the \$27 million Inclusive Schooling budget to early childhood programs. We decided to move funds from those areas of the Inclusive Schooling funding formula that did not directly impact staffing levels or services to students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 38-17(4): GNWT RESPONSE TO MOTION 20-17(3), MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS RESOURCES

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled GNWT Response to Motion 20-17(3), Mental Health and Addictions Resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 3: WILDLIFE ACT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 3, Wildlife Act, be read for the second time.

This bill replaces the Wildlife Act. It modernizes wildlife management processes in a manner consistent with land claim agreements. Provisions respecting the harvest of wildlife were updated and measures for the protection of wildlife habitat are included. Consequential amendments are made to the Environmental Protection Act, the Forest Management Act and the Herd and Fencing Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 3 has had second reading.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Table Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014; and Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act; Education, Culture and Employment, Transportation, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

By the authority given to me as Speaker, by Motion 1-17(4), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee today? Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to continue deliberations on Transportation with the main estimates and then Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will resume with that after a short break.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. When we left off yesterday we were dealing with the Department of Transportation main estimates. I would like to ask Minister Ramsay if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses to the table.

For the record, Mr. Ramsay, could you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right I've got Russell Neudorf, deputy minister of the Department of Transportation. To my left, Mr. Daniel Auger, assistant deputy minister, Department of Transportation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. We will start with general comments on the Department of Transportation. Any general comments on the Department of Transportation? Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to start my conversation possibly where I left off earlier today in my Member's statement. Really, when it was brought forward the first time to the public's light, was the \$299 million cost estimate that was provided to the federal government from this department. Now, in reading the opening comments of the Minister, I was struck back that this number is now being carried forward as a number for negotiations. We've heard earlier that the Minister is not closing or doing any deals. Anything that we were talking outside of this \$299 million is deemed hypothetical, which I do have a concern with that comment.

I guess the roundabout is the fact that this is going to be, by and large, probably the second or third largest expenditure on our public purse, one in which, I think, the public needs to have an active voice, not only at the end stage of negotiations but during the stage of negotiations. I think it's very clear to the public that we are venturing down a pathway to which the public has had very little information. The Members here have had, and I do appreciate the fact the Minister has been upfront and has brought some information, and I say some, not all information. But the general public, to this day, is still seeking that information.

Given the fact that this is an open process, this budget process is open, I find it fairly interesting that the Minister would actually include this information in his opening address, yet has not provided any details or level of detail to which I believe that the public is deserving of. For that, I would ask, in the Minister's comments, to include why. Why are we not sharing this information? Why are we not bringing the public into the light? Why are we not bringing the public up to speed in terms of, as we indicated earlier, the royalties for the granular component? What about the 15 percent of the road that is not accommodated within the cost estimate? What if this 15 percent will encompass barriers or extremely high levels of cost within the

completion of the road? We don't know that, and I don't think any of the Members here know that as well.

Also, the issue of the risk matrix, and as a component of a matter of point, this was deemed by the Auditor General of Canada during her deliberations on the Deh Cho Bridge as being a very weak project and a very weak process of this government. Our job as Members is to clearly put a lens on making improvements, nothing more. We want to see this project go forward as any other project in the Northwest Territories. We're just accountable for the public purse, and I think the questions that we're asking are very fair and reasonable in design. I think we need to also get a response back from the Minister that is equally fair and reasonable. Some of the responses that were received are less than I consider appropriate and are obviously causing frustrations amongst the Members here.

I do applaud the general aspect of the Department of Transportation and their main estimates. We are seeing that they are working within their means, but those means also include the fact that we have many other roads of infrastructure that are going to have to be dealt with in the years to come, and really, there's a lot of concern out there. I know this is not a capital budget; this is an operations budget. I'll leave it at that. I will have questions for detail as we go from page to page, but I really strongly encourage the Minister to not heed to the political Mackenzie two-step that goes with a project of this magnitude and to cooperate fully with the Members, cooperate fully with the public, and let's just share the information. That's all we're asking. Share what we've got today. Let's not wait to hear back from the feds. Let's not wait until we've got to make a five-minute decision on a \$300 million project. Let the public be aware. That's all I'm asking. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): General comments. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a couple of comments here. I'll start where Mr. Dolynny left off with the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the road from Inuvik to Tuk. I, too, am concerned. I appreciate that the Minister has advised that we haven't got a decision yet, but we also don't yet know the total cost of the project. Sometimes I feel that we are heading pell-mell down a road without considering what's at the end of the road when we get there, and I just want to say that I am extremely cautious about this project. Once bitten, twice shy. And the Deh Cho Bridge, having gone through the Deh Cho Bridge Project, it certainly puts a different spin and view on what I see in terms of projects and the large costs involved, so I will be exercising caution. I appreciate no decision has been made, but I encourage the department to recognize that

there are a lot of unanswered questions on the part of Members and I think probably on the part of the department itself. Let's just make sure we know what we're getting ourselves into.

The Minister talked about a net decrease in his opening comments, a net decrease of \$3.4 million to the budget from the previous year's budget. That sounds great. There is a reduction in some of the costs with taking the ferry out of service and so on, and not having an ice road to build across the river anymore. I think we have to remember that we are reducing the Transportation budget, but we are increasing the budget in Finance by \$8 million to deal with the interest on the Deh Cho Bridge loans. Now that the bridge is open and operating, we are starting to pay interest on those loans that we have. So we can't lose sight of the fact that one department has gone down but another one has gone up significantly.

I had a bit of a concern with the fee increases. I'm sort of struggling with that. The Minister mentioned that adjustments to bring fees up to date, with the majority of fee increases ranging from 15 to 20 percent. I can appreciate that we probably were a little behind with our fee increases. We probably haven't brought them up to date for a number of years, but I saw the 15 and 20 percent and thought, as a consumer, I'm not all that happy to have an increase of 15 to 20 percent. Even 5 percent these days is enough, thank you very much. From what I understand, some increases may be as high as 30 percent. I certainly hope the department will, in the future, manage to keep fees closer to sort of I guess annual increments, if that's necessary, or say every two years or so, so that we're not seeing a big, healthy dose of increased fees at any one time.

The Minister mentioned the opening of the Deh Cho Bridge. I was lucky enough to be able to be there that day. Although it was extremely cold, it was a really exciting day. I know I shared the Minister's excitement. It certainly was an historic event for me and I truly enjoyed the opportunity to be part of it. So thanks to the Minister and the department for that. Also, thank you for actually getting the bridge open. That was great. It was a long time coming, but it was really good that it was finally done.

The Minister talked a lot about improving economic development opportunities in his opening remarks. He talked about the need for transportation infrastructure, and I agree. We can't have mines without roads to service those mines, but I am a little struck by the fact that we're not talking at all about the environment and sustaining the environment, and tempering our push for economic opportunities in transportation infrastructure with making sure that we are considering the environment at the same time. This government, in my mind, has a bit too much focus and emphasis on economic opportunities, to the detriment of our

environment and our land and water. I put that forward as just a mention.

I did forget to mention that Mr. Bromley, unfortunately, isn't feeling well, but he asked me to bring forward this particular concern of his. I believe it's on the revenue page in the budget where we have, according to the Minister's comments, increased our fees, but we don't see a corresponding increase in revenue. I look at road licensing and safety fees and they've gone down to \$144,000 from \$589,000 in 2012-13. Those two statements, the numbers in the book and the statement by the Minister don't jive, so he and I would appreciate an explanation when we get to that point. Even if we look at total revenue, we've gone from \$9.6 million to \$12.9 million, which is about \$3.3 million. We are increasing our revenue through tolls of \$4 million, I think was in the Minister's opening comments. Again, it doesn't really jive if we are increasing our licensing and other fees and we're not really increasing our revenue from what the numbers say.

That's all I had, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Are there any further general comments on the Department of Transportation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, thank you. I guess I should let the Minister respond. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Members' comments on our budget. It's important for us to hear Members' concerns.

I know we had a good discussion today about the Inuvik-Tuk highway during question period. I'm sure there will be more questions as we get into some of the detail. Although there is no money per se in the budget this year for the Inuvik-Tuk highway, I would be more than happy, under the highways section, to answer any questions Members may have. It would be very interesting and maybe I'll just put this out there. Any questions, I am very curious to know what we haven't told Members, what we haven't come forward with during the briefing that we had with Members. If Members have any questions, we would be more than happy to answer them. I think we need to ensure that Members aren't left with the feeling that we're not telling them something. I'd like to know that if there's something we're not telling them about the Inuvik-Tuk highway, what exactly is it? We'll get you the answer. There are a lot of unknowns. If those questions point to something that is an unknown, we'll tell you that it's unknown. But I think we've been forthcoming, we've been upfront with Members and we will continue to be upfront with Members.

This is a big project. It's building this territory. It's connecting Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk, a road coast to coast to coast. It's a big, big project. It's something that we need to make sure that we get it right. We need to also ensure that we are answering every question that Members have. We certainly don't want any Member feeling like we are doing things behind their back or behind closed doors. That's not the case. Once we get the agreements and approvals from the federal government and we get the deal put together, the public will know what exactly we're proposing and, at the end of the day, that will be discussed on the floor of this House. Decisions will be made whether or not to move the project forward. Members will have every opportunity to ask questions about the project and, at the end of the day, whether they support the project and however it ends up falling out, we piece it together, that's how that will work. Again, I look forward to questions. We're here to answer questions, so I look forward to that.

I know there are some other issues that came up. We'll get to those through the detail. I'm very thankful for MLA Bisaro mentioning the Deh Cho Bridge. That was a big day for us. We are glad that she and some other Members could be there on the big day when we cut the ribbon on the Deh Cho Bridge, got it into service and are collecting tolls on that key piece of infrastructure here in the Northwest Territories. With that, I'll look forward to the questions as we get into detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. I'll ask Members if they would pass by page 11-7. We will return to that at the end of the consideration of the Department of Transportation. So then on to page 11-8, Transportation, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 11-9, Transportation, revenue summary, information item. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. If I could ask for an explanation of the referencing fees for licences, fees, licences and permits – the toll permits I understand – and registrations. Registrations have gone up but fees particularly, road licensing and safety fees have gone way down and the total revenue has only increased. It hasn't increased the \$4 million that we are gaining in our tolls. If I can get an explanation of these revenue numbers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Thanks to the Member for the question. There was a lot of juggling around with our fees, and for a

detailed response, probably best to answer that would be Deputy Minister Neudorf.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. There were four different adjustments that we made to our fees this year that were in the general section. First is that we took the service fees, so the \$12 typical fee when you go and register your vehicle, we are going to add that \$12 fee. Instead of it being separate, it's going to be added to the base amount of the registration, so the net cost is going to be the same but we aren't going to be specifically charging that service fee. We moved some of the revenue that was reported underneath that line item, road licensing and safety fees, into the applicable category.

We also, as the Member indicated before, made a number of adjustments to our revenue to catch it up to the current market rates. In a number of cases those fees hadn't changed for quite a number of years so the increases were a little higher. Some averaged, I think, in the 15 to 20 percent range. That total revenue included here is \$529,000 in various categories. Some in the airport landing fees and some in the licensing and safety fees.

The Deh Cho Bridge toll revenues are there, \$4.01 million. Those were already added to the 2012-2013 revised mains. We're projecting to get \$1.3 million in this fiscal year. After the bridge came into service November 30th then the final adjustment was just to reflect actuals.

In airport landing and other fees in particular, our projections from last year were a little bit too optimistic and, in fact, to meet actuals we adjusted it down by about \$300,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks to the DM for that explanation. I think I totally understand. I heard him say that we had an increase of about \$529,000 through the fees and licensing and so on, the revenue from those. Then we increased our toll permits about \$3 million, it looks like, \$2.7 million. I guess the numbers do add up. It's about \$3 million difference in revenue in total. Okay. Never mind. I talked myself out of my question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Glad we could help you out with that. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the title-ship of corporate services, I know it encompasses a lot of operation expenditures so I want to first talk about the remaining money that could still not be spent. This money was from the Building Canada Plan, which I believe ceased in

2011. I know there are residual monies that are usually put into stasis or basically in a holding pattern.

Can the Minister indicate if all the money under the previous federal Building Canada Plan has been spent or are there still projects outstanding, tied or attached to that resource money?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is still some of that Building Canada money in the 2013-2014 Capital Plan as well as some research and development money. If the Member wants specifics, we could provide him with specifics.

MR. DOLYNNY: We'll take the Minister up on his offer and ask him to give Members an update as to what is left in spending in that money and what is pending for projects.

On a different subject under the same topic, the issue of regulatory changes in transportation and the impacts that they could have on the operations within the NWT, can the Minister indicate those federal changes that are being discussed and that were discussed, how is that impacting our operations in the NWT to meet those federal requirements?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in terms of the Building Canada Plan, in 2013-2014 our capital plan still has three specific projects that have BCP capital funding: the Highway No. 4 reconstruction; the Highway No. 1, 187 to 411; and the Highway No. 8 reconstruction. Three capital projects that would have been approved in the fall capital plan.

Then we also have about \$250,000 that would be for BCP R and D that would be allocated next year. In terms of the regulatory changes and the impact, the place that it's being felt the most is in our airports division where we need to operate our airports in accordance with Transport Canada regulations. There have been a few changes over the last three or five years or so that we've been implementing. By far the biggest one would be the implementation of safety management systems. We're actually in year four of four, so we are nearing the end and getting all of our documents and procedures in place.

We have come forward with two forced-growth items for that in the past. One in the past where we got some extra positions and funding to meet the various requirements there, then there's forced growth as part of the budget here that brings three additional positions into DOT, one in Inuvik Airport, one in Fort Simpson Airport, both to have help with

the operations, and meet the extra requirements for reporting and conducting emergency exercises and wildlife management plans, and then another in Yellowknife here to deal with the extra technical documentation required as part of safety management systems.

The other two areas that have seen significant changes is, first, on emergency response planning where we now have to go into communities that are with certified airports on a regular basis, once a year, and conduct a live exercise and do planning for that. It takes a considerable amount of planning to conduct those exercises, particularly in our smaller communities. It is, of course, a benefit to do that, a benefit for DOT to potentially deal with an emergency in an airport, but also a benefit to communities because they can learn the process to go through an emergency exercise and how to deal with those. We do work closely with the RCMP, with Health, and with MACA in planning those.

In terms of other regulatory changes, I think the federal government changes with Bill C-38 and Bill C-45, the Navigable Waters Act and the Fisheries Act, where, from a DOT perspective, we think that they do go a long way to simplify the rules to make them clearer and to make our job and the requirements to meet those various regulatory requirements much more straightforward to fulfill.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate Mr. Neudorf's response to that here. In the reply to the question I believe there were about four airports that were mentioned in terms of improvements in the safety requirements. I did hear that this is year four of five of an implementation program. Can we get more detail on how many airports are still not meeting the so-called federal requirements of the total amount of airports that we have under our guidance?

MR. NEUDORF: All of our airports meet existing Transport Canada requirements. All of them are safe. Many of the airports would have some deviations to them so that there are specific requirements or things that would require a deviation from what would be ideal from a Transport Canada regulatory perspective. They are all safe. They do all meet regulatory requirements. Our airports that have regular scheduled service into them by carriers are all certified airports. We have to go through a process to get them certified. Transport Canada provides that so that carriers can operate on a scheduled basis into the program.

The requirements to operate the airports to ensure certification to meet the emergency response requirements have been changing over the last few years, and I mentioned that we're in year four of four of safety management system implementations. We're nearing the end of that. We have been able to meet all of those requirements. It has taken some additional personnel and additional

budget adjustments to do it, but we are able to meet all of the Transport Canada requirements.

MR. DOLYNNY: I'm getting the fact that our airports are meeting all federal regulatory requirements and that there's just some safety management systems or emergency response planning left to be fulfilled. If I am indeed in error, I would ask the Minister or deputy minister to correct me. That said, can the Minister or department indicate to me, the emergency response planning that happens at airport or airport authorities, how close does that mimic or work with any of the emergency community plans that would be involved with those communities that do have airport or airport authorities? Are we talking the same document or a separate document?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. There would be separate documents but we certainly rely on community emergency plans and anything we do at airports in communities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Dolyunny. I'm sorry. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're hoping for that one day. Just so I'm very clear, I have to be perfectly crystal clear here that we still have some community emergency action plans at airport authority level that still need to be implemented. Can I just get an inventory of those communities that have yet to achieve that?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That's an ongoing opportunity for us. Every year we have to go through emergency planning exercises around the Northwest Territories. That is ongoing.

MR. DOLYNNY: Can I get maybe an indication, is this an annual accreditation that an airport authority has to maintain, or once your accredited do you have a two-, three-, or five-year life cycle before you are up for an accreditation again?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Most would be a year but it's a cycle where you would have to go through the accreditation. Yes, most cases are on an annual basis.

MR. DOLYNNY: If we can maybe get an indication of those airport authorities that have failed or have not met the regulatory requirements that are governed by the federal statutes, if we can get a list of those.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We're complying with regulations that are in place and currently there would be no airports that didn't meet them. We're almost finished the SMS. There would be no airports that didn't meet the requirements.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-9, Transportation, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-10, Transportation, information item, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-13, Transportation, activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$10.326 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-14, Transportation, information item, corporate services, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-17, Transportation, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$29.704 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I do appreciate the Minister and deputy minister's answer earlier. Keeping on the topic of airports, if we could maybe get a brief update as to the Public Airports Act. This has to do with airport parking or use of parking or parking issues. Has this been problematic for the Department of Transportation to implement this act?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Airports Act itself is working fine. The one specific issue that we did have is around parking and enforcement of parking. We have been able to change our enforcement practices to be able to live within the act. Somewhere on our agenda is to actually come back and update the act, but really the only issue for now is the parking enforcement and we have been able to find a way to make it work. It's not high on the priority list.

MR. DOLYNNY: Maybe I could get a bit more of an explanation from the deputy minister or the Minister. In his reply is "making this work." Can he maybe elaborate on that last comment?

MR. NEUDORF: Typically when you get a parking ticket, you can put a ticket on the vehicle and you just need to record the licence plate. Our Airports Act does not allow us to do that, so when we issue a parking ticket it has to be to the driver of the vehicle.

MR. DOLYNNY: This economy is going to be faced with, as the Minister has put it many times, we're going to see some substantial economic growth, which will probably put a little bit of strain

and pressure on our airport system. Can the department indicate to us: Have the airport fees been reviewed as of late, and is there any inclination of increasing those fees to accommodate the increased traffic that we may be seeing, especially in areas like the Sahtu?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The fees related to airports were part of the overall fee review that took place last year and are detailed in this budget under revenue. Yes, we had some inflationary catch-up to do in a number of cases, and we're coming forward with some new increases to some of those revenues, including those of airports.

MR. DOLYNNY: Can the Minister indicate to the House here when was the last time those airport fees were reviewed?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I would have to get that detail for the Member. There was a little bit when, I believe it was in the 15th Assembly, we had to find \$11 million to use for the upgrades to the main terminal building. But prior to that, probably 2001 was the last time that fees were reviewed. I believe it was just specific to landing fees in 2006, that we had to find an offset for the \$11 million to upgrade the terminal at YZF.

MR. DOLYNNY: Where I'm kind of going with this is that I believe it was, as the Minister put it, an initiative that was overdue in terms of the reviewing of airport fees. Does the current process allow that these fees are being reviewed on a more frequent basis? Is there a provision or a proviso within the review program that will not allow this to lapse, that we actually are keeping up with either inflation or use of our facilities?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Member is correct. We hadn't done it for a while so there's a bit of a shock there. We're going to try to, as we move forward, look at it on an inflationary basis, year to year, so that there's not a big gap of 10 years before you look at fees again. Yes, we're doing just that.

MR. DOLYNNY: There has been a lot of activity lately here in the ITI sector. Where I'm going with this is that our international exposure has now heightened the awareness of many other countries possibly wishing to use Yellowknife as a destination for their air buses. Edelweiss Air was one of those potentials that were out of Zurich. There were some complications a number of years ago looking at runway length and other, I guess, barriers to looking at increasing our exposure of our airport system to the national and international audience. Can the Minister indicate to the House here if there are ongoing dialogues or discussions with any third-party airlines, international airlines that could be seeing increased traffic, and are we equipped for

that international business which could be a huge benefit to the tourism sector of the Northwest Territories?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, there is. There are those types of discussions that happen and Edelweiss is one of them. We certainly have to be taking a look at the infrastructure that we have at YZF. Runway length has been talked about. That would probably require \$40 million to \$50 million to lengthen the runway. Also, other infrastructure that would be required to handle different types of aircraft, and also the requirement of customs personnel and a customs handling area at YZF. The dialogue continues and we certainly understand and appreciate, from a tourism perspective, what having direct international flights show up in Yellowknife and in the Northwest Territories could mean to the tourism sector here in the Northwest Territories. It's a dialogue that we continue to have but it is going to cost some money. If we can find a carrier that does want to pursue that, we're going to have to come up with some sizeable dollars to make it happen.

MR. DOLYNNY: I am totally in agreement with the Minister here. If we can open up our doors to the world, I think our tourism budget would reflect that.

The concern I have is that within the premise of this operations budget for airports there is no provision what I see here for future thinking or future growth in that area of attracting. I would assume the provisions and putting together a proper study or planning document or emphasis on capital, which I know we're not discussing, but this is about operations, and operations means planning. If these discussions are indeed transpiring, what reassurances do we have that the department is now working towards a battle plan, so to speak, towards making this a viable option for the people of the Northwest Territories? As I see it, the budget here doesn't seem to be accommodating that. Can the Minister or designate indicate is this something that we may see in the '13-14 budget?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We continue to work toward a business case, and I think that's where we're trying to get to. This is discussed in the Airport Development Plan. It outlines what the Member is talking about today. As far as planning, a lot of that would take place under corporate services or the commercial development section of the airports division, so that money the Member talks about would be contained in those units inside the department. But, again, we have to get a business case to make something like this happen.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Next, I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple questions here. I was really glad that Mr. Dolynny raised the issue of airport parking. I've had a couple of unfortunate experiences with parking at the

Yellowknife Airport. I guess I would like to know from the Minister... I think he's aware. I think he's been caught once or twice as well. I appreciate that we want to keep traffic moving in front of the terminal building. We don't want people parking there and leaving their vehicles, but I do have a concern with the negative attitude, I guess, that is put upon people dropping somebody off. If I'm dropping someone off and they happen to have several pieces of luggage, and I get out of the vehicle to help them take that into the terminal building, I've come back out and found that I have a ticket.

I guess I'd like to know whether or not the Minister would look at the whole parking policy, I guess, or the way that we enforce the drop-off zone in front of the terminal building. It would seem to me that we could probably be a little nicer, I guess, so to speak, and we could still enforce the fact that you're there to drop off or, in some cases, pick up. But, basically, I think we could have a little bit more leniency with the, I'm going to call them Nazi's, but I'm smiling when I say that, the parking police who roam up and down. I guess I'd just like to know whether or not the Minister and the department would have a look at that particular policy and the way it's enforced.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for raising the concern. As far as airports go, we feel that the parking at YZF here in Yellowknife, there's one hour free parking for anybody that wants to park in the lot. We have to remember there are drop-off areas there so people can drop folks off. There are carts for luggage. From a safety perspective, we have to keep traffic moving in that area, so we can't have congestion in that area. The parking enforcement at the airport is that it's meant to be a deterrent to people leaving their vehicles outside of the airport. Not everybody takes advantage of that, but there are some people who would leave... If the parking enforcement isn't what it is, people would leave their vehicles out there and we'd be faced with situations of congestion. Again, we take that issue very seriously. Like you said, we've got the one-hour free parking, which is very generous if you look at other airports around the country. There are not too many airports that offer any free parking at all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that we don't want people stopping there, but maybe we could just brainstorm a little. I mean, sitting here listening to the answer, I totally agree that we don't want people parking in the drop-off zone, but maybe if we put luggage carriers outside. You know, something like that just to make life a little simpler. There are a lot of people who simply

drop somebody off and move on and you cannot get out of your vehicle unless you want to get a parking ticket. So something like that would make things a little more inviting.

I also wondered with regard to Yellowknife Airport in particular, but a number of years ago there was quite a discussion about changing the management at the Yellowknife Airport, giving the management over to an airport authority and/or the City of Yellowknife, something like that. Has that thought died, so to speak, or is there still an intent of sometime down the road to bring back the possibility of an airport authority at Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That is with the program review office and that continues to be a question of where do we want to take that. Certainly, if there's some political direction on what happens with an airport authority here in Yellowknife, that's something we look forward to input from Members on their thoughts on an airport authority here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I look forward to the program review office recommendation, whenever it comes forward. My recollection of the last time around is it didn't seem to be financially viable, so to speak.

My last question here has to do with runway upgrades. Over the last number of years we've been upgrading runways here and there across the territory. Does this budget include any upgrades to any of our runways? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That would be under the capital so, no, it's not in this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Transportation, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$29.704 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Page 11-18, Transportation, activity summary, airports, grants and contributions, contributions, \$30,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-19, Transportation, information item, airports, active positions. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just a question here. I note that we are increasing the staffing in this budget by three. Could I know where they're going and why? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Two are directly related to the safety management system, one located in Fort Simpson and the other in Inuvik, and also a technical service officer

airports division located in Yellowknife. That would also deal primarily with the SMS. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Transportation, information item, airports, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11-21, Transportation, activity summary, highways, operations expenditure summary, \$64.766 million. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm probably going to open up my conversation on this page with respect to the overall strategy we have for our highway systems. It's been noted a number of times. I know the Minister had made some comments towards our overall strategy moving forward for the remainder of the 17th and maybe setting up for the 18th Assembly. Can the Minister indicate where we're at with respect to the overall Highway Strategy as an investment focus, as a terms of priority for maintenance, and some of the key expansion initiatives that this government or future governments will be facing in the next couple of years? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We hope to go to a Transportation Strategy update in the next year. We also need to come up with a plan and we are currently working on a plan on an infrastructure program from the federal government, a cost-shared program, where we could best utilize those capital dollars in the NWT in our transportation system. We are working on that and that is definitely a work in progress. As soon as we get something concrete, we'll be coming to the Members to share that plan with them. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I can speak on behalf of I know the people of Range Lake, and I'm sure Yellowknife in general and probably every resident in the Northwest Territories, that this is by far probably one of the biggest frustrations that any one of us deal with on a regular basis. Those of us who have to travel by road know only too well the frustrations that we have out there. We are very cognizant that the department only has so many dollars in their tool chest and their coffers, but I think a strategy would serve well, knowing in terms of priority, in terms of planning, especially those communities that are waiting patiently to find out if their road is going to be touched.

The question I have is in the interim, we are probably talking about a strategy that is imminent, but we have a lot of issues involving road surfacing, a lot of roads that require that type of update and options. Can the department indicate to us is there a plan of action to deal with a lot of the road

surfacing hurdles in the short order for roads in the NWT?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Madam Chair, certainly I have heard about the frustrations with Highway No. 3 as well. Certainly, it is a challenge in trying to maintain that highway in an area of discontinuing permafrost, and to deal with the heaving, and the melting, and the consolidation of material that's been going on.

In terms of resurfacing, of course, we get many requests to upgrade the surface of our roads and our highways. Chipseal, having a paved surface provides a much higher level of service and it is appreciated by users of the road. We do want to take a look at that again as part of our capital planning.

The Minister mentioned about preparing a response to the next Building Canada Plan, the next federal government infrastructure plan. We are working on a high-level document that would talk about what our priorities would be and we would look forward to coming to the standing committee to talk about that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I appreciate the honesty here. We know the troubles. We know the challenges faced by the department. What would be interesting to have is – and I know we have to wait for the strategy to come full course – the needs assessment, the priority list or the substantiation sheets on those sections of highways that are in dire need of repair or resurfacing or actually even new construction. Has the department compiled such a document? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department does a needs assessment every year and has to substantiate every capital request that's submitted. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: I guess, in due course I think Members would probably be interested in seeing a consolidated version of that document. I know some Members have received segments or certain sheets from that document, but a consolidated version of that document definitely would put a lens on the needs assessment, and it would also give Members here an opportunity to see as to what road structure or road infrastructure they are affected by their own riding. Again, I will challenge the Minister to provide that in due course.

I just want to talk a little bit about the Inuvik-Tuk section of the northernmost section of the Mackenzie Valley Highway system. It is very clear and documented that this government, through the support of Regular Members, supported about \$12 million for due diligence work, so that the cost-

sharing number that Minister shared with us earlier of \$299 million came to fruition.

I'm going to challenge the Minister here to hold to his word in terms of responding to the Members and being upfront with these numbers. Is that \$12 million of pre-work, is this included in the overall budget of the cost-sharing estimate of \$299 million? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That information was provided to Members, and Members would know the answer to that question. The answer to that question is the government had to put money into the project upfront. Those are some costs in a project that's going to be close to \$300 million. So, no, that \$12 million isn't part of the \$299 million. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Minister Ramsay, for answering that question directly. I appreciate it. It saves a lot of time and energy.

My next question and it will be my last question, Madam Chair, is I think people need to understand that should this project exceed, and I say should, the \$299 million, would this overage be following 100 percent in the hands of taxpayers to actually pay that overage out of our own coffers and not a cost-sharing involvement with the federal government? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would just like to remind Members that we're dealing with the operations and maintenance budget here. We're not dealing with the capital budget. There isn't actually anything on this page with respect to what Mr. Dolynny is asking. However, Mr. Ramsay did bring up the issue of the Inuvik-Tuk highway in his opening comments, which I suppose does give Members a reference point. I just want to caution Members to stick to the matters before us on this page and on this department. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The number of \$299 million, worst-case scenario and it does go over \$299 million, history shows that other funding arrangements that the territorial government has had with the feds is that they don't fund cost-overruns. But, again, we haven't seen a funding arrangement. We haven't got the approvals from the federal government, so it's really yet to be determined.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. At the risk of angering the Chair, I just want to ask one question with regard to the Inuvik-Tuk highway, I listened with interest to the exchange in the House earlier this afternoon, and I believe the public is interested in knowing details about the project and what is planned, and what the planned costs are. I would like to ask the Minister if he could advise when the public might be able to see or have access to those

sorts of intricate details on the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As soon as decisions are made, the approvals come in from the federal government. We want to stand behind this project. We want the public to know fully what the Government of the Northwest Territories intends to do with this project, how we're going to build the highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. So we will be forthcoming with information as it becomes available to us. Again, we aren't quite there yet. We have to get approvals. We have to get the funding agreement from the federal government. But I promised the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning an update as soon as we get those approvals in and the agreement in. We will be back in front of committee and it will be the Members of this House that will approve this project. So we will be putting every number that we have out there. Also, the public has every right to know what those numbers are as well. Once we know what we're getting into, we will share that information publicly as well. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. Really all I asked was when. I'm looking for an estimate of when you think that might be. My point is we do have constituents who have a great deal of interest in this project and will want to tell us what they think so that we can vote accordingly.

I wanted to ask a question, as well, with regard to the Sahtu winter road. You've just recently had a lovely experience on it, Mr. Minister. There were a lot of problems, certainly at the beginning of the use of the road this winter. Is there, and maybe this is capital again, and if so, I'm sorry, but is the department planning on doing sort of a bit of upgrading or a lot of upgrading on that road to try and make sure that the problems that occurred this winter don't occur next winter? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you and I apologize to the Member in not giving her a time in response to her previous question, but when the approvals come in and we get the nod from the federal government, things will move quickly. We're hopeful that even by perhaps Friday we could be in front of standing committee. If we are going to make something happen in the Beaufort-Delta, things are going to have to progress quickly in order to make that happen. So it could be as early as this week, in response to the Member's previous question.

On the Mackenzie Valley winter road, and again that's capital, but I'll touch on this for the Member. We did have some difficulties early on in the season. There's been a tremendous amount of heavy truck traffic in the Mackenzie Valley, given the economic activity that's taken place there. Not just in the Sahtu in and around Norman Wells and

Tulita, but also further south we noticed quite a bit of activity in and around Wrigley and Fort Simpson as well. You couldn't get a hotel room in Fort Simpson. Very much a busy, busy place. Ledcor is doing a lot of work on the Enbridge line north of Simpson and there are lots of jobs and opportunities for people, but that has brought some problems for the winter road and that is the heavy truck traffic.

I had the opportunity on the weekend to drive from Fort Good Hope to Fort Simpson. So I saw firsthand some of the concerns that are out there. The ruts in the road, there's some holes, there's some approaches that needed some work. As soon as I got back on Monday, the first guy I phoned was my deputy minister and we were assured that the contractors that are in place addressed the areas of concern that Norman and I saw on the ride down from Fort Good Hope.

So there are issues, but it is a winter road, the speed limit is 50 kilometres an hour. Really, if you talk to the people in the Mackenzie Valley, I mean, that winter road is a real lifeline for them getting goods in and travelling around the communities and the regions. So they depend heavily on that winter road.

But again, the bottom line, and it impressed upon me and anybody I talked to on that trip, was the need for an all-weather road down the Mackenzie Valley, and judging by the truck traffic that we saw coming south from Norman Wells, we need an all-weather road there sooner rather than later. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks for both the Chair and the Minister indulging me with a capital question.

I do have a question with regard to the number under details of other expenses. In this year's budget we have other, \$6,000 and previously it was more than \$8 million. So I'm wondering if that is the interest expense on the bridge or if it's something else. Can I get clarification? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. The Member is correct; that was for the Deh Cho Bridge, the remains there are \$6,000 and that's chargeback expenses. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Next on the list I have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll start my questions with the Deh Cho Bridge and the process of operation there. I'm just wondering how the department is handling the maintenance of the Deh Cho Bridge this winter and has that cost been exactly what we expected. I've heard that we have staff on 24-hour call to salt and gravel the bridge. Have there been any additional costs than what we expected on the Deh Cho Bridge?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The maintenance on the Deh Cho Bridge is own forces and we've had to adjust the maintenance in the Fort Providence area to account for the Deh Cho Bridge. In terms of additional costs, you'll see in the budget there's \$259,000 in additional costs to maintain and operate the Deh Cho Bridge. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Along the lines of the bridge as well, can the Minister maybe provide me some of the analysis of the toll collection, collecting the tolls? Has that been what we expected and also the other side to it, the expenses? Has the toll system been working effectively and have there been any additional costs to tracking of this or any additional expenses to doing the toll collections?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. It still is relatively new, but things are on track. We continue to collect tolls. On an annual basis it will be somewhere over \$4 million. We have an annual admin cost on the tolls of about \$300,000. It is an automated thing. There are pictures of the licence plates that are taken of the trucks that are crossing northbound on the Deh Cho Bridge. So the good news is that the bridge is in service, that tolls are being collected and there haven't been hiccups thus far. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question on the bridge is we have agreements in place with the utility, I know there are a couple of utility companies, the telephones and maybe potentially the power company that are looking to use the bridge. Is there typically a chargeback to that or is it something we provide for those utility companies?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. Yes, with NorthwesTel and we've also had discussions with the NWT Power Corporation for using the bridge and the conduit in the bridge, and that would be done on a chargeback basis. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next area, obviously, would be the interest in the Tuk to Inuvik highway, but my question would be what does it currently cost us to build the winter road, operate the winter road from Tuk to Inuvik.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. The Inuvik-Tuk ice road and the road to Aklavik, together they're about \$2 million. So we're going to save about \$800,000 in putting that ice road in between Inuvik and Tuk. It's about \$800,000. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you. I'm just wondering also along those lines of any kind of other business case that we've looked into the government of the benefits of the Tuk-Inuvik highway. Is there an operational cost that the department has been working with, maybe, the Department of Health or Department of Justice for transportation costs that

we would be saving in the creation or the building of this road? Has a business case been completed for this?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. Yes, there definitely are benefits to building the Inuvik-Tuk highway. As far as a business case goes, all roads built here in the Northwest Territories, I mean, we wouldn't have the Deh Cho Bridge if we went strictly of a cost-benefit analysis. So we have to build infrastructure and in this case it's the Inuvik-Tuk highway that we're looking at constructing. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you. Yes, I'm just looking for a little more detail on that business case. I'm wondering if the department would be... Obviously this is a capital project, I understand, but I'm just wondering if the department would be investigating some of the additional business case savings that the territorial government would have. Obviously, it's easier if we're saving similar to the toll system, it would be an easier case if we could say that we were saving \$2 million a year in transportation costs because we don't have to fly in and out of the community, items like that. Is the department looking at doing any of that type of stuff for us when we're considering the capital side of this project?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have done a benefit analysis. We could look at getting that for the Member and other Members as well. The Member is correct; there are a number of those benefits and they have to be quantified. We'd certainly like to help get that information to the Members.

MR. BOUCHARD: I just want to go back to the bridge topic. I missed one of my notes here. I'm just wondering about the corporation, the corporate companies and registration of the tolls. Have we registered most of the northern companies as far as for the toll system? Are we still in the middle of that system? How much flack are we talking with the tolls of collecting and getting operators up to speed on the registration of the tolls?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: It is still a relatively new system. It's somewhere around 80 percent in terms of registered users of that toll system. We still have some to capture, but compliance has been good where we continue to move forward with toll collection.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next line of questioning would be toward the Sahtu winter road. Obviously, some of the other Members had talked about the closures and some of the difficulties there. I'm just wondering what kind of feedback the department has gotten with some of the corporate companies. I know some of the corporations have provided us money for the winter road to get that up and operational as soon as possible. Have we seen much flack from that when the closure was going

on, and do we expect that corporate sponsorship to continue?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Along with the heavy usage of the road, weather was also a big factor early on when the road did first open. This operating system, we got \$1.2 million from industry and they have been very supportive in helping us construct and maintain the winter road in the valley. All indications are that next season we may have even more industry buy-in to supporting the government's efforts on constructing and maintaining that winter road down the Mackenzie Valley. Discussions have been good thus far, but whenever you talk to industry, they want to support getting the winter road to be the best that it possibly can be, but they also talk about the all-weather road and the fact that things would be so much easier if we had a road down the Mackenzie Valley. They're going to be partners, it looks like, with us for the foreseeable future, which is very encouraging.

MR. BOUCHARD: Obviously, we wouldn't be representing all of our fellow Members here if we didn't mention Highway No. 7 during highway discussions. Mr. Menicoche is travelling this week. My question for Highway No. 7, obviously Hay River being part of the Deh Cho loop and promoting that, I'm just wondering if the department is expecting to continue their upgrade and early maintenance of Highway No. 7 so we have a fabulous year like we did last year. Does the department have any additional funds expected to be worked on Highway No. 7 and will they continue to make sure this maintenance happens earlier in the season?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: With Highway No. 7, that is a capital question but I'm more than happy to respond to it. We've got \$1 million in this year's capital budget. Going forward we've used the number of \$250 million would be required for the complete reconstruction of Highway No. 7, which is necessary, but we don't have \$250 million to put towards the complete reconstruction of that highway. What we do have is a plan to come forward with \$3 million in capital every year for 10 years, I believe is the length of time, to put a dent in the requirements that are needed on Highway No. 7. With the advance of Prairie Creek and the more usage on that highway, it's going to become even more imperative that we find the dollars to put into Highway No. 7.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bouchard, your time is up. I will put you back on the list if need be. Next is Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to find out from the department and the Minister here, if one was to look at or wanting to get information with respect to any type of infrastructure such as the Inuvik-Tuk highway, would they be able

to go to the department website to get that type of information, updated information?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, there are reports there. In fact, I believe the benefit analysis is on the website, as well, so Members could go to the Department of Transportation website and avail themselves of the information that's there.

MR. DOLYNNY: Actually, I have the luxury of being in the House here today and I actually have the Department of Transportation website in front of me here in real time. I'm looking at all files related to the Inuvik-Tuk highway and I see here that the last entry of any type of document was in May 2011. Can the Minister indicate to me if there is another site that the general public can go to to find current information, recent information that is not 22 months old?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: It may be contained on the EIRB website. If the Member's got access to the Internet, he could try that website. I've taken his notice of lack of information on our website. We will get as much information up there as soon as possible.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Maybe you could clarify which website you were referencing.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: It was the Environmental Impact Review Board.

MR. DOLYNNY: I will take the Minister up on doing some more Google searching for what I consider a pretty large project.

Just on an aside, with respect to the Department of Transportation website, which I believe is a new website here that's up and running this fiscal year, when I look at any of the highways or highway information, October 2011 was the last time on the Mackenzie Valley Highway that we've seen any type of report. I indicated May 2011 with Inuvik-Tuk. Highway traffic reports, 2011. I'm seeing very little with respect to highway information, information that I know, if I was a member of the public who wanted to know information about highways, and linking Department of Transportation with highways, it is very clear that we are lacking current information available to the public. Can the Minister explain why?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The road conditions and travelling conditions would be updated daily, but I certainly take the Member's point and we'll try to populate the website with much more information.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. You're done, Mr. Dolynny? Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had one more follow-up question. My question was about Highway No. 7. Again, Mr. Menicoche is

probably happy I'm asking this question. About the maintenance – and we talked about spring maintenance and getting maintenance done early – I know that was a large issue and I think that was probably one of the successes of last year's roadway, was to get the maintenance done earlier. I'm just wondering if the department has the same commitment to get that maintenance on Highway No. 7 done early in the springtime.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, we have the same commitment as last year on Highway No. 7. The money will be used for priority areas.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Page 11-21, Transportation, activity summary, highways, operations expenditure summary, \$64.766 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 11-22, Transportation, activity summary, highways, grants and contributions, grants, \$200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 11-23, Transportation, information item, highways, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 11-25, Transportation, activity summary, marine, operations expenditure summary, \$5.717 million. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to lead into what was mentioned earlier today. I believe the deputy minister here indicated that with federal Bill C-45 that there tends to be, and I don't remember the exact wording, making things easier. Can I get maybe the Minister or deputy minister to elaborate on what effects it will have on our marine programs with imminent changes to federal regulations?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. The changes to 38 and 45 would affect us mostly on the capital side of things and as we seek approvals for our capital projects, it will make the process a little clearer, in some cases a little simpler, and it will also put in specific timelines that must be met for the regulatory process and whatever other environmental assessment-type approvals we have to go through.

MR. DOLYUNNY: I will be looking forward to maybe asking that question when we get into the capital side in a few months, so I appreciate that. I remember some time ago we talked about, I believe in committee format, it was referred to as the On

Course Marine Strategy. Can the department give us a bit of an update as to where we're at with that strategy and maybe some of the goals or strategies that could be affecting this budget for this year?

MR. NEUDORF: The strategy On Course was for five ferries that we had at the time. It is still sitting in draft in the department. We have not rolled it out publicly but we are taking the results of it and using it in our O and M and capital refit work for the vessels. It's helping us to prioritize that work. The plan is that we want to come forward with a full multi-modal transportation strategy and one of the chapters or sections of that would include marine as well. In terms of the other specific things that we're working on marine, of course, the Merv Hardie is coming out of service so we are just working on the plan of what will happen with that vessel.

MR. DOLYUNNY: I believe my notes indicate that we are anticipating to see the completion of that On Course Marine Strategy in the 2012-2013 budget. It's interesting to see that it is still not completed, yet we do have a lot of changes in our marine vessels, especially with the Merv Hardie. With that said, we service, currently, four river crossings with ferries, and with the changes that we're seeing with the Deh Cho Bridge finally in active services and the Merv Hardie possibly being re-allocated to a future port of call, is there any cost recovery with any of our fleet that may be coming off the books in this fiscal year?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a reduction of \$2.4 million as it relates to the Deh Cho Bridge and the Merv Hardie ferry. We are going to be making some decisions on perhaps relocating the Merv Hardie ferry to Tsiigehtchic. Those discussions are underway and we're doing the analysis now. We wouldn't have any plans to dispose of another ferry.

MR. DOLYUNNY: I just thought that it would seem that if we've got a ferry that is being re-allocated, we would have a ferry that is not in use, therefore, are we keeping it as a spare or is this something that could be used as a cost-recovery for the taxpayers?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Cardinal would, if the Merv Hardie ends up at Tsiigehtchic, be used in a spare capacity. As things progress in other places around the territory, the Cardinal could be put into service – across the Bear River, for example – at some point in time. So we wouldn't be in a real rush to dispose of that ferry.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thanks to the Minister. With all the industrial development that's anticipated in the Sahtu region, does the department anticipate a

much bigger increase in marine traffic or activity, and is this reflected in this year's budget?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Getting back to cost recovery, if we had a request for the Cardinal from industry in using that to cross from Norman Wells or Tulita, that's something that we would certainly consider on a cost-recovery basis. We could see how that progresses.

As far as marine traffic, I think that will be moving forward. There will be much more marine traffic this coming summer and the following summer with the advance of Husky's all-weather road into one of their leases in the Sahtu. As well, Conoco has plans to build an all-weather road on the other side of the Mackenzie. As well, there will be more marine traffic. I think Hay River is going to be a busier place as a result of that. We don't have any money associated with that in this budget, but activity will certainly be increasing.

MR. DOLYNNY: A final question I have here, and just so that I'm perfectly clear on all the regulatory changes that we're going to be faced here in the GNWT, is there any increase in our operating costs to this department with respect to marine activity?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: No.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Mr. Dolynny is done. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions are along the ferry operation as well. I know the Minister has answered some of them with Mr. Dolynny's questions, but I'm just wondering about the strategy that the department is going to come with all the ferries. I have heard also that the ferry in Fort McPherson, they would like to upgrade it as well. I'm just wondering when the department is going to analyze and decide if they're going to move the Merv Hardie up to Tsiigehtchic, maybe the Louis Cardinal moves up to Fort McPherson, and then we would have a spare ferry. When would the department be looking at rolling out this plan to implement? Obviously, the spring is coming and we're a couple months away from wanting to open up these ferries, so when does the department expect to know about what they're going to do for this upcoming season?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That analysis and decisions could, in fact, even happen this month. I mean, spring is coming and decisions are going to have to be made, so, yes, we'll be moving on that as soon as we get the analysis done.

MR. BOUCHARD: My other question is about the Merv Hardie. I've heard that they need to potentially do an upgrade to the engines and stuff like that. Would that be an operating cost or would we be

capitalizing any kind of major engine repairs to that ship? Obviously, we'd do that before we would send it up to Tsiigehtchic, I would assume.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That would be a capital cost, and we don't have the capital dollars to do the improvements right now. That's why it was going to be put as a spare, but that's not to say that it can't be put back into service and we can find the capital dollars to upgrade at a later point in time.

MR. BOUCHARD: The other area of interest of mine is, obviously, dredging, and this goes in line with marine. The Minister has already committed to providing some financial assistance to looking at the Hay River dredging, but I'm just wondering if the department is looking to roll out more of a plan for dredging. I'm not just concerned about Hay River dredging. I think there are some other areas of concern. Dredging, you know, maybe some, potentially, in Inuvik and some in Norman Wells. What is the department looking at as far as a dredging program through the Northwest Territories?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Dredging remains a responsibility of the federal government. I see our role as being one that continues to push the federal government to reinstate a program like they had prior to 1994 when they had a multi-million dollar dredging program here in the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned to the Member earlier, even a small-scale dredging program is going to cost somewhere between \$2 million and \$3 million. Full-scale, you're looking at probably \$12 million to \$15 million for a full-scale dredging program. Those are capital dollars that today we just do not have, and again, it's not currently our responsibility, but we do have a responsibility to impress upon the federal government the need and the requirement to dredge a port like Hay River and others in the territory.

We will continue to impress upon the federal government the need to get a program back up and running here in the North. In discussions we've had previously with the federal government, dredging has come up and we continue the dialogue, but we haven't seen any funding yet. We will continue to push the federal government for funding for dredging here.

MR. BOUCHARD: That's all. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just interested in the issue that's arisen to the floor, the discussion on the potential transfer of the Merv Hardie down the line. What I'm hearing is the access by Tsiigehtchic, or wherever appropriate, to replace that ferry, the Cardinal I think it is. Has there been any consideration to maybe push the Merv Hardie to the Liard ferry at Fort Simpson and

then push the Lafferty, I think, further down? I'm just curious on the analysis and consideration that will be taken into effect. Considering how busy that highway is and certainly getting with the heavy trucks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The main impetus on looking at relocating the Merv Hardie to Tsiigehtchic was its ice-breaking capability and the fact that it could remain in operation longer, and with the situation of gas in Inuvik, that's very, very important. Again, decisions are going to have to be made sooner rather than later. The Merv Hardie, we didn't look at any other location that it could move in the NWT. The traffic volumes aren't there at other locations and, again, I think we need to keep in mind the situation in Inuvik with the gas and the fact that we can keep that crossing open for many weeks more than is currently allowed with the current operation there. Is it the location we're looking at?

MR. HAWKINS: What's the enabling document that defines who's responsible for dredging?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I could find out which document it is, but it's always been a federal responsibility here in the Northwest Territories. We'll try to find that document for the Member.

MR. HAWKINS: I thought certain limitations of dredging as to where it was or handled was transferred to the GNWT. Is there any familiarity to that?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: No.

MR. HAWKINS: [Microphone turned off] ...last year that dredging was actually paid for by the federal government and to what extent?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That would have been 1994, and it was a multi-million dollar operation at that time. They had a program that was run on an annual basis here in the Northwest Territories. The program ceased to exist in 1994.

MR. HAWKINS: Has the department been involved in any dredging since 1994? That's just short of 20 years.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: On a small scale, like you see in this year's budget, \$60,000, but that's just an effort to try to help folks out in Hay River. But we do not have the millions of dollars it would require to dredge the port of Hay River, nor is it our responsibility.

MR. HAWKINS: If it's not the GNWT's responsibility, why are we dedicating \$60,000 to a project that almost sounds fruitless? Perhaps at the same time, can the Minister provide a financial scale of what type of funding needs to be done for that type of project? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Madam Chair, we are addressing a need. It's through federal funding that we look at the \$60,000 in partnership with the Canadian Coast Guard. We work with other folks in Hay River to try and get up as much of a program as we possibly can. The requests keep coming. I know I've heard both Members from Hay River talk about the requirement for dredging in the port of Hay River. That's how we can answer the call. We don't have millions of dollars, but we can offer assistance where need be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks, Minister Ramsay. Just to the Minister and to Mr. Hawkins, we are talking about marine, which is kind of ferry operations, I believe, not dredging, but maybe Minister Ramsay can identify whether the \$60,000 we are talking about is...where it is in the budget.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: It would be under information items, work performed on behalf of others, but we'll get you the exact page, Madam Chair. Page 11-36.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Maybe you can hold your questions, Mr. Hawkins, until we get to that page, at least on dredging. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: I could, Madam Chair, but it was the Minister who brought it up and he was the one who coined the money. But that's fine.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Committee, we are on page 11-25, Transportation, activity summary, marine, operations expenditure summary, \$5.717 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Page 11-26, Transportation, information item, marine, active positions. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): We will move on. Page 11-29, Transportation, activity summary, Community Access Program, operations expenditure summary, \$1.008 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): We move on to page 11-30, Transportation, activity summary, Community Access Program, grants and contributions, contributions, \$980,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. We move on to page 11-33, Transportation, activity summary, road licensing and safety, operations expenditure summary, \$5.490 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to open up my discussions on the driver examination wait times. This is something that I did bring up in the House here a couple months ago. At

such time, there was about a three-month wait time here in Yellowknife and roughly about a two-week wait time in every other jurisdiction across the Northwest Territories.

Can we get an update as to if that has now been rebalanced in terms of the driver examinations? Are they now all in line and roughly what that time wait would be across the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for bringing this to our attention last year. The wait times now in Yellowknife are in line with other wait times around the Territories. So someone shouldn't have to wait any more than the two-week time frame to be tested. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I appreciate the Minister looking at that when we did bring that up. The question was regarding Class 5 regular examinations. My question now will have to deal with, I call, specialty licences. I am talking about Class 1, motorcycle and that kind of stuff. There seems to be very few opportunities throughout the given month where people across the Northwest Territories are able to actually access proper examinations for those specialty licences. Is the department aware of this? Is there a plan of action to decrease the amount of wait time, especially for things like motorcycle licences? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Madam Chair, that's the first that has been brought to my attention. If the Member has some specifics of people waiting an inordinate amount of time to be licensed or to have a test, I would be more than happy to try and address those concerns if his constituents or others are having those types of difficulties. I haven't heard those concerns personally. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I'll bring those direct questions to the department personally. Thank you very much.

The so-called on-line availability for road licensing and safety in terms of drivers and vehicles and NWT driver's licence, it was indicated, back in this House, that there were going to be upgrades to the system, allowing the opportunity for on-line access for things like abstracts to be done. Can the Minister update us as to where we are at with that initiative? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do continue to upgrade our Motor Vehicle Information System and are working toward providing more on-line services. Initial focus of the upgrade has been to make the requirements for the Deh Cho Bridge toll. You can remit information required for our

monthly reporters on-line, so that service is already provided on-line.

We are working, in the spring of this year, to be able to provide our client profiles, so you can request a driver abstract by the spring of this year. Later in the fall of this year, fall of 2013, we will be able to have on-line notices come out. So for registration expiring, for example, and to be able to book your driver tests on-line and also order a driver abstract, as I mentioned. Later in next fiscal year, so later in the winter of 2013-14, we are looking at having on-line vehicle registrations. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, it is very promising news. I think the general public would appreciate that. I know people who have to drive hundreds of kilometres to get a driver's abstract probably waste more in fuel than they do in trying to get the piece of paper.

My next question has to do with harmonization of vehicle permitting, or I like to refer it to as "in transit". Currently, if you were to purchase a vehicle outside of the Northwest Territories and have to register it in transit, the user has to go to each and every province to re-register that vehicle on his journey back to the Northwest Territories. If you buy your vehicle perhaps in Quebec or PEI, you have to stop in every province to re-register that vehicle that is called in transit.

Is there any appetite for the department to look at any type of harmonization program with the vehicle permitting requirements through interprovincial jurisdictions? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Madam Chair, this is a situation that we would be more than happy to look into. I'm under the understanding that that may not be the case, but if the Member has a specific case where in each province during transit of purchasing a vehicle they had to get a new in transit from each province they pass through, again, that is something... We will look into it. It shouldn't happen. If it is happening, we'll try to make sure that it doesn't happen to anybody else. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I will be more than happy to bring all of my paperwork to the department on that one as well.

NWT Road Safety Plan, this was something that was brought up by the department and yet we have not seen the framework of this NWT Road Safety Plan. Can the department indicate when this might occur and, if so, is this going to be occurring in the 2013-14 budget cycle?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Madam Chair, we continue to work on the Road Safety Plan. It is still a work in progress. As to the date, I would be

guessing. As soon as it's done we'll be back before committee with that plan. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I have no further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Committee, we're on page 11-33, Transportation, activity summary, road licensing. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my pleasure to offer some insightful thoughts on this particular page, especially for those who called for detail, and detail I will provide. The issue I've raised here is about the question about on-line updates where people can apply for certain services, obviously with fees. This is an issue I brought to the House some time ago and I'm wondering about a particular update, if it's feasible and the department judges it worthy for response. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. In response to Member Dolynny's question about on-line services, we hope to have abstracts available on-line hopefully in the spring of this year. We also look forward to having on-line vehicle registration sometime in '13-14. Also, on-line services, client notifications, registrations expiring and things of that nature, booking road tests, and that should happen, as well, this year. So we're making a great deal of progress in the provision of on-line services here in the territory, and I thank the Members for bringing their concerns to the department's attention. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Is it anticipated by the department that there will be any additional fees to this particular service, considering the offset of time and energy we'll be saving by people booking them and organizing them, or even going through the process of having to print out the statements? So what's the fee schedule strategy? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. It's not anticipated that there will be any fee increases associated with people accessing services on-line. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: That's fine for now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks. Committee, we're on page 11-33, Transportation, activity summary, road licensing and safety, operations expenditure summary, \$5.490 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks, committee. Page 11-34, Transportation, information item, road licensing and safety, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Pages 11-36 and 37, Transportation, information item, work performed on behalf of others, \$2.129 million. Pages 11-36 and 11-37, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's my further pleasure to offer more insightful comments and questions to this particular page. I was reading some information here under responsibilities, and that's referring to one of the particular transfer agreements from the Government of Canada to the Department of Transportation. For the official record, we should say that's the transfer date of May 1990.

Under the responsibility section, plus sections, sections, sections, under there it further goes on that, "The GNWT will assume the following responsibilities..." and if we further follow the chain down, "...funding for dredging of rivers and ferry crossings listed in paragraph 5." It's important to get it on the record, of course, so we'll go to number five and it's not attached, oddly enough. Here we go, here it is. I found it. "Red Knife River Camp, Liard, Wrigley, McPherson, James Creek." These are camps. Why isn't this particular area that the Member for Hay River keeps raising, why isn't it added to the schedules of territorial responsibility? It seems to me we have enough schedules to point out dredging in other areas. If this is an area where we've worked with NTCL as well as the Coast Guard, it would only make sense that it would be part of this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That was 1990 and in relation to that agreement, we are responsible for ferry landings and I think that's what the Member is alluding to, the fact that DOT is responsible for dredging near ferry landings, but definitely we're not responsible for a port like Hay River, to dredge that port. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister has already promised to provide the enabling documentation, so there's no sense in asking the question again. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. We are on pages 11-36 and 11-37, Transportation, information item, work performed on behalf of others, \$2.129 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. We will return to page 11-7, Transportation, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$117.011 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Committee, are we agreed that we are concluded the Department of Transportation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. We will move on to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I'd like to thank the witnesses for their attendance here. Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Alright, committee, Municipal and Community Affairs starts on page 6-7, but before we start, I will go to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and ask Minister McLeod if he has any opening comments.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I am pleased to present the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' main estimates for the fiscal year 2013-2014.

The department's main estimates propose an operations expenditure budget of \$98.8 million, an increase of \$3.25 million, or 3.4 percent, from the 2012-2013 Main Estimates. The increase consists primarily of \$3.68 million in forced growth funding, offset by funding that is sunseting this fiscal year.

MACA has a broad mandate, focusing on community governments but also providing a range of programs aimed at sport and recreation, youth and volunteers. Of the proposed 2013-2014 budget, approximately 78 percent is provided to our key stakeholders: community governments. This includes \$47 million to provide for community government operation and maintenance costs and \$14.6 million to provide for water and sewer costs.

MACA will also provide community governments with infrastructure acquisition funding of \$28 million in 2013-2014, comprised entirely of capital formula funding.

In addition, the Gas Tax Agreement will provide community governments with funding of \$15 million in 2013-2014, unchanged from 2012-2013.

In support of the 17th Legislative Assembly's goals, MACA will provide technical advice and assistance related to the implementation of integrated community sustainability plans in the areas of energy, capital and human resources. The department will continue to implement the Public Service Capacity Initiative, and will implement an accountability framework to further improve reporting requirements for public funding, and to support community governments' ability to be accountable to their residents. MACA will also complete the Recreational Leasing Policy Framework.

Through programs such as Active After School, Get Active NWT, traditional games tours and participation in the Healthy Choices Framework, MACA will continue to support the 17th Assembly's goal of healthy, educated people and its priority of

supporting the health care system through preventative measures such as physical activity.

Forced growth funding accounts for \$3.68 million of the year-over-year increase to MACA's budget reflected in the 2013-2014 Main Estimates. This increase is to provide grants-in-lieu payments to tax-based communities, increased operations and maintenance funding and water/sewer funding due to population growth, and increases in fuel and electricity costs.

The department will also be supporting the government's decentralization initiative by re-profiling funding for three vacant Yellowknife positions and combining with existing regional position funding to establish five new assistant regional superintendent positions in the Beaufort-Delta, Sahtu, Deh Cho, North Slave and South Slave.

Reported results confirm more communities with accumulated surpluses and fewer communities with accumulated deficits. These are strong indicators of improved financial management, and community governments should be acknowledged for the improvements they have achieved with the support of MACA staff and through the Public Service Capacity Initiative. MACA continues to support community governments in their capacity building initiatives, and funding the public service capacity is again reflected in MACA's 2013-2014 Main Estimates. There has been a great deal of work done on this program over the past year, and the input of our partners from the NWT Association of Communities, the Local Government Administrators of the NWT and the Department of Human Resources has been instrumental in improving the program. The department is currently working to finalize an evaluation framework to use to measure results and to report on the program and its outcomes.

MACA is in the third year of implementing its strategic plan, and will continue to report on progress through the business planning process. Continued support of community capacity building, land management initiatives, youth leadership development and healthy choices are just some examples of how MACA is responding to the priorities of the 17th Assembly.

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to provide an overview of the department's 2013-2014 Main Estimates. I look forward to discussing them with you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister McLeod, please introduce your witnesses for the House.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my left I have Mr. Tom Williams, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs; to my immediate right I have Mr. Gary Schauerte, director of corporate services for Municipal and Community Affairs; and I have, to my far right, Ms. Eleanor Young, associate assistant deputy minister for Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We will start with general comments. Are there any general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just some general comments. The Minister and the department might be familiar with some of the points I'm going to highlight and this goes to the communities that I represent. For some time it's been their aspirations to try to at least take on the responsibility of serving their citizens to the fullest. One of them is being able to have their own water source. There are two communities in particular that I represent, Enterprise and Kakisa, that have for a long time aspired to ensure that they have the responsibility.

I have raised this on a number of occasions. It continues to be an aspiration that they want to work on. I know they have considered some options, whether they do well water or trucked services. It could be a partnership arrangement. It continues to be a point that communities have aspired to work and continue to lobby their efforts to ensure in the end their strong will. Hopefully, there will be a compromise or a middle point where the department will be in a position to assist the communities. Eventually, they would like to realize their own source of water in both Enterprise and Kakisa.

For some time, too, I know there's been a New Deal with MACA and communities, where money and funds have been downloaded to communities for them to be responsible for ensuring that they have their capital wish list or capital plan wish list, and at the same time giving them the responsibility for operations and maintenance. It's good, but at the same time it shouldn't be the case where MACA basically walks away from their responsibility. There has to be an assured level of cooperation and stronger than ever if these communities that have aspirations to establish their own water source, that partnership needs to be there. I would encourage it.

I'm hoping we can make some advances over the course of this year.

Another point that I wanted to make is just highlighting two fundamental things that I've been monitoring and trying to get some movement on, on the matter of ground ambulance and also the highway fire emergency situations. I think MACA has been in the lead for some time to try and get at least an interdepartmental cooperation and level of discussion in terms of trying to focus on the issues of trying to establish those two initiatives within the NWT. I understand there are some fundamental challenges with respect to liability issues in terms of a volunteer brigade from the community that might make a Good Samaritan decision and assist the public out on the highway, and then the question of liability has been brought up. In the end, it's the citizens of the NWT that we have to serve. Down the road more likely we'll be seeing more visitors hopefully coming up North, travelling the highway system and the eventuality of perhaps an unfortunate accident may happen and may arise and at the call of a whim a decision has to be made where this volunteer fire brigade has to be employed and provide service to the public. Some focus needs to be shed on this initiative.

I understand it's been an ongoing matter for some time. I think it's come to the forefront because of the opening of the Deh Cho Bridge. We have 24-hour uninterrupted traffic flowing right from North of 60 to Yellowknife. We need to ensure that there's marked progress, and perhaps an established understanding of how ground ambulance and highway fire emergencies will be arrived at. I hope during the life of at least this Assembly I will be able to witness some significant progress in the front. In the end it's the spirit of helping out the public that requires need and assistance on the highway, or else even, for that matter, for the smaller communities that are in the circumstance where they have a volunteer fire brigade in their community. They have to act in circumstances where they have to assist the public, especially in the community level as well. I think there needs to be a focus on training and preparing people to be in the position to help the public. Those are just general comments at this point.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. My opening comments for the Department of MACA deal mainly with what the community of Hay River has been dealing with the department for some time. We've had the opportunity to meet with them over the last couple of months. The community's obviously concerned about the formula funding and the way that some of the formula funding has been affecting the community of Hay River.

The way the formula is calculated out for the last couple of years, Hay River has seen a major decrease in some of their funding. We continue to work with the department on finding ways to see if there is a potential for Hay River to regain some of that funding. There is an area of concern. I know the department has indicated that they re-evaluate the formula funding on a regular basis and try to assess it, but if the department can look to assess or re-assess the community of Hay River would be an issue, and continue to work with the community of Hay River and see if there's something they can do for that formula funding deficiency that Hay River has been suffering with.

The other area that we've also been discussing with the Department of MACA is the emergency services. Obviously, we have a fantastic fire department in Hay River and they serve the community well. Not only the community but the surrounding area. We're looking for the department to give some direction and assistance in some of the calls that we respond to outside of the community. We have a large highway system both to the east and west and south of Hay River that basically demands emergency response. Hay River, having more of the equipment than the surrounding communities, often responds to these calls with limited resources given to the community of Hay River for that service. We've been working with the department on that.

My third point is, obviously Hay River being an area that every year has a breakup and could have flood issues, the emergency services and that type of responses, we would like to work with the department to continue to make sure that's available for the people of Hay River, the residents of Hay River if we do experience any flooding in the community. Those are my major concerns in the Department of MACA for right now.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Next on the list is Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to welcome the Minister and the Department of MACA here today. As I said, sometimes we don't stop and be thankful for some of the great work that departments and senior leadership provide to the people of the Northwest Territories. I think this is one of those occasions where I need to aim my congratulations on how the Minister and department deal with sport, recreation and youth. As far as I'm concerned, you guys are well beyond your leadership in this area in relation to even provincial counterparts, and I encourage you to continue down that path. I think that's a very strong message and it's one in which you don't get too often from this Member when things go well. Congratulations.

There is no denying that I have brought many, many times to this House and I wish I could have

seen this topic embedded within the opening comments. That subject is emergency preparedness. I can't stress enough the fact that I believe if there is one opportunity for this department, it's to focus resources and priorities in preparing our communities for that inevitable day that could happen to any one of them. We had a bit of a glimpse of that earlier this year with two of our communities. We've also seen a very tragic accident on our highway system as of late which also... I'll talk to that in a second and echo my comments to Mr. Nadli here. I'm very concerned that the department is either underfunded in this area or isn't treating this in the proper respect, if we're using the right measuring stick, to put that in light of what I think is required by this department. What I mean by that is that I am looking for that day when all communities have complete and updated hazard and fire assessments. Sometimes a lot of these terminologies get really confused, not only in this building. They get confused at media level and they definitely get confused sometimes at community level. As I said, the fire and hazard assessments, all 33 communities, it would be a great accolade to see that done in this fiscal year.

Complementing that would be the completion of all community emergency action files, which, in my mind, is a very different element to the fire and hazard assessments. To that, I would hope that this information, once it's compiled, is systematically filed and maintained in a real-time database. It makes no use to put this in a hard copy format. This has to be something that is accessible by all communities in real time. I feel that the GNWT needs to focus the proper resources and expertise to achieve that milestone. I challenge them in this fiscal year, if they don't have it in place, to put the means in place, to do it by our next budget, because I will be bringing those same comments back to this House. I'm hoping that the Minister will have promising opening comments to address what I'm talking about. This type of emergency information is a two-way street design. What I mean by two-way is that we need to basically integrate all this information with our federal counterparts. Right now our communities are operating as silos in relation to emergency situations. Should an emergency arise, this real-time information or the lack of a plan will hamper and put our communities and people at risk. The federal components do have the capabilities of aiding us, but if we're not able to communicate or we don't have the contact person or we don't have the phone number, how are we able to prevent injury or harm or further disaster and cost and potentially lives to our communities?

I don't want to undermine what I'm talking about there. I want this information to resonate loud and clear with this department, because I will continue on my quest to move this forward. I want to make

sure that we provide the ongoing emergency management training for all our, whether it's fire chiefs or base superintendents for community services in this area. I want to reach out and not normally would I say this here, but every time I do my investigations in this area there's one name that comes out that I believe deserves an accolade and I have no problem putting that name on record here. That name is Kevin Brezinski. He deserves full praise. He is working extremely hard in this area to mitigate the exact thing that I'm talking about. Sometimes we don't give praise to very hardworking employees out there that are working for the GNWT. I hope that we provide all the needed resources, funds, and all the tools at our disposal to aid people like that to make sure that this vision comes true.

I also want to echo the comments that were brought forward by the Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli. He spoke very profoundly of the needs of his community. I think he speaks to the truth of all communities in dire need of this government, this department, to look at the extension of what I was just talking about, and that is the extension of our Ground Ambulance Program, our highway fire and emergency service. As we found out, the Emergency Triage Intervention Program, via whether it's air ambulance, so they're working in conjunction with other departments, the inter-department relationships that this department will need to achieve to allow the people of the Northwest Territories the confidence.

We have the capabilities and the abilities to protect our own in the event of tragedy. Currently, I think it's painfully obvious that we do not have the proper systems in place, and that's no fault to anyone. It's the fault that we haven't put enough resources into this. Unfortunately, I hope that no one in this room and no one that's listening in today are involved in a situation where a loved one is put at risk or in peril, or potentially death of a result of the fact that we could have, or should have, done something in this area years ago. I put the challenge out not only to this department, but I put the challenge out to the Department of Finance: Find the money for this, period. This is something you cannot put down on a spreadsheet, this is not a line item on a balance sheet, these are lives. And I'm sorry, you cannot put a dollar figure on a life, not in any budget, not in any budget that I have.

So I challenge this department to continue their quest to look at ways just to put this program in place, and I ask that they follow some very key components to that ask, and I ask that this be a fully coordinated program. I ask that this become a very standardized program. So whether you're in community X or you're in community Y, our systems are standardized. If we have a ground fleet or an ambulance fleet that if I go into the back of that truck, that I know that the fire extinguisher is in

the same spot, that that First Aid kit is in the same spot, that those Band-Aids are in the same spot, so we can actually coordinate our efforts in the event of a major emergency, that if we're bringing in help from other regions, they don't have to learn the system. They just need to act and react accordingly.

Finally, it goes without saying, when we're dealing with budget, is to please make this cost effective. We can make this cost effective. There are many programs and protocols out there provincially, that are light years ahead of us. Let's learn from our counterparts. Let's learn from our brothers and sisters down south to make a more cost-effective program and tailor this program to our uniqueness, our geographic uniqueness of the Northwest Territories. And let's make this, together, a successful program.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. It comes as no surprise, I'm sure, to the Minister that I'd like to raise the consumer affairs issue. I think this is an area that seems to be underexplored by this government and whether it's the lending agencies of the small little loan companies out there, payday loans as they're often referred to, which I've had concern with in the...or even to the gas prices or the cell phone issue that I raised the week before. I'd like to hear from the Minister on how they plan to work with this area, perhaps maybe even bolster it and support it in a manner that it gets out into the public, talks to the public, to all four corners of the NWT and gets people's feedback and engagement into consumer protection issues. I mean, why have a consumer affairs division if they a, have no teeth and b, certainly fall more anonymous than, certainly, in the public's eye.

The cell phone issue, as I raised earlier, is a critical issue, but consumers really don't know what to do or where to go, and I think they feel helpless if not stranded by their government on the anonymity of this particular section. I'm not suggesting in any way that they don't do work or the work that they do manage to do is of any lesser quality. The reality is, it has become largely anonymous and I think it's time that in this heightened awareness role of society where people need to know where to go when they have concerns, they need to know that their government is listening, that they're certainly available, and these are their rights. But right now, as it stands, as I said, it's more of an anonymous situation than it is a public one. I would challenge the Minister, and certainly the department, to offer ways and suggestions in a creative fashion to show how they could do more with this area, because I think it's very, very important.

Active living is very important. We see it highlighted in the Minister's opening comments, as well as we're all well-versed, very clearly, in MACA's goal about helping getting youth active, but there's often a critical component, and I've highlighted this, that seniors' activity is a gaping hole in our public system here where we don't have a specific mandate to support them in an active type of living. The challenge, of course, I'm proposing to the department is the fact is they need to be able to offer services. There have been gaps in a manner of being able to fill. We've been able to reach out and find service agencies that, by the way, get their money from MACA, which is a bit of a paradox. MACA can't help them but they can give money to somebody else who can help seniors, which seems to be a paradox by itself. There needs to be some recognition that seniors need to be active. They want to be active and they need support mechanisms.

I probably beat my colleague to the punch on this one, but not necessarily on purpose but to further underscore how important it is, which is the 911 system. I know that Ms. Bisaro has raised it even recently, and the Minister has spoken positively to this. I'm kind of glad to hear that it's in the focus of the department, and I'd like to hear more as to what they can do or certainly how they're probably trying to drive this to a solution. I know I've raised it a few times in the House and I've even had good discussions with NorthwesTel about logistics and technical abilities. They have had the ability to provide a tier-two 911 system, and it's a shame that the government hasn't gotten behind that. But now the proverbial excuse of cell phones being part of the problem, whereas then they couldn't do a full implementation has now been relieved from the government as being a barrier. So I look forward to hearing the government providing some input and certainly some proposals.

I agree with Member Dolynny that the programs offered for community ambulance services or extension of emergency services are probably very weak, and the fact that communities are doing the best that they can, and they certainly need the support of equipment, training, as well as the financial authority to go make the right call. I mean, I'd hate to think that someone hesitated to go rescue a person in need on a highway and it all came down to simple things like authority or they didn't have the money to do it. The government needs to be standing shoulder to shoulder with these Good Samaritans who are willing to join these community services programs. They're largely volunteer so, in other words, they're underpaid and probably under gratified in the sense of the work they do, but it's so important to the community that they're there if they need someone in an ambulance or a fire service. That work is absolutely critical. It's just one of those things. I

wish we could pay them but we just, obviously, don't have the money to do it.

I just want to restate seniors programming and funding for seniors to get them active. I think that's very critical, from my point of view, although I've probably overused the word critical. It's trying to stress how important I think it is. I have a large seniors' community in my riding. I would say, to some degree, not unlike anyone else, but I'm there regularly at the Baker Centre with the Yellowknife seniors, and even at times we see people and we speak with them from the territorial seniors' point of view, and it's so exciting watching them engage into lawn bowling or types of participation that keeps them healthy. It becomes one of the fundamentals that if they're not active, it starts having a ripple effect or a trickle effect against their general health. I mean, it's wise for our government to find new ways to get our seniors active, and if the department was clever, they would probably try to link it to some type of youth programming where we get the seniors to take the youth out for a walk or a brisk walk in some manner or we get the youth to take the seniors out. I mean, there's got to be a neat way to get them engaged. I mean, that would sort of speak to the fundamental type of government we run and maybe the territory we live in, which is we always want to talk about linking the youth to seniors, and here could be a new, innovative way that the department could come up with a program that, you know, get granny walking but maybe granny's out spending some time with the young folks being active as well. It could be a great way of doing things.

That said, that seems to be all I would feel at this time I'd prefer to comment on. I will leave the rest up to my colleagues. I will have further questions page by page.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. General comments. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of comments in no particular order. Some of them have already been mentioned and I'll just kind of add emphasis to them as I add them.

I want to thank Mr. Hawkins for bringing up 911. The Minister knows it's something that I've been somewhat passionate about for quite some time now, and I recognize that there's no money in the budget for any kind of 911 this year, but I would hope that the department would seriously consider looking at providing some assistance to the City of Yellowknife if you get a proposal for the 2014-15 budget year. It's not a huge amount of money that's required, and I know there's not a huge amount of money that the department has at its disposal, but I just want to put the seed out there and hope that you think about supporting the city to get something started in regard to 911.

I agree with Mr. Dolynny's comments about emergency preparedness. It is something which I think has taken a bit of a backseat and has lost focus since we reduced staffing at the department. I can't remember when it was, but a couple of years ago we reduced the number of staff within the emergency preparedness section. I think that's been to the detriment of, sort of, well, the territory as a whole but our communities as well. I'll just leave it at that. Mr. Dolynny has emphasized things really well.

The Minister, in his opening comments, mentioned the accountability framework, and I will have some questions when we come to that section.

The Recreational Leasing Policy Framework was also mentioned, and I will have some questions when we get to there as well.

I do want to say that in terms of what I consider to be an extremely successful program, and I think the Minister considers it that as well, is the Youth Ambassadors Program. It's kind of grown over the years, it's now well-entrenched within the department, and I think it has proven to be a very valuable program for our youth. It's been valuable for us in terms of promotion of the territory, but it's also been really valuable to the youth in terms of their development as young people and as leaders.

I will have some questions when we come to it about the changes to legislation of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I would hope that the department is moving towards including municipalities under that legislation.

Kind of along the same lines is the transfer of taxation capabilities to municipalities. I know that's been mentioned and I'll have some questions when we get to there to see where things are at with that.

I am concerned about the, I don't know if it's slowed or stalled or whatever, but the opportunity for a municipality to implement a hotel levy if they wish to do so. I know the hoteliers within the city of Yellowknife would like to see a hotel levy and the revenue put back into tourism marketing and promotion.

I, too, have major concerns about the ground ambulance and highway rescue policy, or lack of, and the amount of money that's available to municipalities. We need to allow for training, equipment and capabilities in all of our communities that are on the highway system to be able to respond. It goes beyond ground ambulance. That's been sort of the focus for the last number of years, just to sort of reimburse communities for the costs of responding with ground ambulance to situations outside the community. Yellowknife, for instance, down the Ingraham Trail, if an ambulance has to go out there, that costs the city, that's not within the city's municipal boundaries. But, you know, the city sends fire crews and sends emergency crews out

anyway. We need to go beyond having the capabilities so that municipalities feel comfortable in being able to respond to some kind of an accident or some kind of an emergency on the highway, and we don't have that right now. I know it's an expensive proposition. I know it was looked into a number of years ago, but I think we have to go back to that and try to find a solution, maybe halfway in the middle. But we've got to do something to protect our residents and protect municipalities.

There has been reference to evaluation of funding formulas. I believe last year we were advised that the operations and maintenance funding formula was going to be reviewed this year, so I'll have some questions when we come to that portion.

I also would like to hear from the department when we get to that section, how the Public Service Capacity Program is doing – it's been two years now, I think – and whether there's been an evaluation done by the department, and the impact that it has had in communities and whether it's successful or not, that sort of thing.

That's all I have, Mr. Chair, but I'll have specific questions when we get to certain sections of the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Great. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. General comments. Okay, I'll allow the Minister to reply to general comments. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments from the Members. The comments were all basically the same and I think these are issues that we've been working on.

There's concern with the ground ambulance and highway rescue. I've committed to Members that we are looking at that. We'll answer specific questions when we get into the particular page, but I do know we're considering a couple of possible pilot projects; one for sure, possibly two in the north and south communities that are on the highway system. We're looking at rolling that out soon.

Then there was the water source that Mr. Nadli had raised. We are working closely with the communities of Kakisa and Enterprise to see what options they would have. I made the comment about downloading responsibility on to communities. That is exactly what we have done, we have downloaded responsibility on the communities because the communities have proven that they are quite capable of handling all the new responsibility. We continue to work with them. We see a role now as just working closely with the communities, assisting them any way we can.

Again, the emergency issue came up a couple of times. We have a number of communities that have updated emergency plans. Some of the communities, in particular Mr. Bouchard raised Hay

River, and they have an excellent plan. Having to deal with floods on a number of occasions, they have a good emergency plan in place. We've had a couple of issues with some of the other communities.

Again, we have 16 communities that have updated plans, 15 that need updating and two communities without an emergency plan, but we are working closely with the communities to make sure that they get all of their plans updated and we will continue to do that work. I think we have seen, in the last little while, the importance of having good emergency plans and central contact people. So we'll get all of that straightened away. I think Mr. Dolynny's comment was I want to see by next budget here that we have all these in place. I can commit that we'll have more updated action plans by the time we get to the next budget session, probably even through business plan.

Ms. Bisaro raised a number of issues that talked about the 911 that she's raised on a number of occasions. Again, I think we had that exchange in the House. She said she will have questions when we come to the appropriate page. I think I will just hold off comments until we come to the appropriate pages in the budget and we'll have a further discussion.

That's all I have for now, Mr. Chair. I do know that we're going to be going page by page and Members will have questions. So rather than me trying to answer them all now, I'll wait until we get to detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This seems to be a bit of a departure from what we tend to go with. When Members ask questions, most of the Ministers thus far have worked through Members and their particular questions. Now we have one saying that the rest of the comments I'm going to respond to when we get to the page. Now do we have to prompt the Minister? Is he going to answer all of our questions? Again, it seems to be a bit of a departure from what we've been doing.

As a matter of fact, we've gone through seven, eight budgets. Every one of those, the Ministers have gone through a similar process. I would think it would only seem appropriate to go through a similar process as well. I'm fine with changing the way we do things, but how are some of our questions going to be answered? These are opening comments. They come with questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Hawkins, it is the Chair's purview that the Minister has the right to respond in a way and means he sees fit. He did make a commitment that he will deal with some of those general replies

within the details. We'll hope that the Minister holds true to that promise. If not, I am sure the Members will cue the Minister if need be. With that said, I appreciate the comments, Mr. Hawkins, but duly noted.

Committee, before we commence with detail here, we are actually going to take a very short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back, committee. Committee, we're on Municipal and Community Affairs, 6-7, we're going to defer the operations expenditure summary to the end. So I'll ask people to turn their pages to 6-8, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. 6-9, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, revenue summary. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under general lottery licence there seems to be a bit of a fluctuation. Can the Minister provide an answer as to why?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have Mr. Schauerte respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: In '12-13 the department committed to a revenue review. We wanted to look at the actual revenues as opposed to projections that have been historically included in our main estimates. As a result of the review, the revenues that are projected for the '13-14 Main Estimates are in line with actual business operations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: So in the revenue review, is there an overestimate of money or is the money going elsewhere? I'm just trying to get a sense of the error in the money or the extra anticipated revenue.

MR. SCHAUERTE: The revenue that's represented will be actual revenues that we're anticipating collecting. So these will be an actual net decrease to revenues for '13-14.

MR. HAWKINS: So is the policy not to collect as much revenue off this particular fund? Basically, I assume we're collecting our revenue lottery commission of some sort, if that's correct, and if that is what is the percentage or what is the revenue based on in the value of the number?

MR. SCHAUERTE: Can I just confirm, is he asking about lottery licence revenues?

MR. HAWKINS: Yes, I am.

MR. SCHAUERTE: The department has seen a downturn in the number of lottery licence applications that have been sent to our department. At the same time, some community governments have agreements to operate lotteries on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, which is where the lottery revenues are collected. I believe that its 12 communities in the Northwest Territories that have this arrangement.

MR. HAWKINS: So, other than the anomaly of the downturn in the market, is there a fee structure that's changed that's coming into the GNWT as far as lottery licence concern is? So would the downturn alone explain the drop from \$75,000 in the last business cycle to an anticipated \$50,000 in this one?

MR. SCHAUERTE: Yes, that's correct. There has not been a course point increase to the lottery licence fees.

MR. HAWKINS: The next particular question I have is about quarry fees, if we can get an explanation. I know what the quarry is and I know what a fee is. Can I get some explanation as to what type of fees are driving out of this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, we don't have the information with us, but I will commit to Member Hawkins that we'll gather the information and pass that on to him and committee.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you and I happily take that. Under real estate agents and sales persons, we have anticipated of \$3,000, \$5,000 last cycle, \$2,000 the year before. Can I get an understanding exactly how this fee cycle works and why it's gone up from \$2,000 to \$5,000 and then down to \$3,000? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. There's a slight reduction in the amount of operating sales staff in this industry and that has led to the decreased revenue.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. When was the last time real estate agents and sales persons' revenue fee were reviewed?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm not sure when the last time was. Again, we'll look to gather that information and share it with the Members.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. A similar question to vendor direct sellers licence. Can the Minister explain exactly what that line is deriving and the last time that fee structure has been reviewed? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. As far as the last time a lot of these have been reviewed, I mean, we'd have to go back and gather that

information. Once we get the information for all these particular issues, we'll share with the Members of the committee. On this particular one, there was a slight increase in the number of licences that were issued. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Can I get the detail on the fee structure? I wasn't quite clear in the Minister's action and the last time it was reviewed? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm not sure exactly what the fee structure is. I don't have that information with me. As far as the last time it was reviewed, I said before that I'm not sure of that, either. So we will gather the information and share it with the Member.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you to the Minister for that. Collection agency licences. How many collection agencies are there here in the Northwest Territories and what's the licence fee based on? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. A lot of these are small amounts in the work that we do. I do have some detail. However, the detail that the Member is asking for needs a little bit more work on my part and I will commit to gathering all of the detail for all of the Member's questions, the ones that he's asked and the one that he's about to ask and we'll get that information back to him.

MR. HAWKINS: That's a very thorough answer and I appreciate that from the Minister. Could the Minister help me understand what plan review fees is, at \$15,000? There's a significant drop. It rose from \$8,000 to \$31,000 in the last fiscal cycle and then it significantly dropped to the \$15,000. So I'm just trying to get a sense. It seems quite a turbulent bit of a fee prediction there, if anything very challenging to manage to predict it. So perhaps he could help me understand what fee review is, for my education as well as the House and the public, and what it's based on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are fees that the department charges for the review of development plans that are submitted to the office of the fire marshal. The change that's represented in the 2013-2014 Main Estimates is indicative that the department is no longer charging other government departments for providing that service.

MR. HAWKINS: What is the fee structure based on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll put some information together for the Member and he'll have all the information he needs on the questions that he's asked.

MR. HAWKINS: Land lease. Would the Minister provide me the last time land leases were looked at? I'm looking for the information as to when the last time land fees or leasing fees were adjusted. How do we come about with a particular rate on charging those things?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member is asking for a lot of detail that I didn't come prepared with because we were looking at the overall numbers. If the Member is looking for more detail, then I've committed to providing him with as much detail as he would like.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd be happy to accept that. It appears we've come to the end of the page.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Continuing with questions is Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question with regard to the revenue on the line Joint Emergency Preparedness. We're going from \$90,000 to nil. Is that federal funding that we get and, if so, what was the \$90,000 last year used for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$90,000 was money that we did receive from the federal government. Some of this I think we distributed to some communities to help with their emergency action plans. Joint Emergency Preparedness is the name of the program. This program was discontinued by the federal government and they're looking at replacing it with a program called the Disaster Mitigation Program now. We're not quite sure of the details. We have some discussions with my federal counterpart, Mr. Lebel, and we're hoping to get some information soon as far as what this program consists of and what kind of money we can expect to get. I will note that in our discussions with Mr. Lebel, we have told him that base-plus is the only type of funding that works for the NWT.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Page 6-9, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 6-10, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 6-13, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$4.395 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask some questions here with regard to funding formulas for communities that the department has. I

can't remember if it's in the Minister's opening remarks or whether it's information that we got elsewhere, but my understanding is that I think in this current budget year there were funding formulas that were going to be reviewed. Particularly the operations and maintenance formula for communities, but I think also the water and sewer formula and the community public infrastructure formula. I think the capital funding formula was reviewed last year and it was recommended to be no change. Just in terms of all four of those funding formulas, if I could get an update from the Minister on whether they have been reviewed and, if they have not, when they will be. All that stuff.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct. We have looked at our O and M funding in the water and sewer and as a result of forced growth, and working with communities on some of the water and sewer, funding was increased. The O and M funding is one that we still need to work on a bit, because with all the capital money and capital projects that are going into communities, the concern we're hearing from communities is that the O and M funding is not keeping up to the amount of capital that they've got. Considering our fiscal situation, I think there's only so much we can put into increasing the O and M funding every year. It's an ongoing review. We're trying to get our communities up closer to keep up with the amount of infrastructure that's getting on the ground. It's a work in progress and I commit to keeping Members updated on the work we're doing as we go along. We work closely with the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT. We rely quite heavily on their advice and input into how we design our programs.

As far as the capital goes, I think I said last year that one of the concerns we got from our partners is that the capital funding is okay the way it is, the O and M funding is the one that needs some more work to keep up with the capital. We're continuing to do that again. I will provide Members with an update on these formulas as we're going along.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for the info. I think I heard the Minister say that the water and sewer funding formula has been changed to provide more money for communities. Is that every community that got an increase in water and sewer funding?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: This year all of them have seen an increase.

MS. BISARO: So does that mean I can tell the mayor of the City of Yellowknife that he's getting an increase in water and sewer funding?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: ... (inaudible)... a MACA update every year for community governments to plan their budgets for this upcoming year, so they're all aware of any changes.

MS. BISARO: The Minister mentioned in his opening remarks that, I think in the 2013-2014 budget year, the government is going to implement an accountability framework. I think the Minister did a statement on this earlier in session. I've always had some difficulty in understanding just sort of what the makeup of the accountability framework is, what it is we are trying to measure, what we are holding municipalities accountable for. Can I get a bit of an explanation, I guess, of what the framework includes and what it is intended to do?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'd like to have Ms. Young respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The accountability framework is intended to be a framework that provides both accountability for community governments to their residents as well as provide information for the department to provide accountability to the Assembly and all the residents of the Territories. What we have done is worked with our partners at the Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators to identify key indicators of success or potential challenge that community governments may face. It's framed around four key areas: governance, financial management, planning and safe communities. There are indicators within each of those four areas. In each indicator there is a checklist, and an internal process for the department to engage with communities to monitor progress in each of those indicator areas.

As an example, financial management there is quarterly reporting that is identified as one of the indicators and, through the checklist, the department will work with the community to ensure that quarterly reporting is submitted and monitor progress with communities in those areas to see if financial position is improving. If there are any areas where there may be challenges in submitting reporting where the department can engage with the community to improve reporting and ensure that funding continues to flow in accordance with their funding agreements in that area.

We are just finalizing the checklists and the internal processes for that framework right now and anticipate having a document out to communities within the next month so that communities will be able to work with us in implementing the checklists.

We are also looking at a communications framework and a large implementation workshop with our stakeholders in the fall so that we're all on the same page with the framework and its

implementation. We'll be able to use this as an annual reporting tool on how communities are doing and how the department is engaging with communities, and whether we're making appropriate measures in each of the areas of the accountability framework.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Young. Mr. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: That's great. Thanks very much, Ms. Young. The next thing I wanted to talk about was legislation. I think it goes under this section. I mentioned in my general comments that I feel very strongly that it's time that municipalities be included under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I'll mention two other things here as well. They're sort of legislation but they're policy oriented more so.

The municipal taxation authority been delayed, I think, for communities which are currently non-tax-based, and I wonder if we have a date when the department intends to download that taxation authority to the municipalities that don't have it. The other one that I mentioned in my comments was the authorization from municipalities to implement a hotel levy if they wish to do so. Those three things, if I could get an update.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For that we'll go to Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to municipal ATIPP legislation, we have been working with the Department of Justice to continue to respond to the Privacy Commissioner on this. In our most recent commitment to the Privacy Commissioner, the department has engaged with the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT to proceed with formal consultation with community governments relative to the implementation of ATIPP legislation. The intent, really, is to hear from community governments about their ability to respond to legislation of this nature.

Anecdotally, we have indicated that community governments are capacity challenged under this, but we really need to hear from them as to what impact legislation of this nature would have on them.

We're well aware of this type of legislation across the country so what we need to do is proceed from a very informed perspective, relative to community governments.

With respect to the municipal taxation authority, this shows up in our department as the Property Tax Revenue Grant Program. The department is under direction right now from the Financial Management Board to go out and conduct an analysis of which community governments may be able to take on this authority. At this point we do know that seven

of the community governments that don't have this authority may have sufficient municipal or the asset base within their community to make the program something that might be viable at the local level.

With respect to the other community governments, it's unlikely that they'll be able to attain this kind of taxation authority, or at least be able to successfully implement it. In most cases it wouldn't be cost effective or viable for them to do that. We're under direction to return to the Financial Management Board within a couple of months on this with our assessment, which will help inform the future direction in this area.

With respect to a hotel levy, again, we are aware that the NWT Association of Communities has passed a motion relative to the creation of a hotel levy and we have met with the Yellowknife Hotel Association in the past on this. It is the department's intention to proceed with formal consultation through communication with community governments and hotel operators to hear from them about their perspective on this. It is our department's sense, at this time, that the hotel operators in the city of Yellowknife are certainly interested in this option, and at this point, we just want to determine from other community governments and other hotel operators in other communities whether or not there's more widespread support for something like this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Ms. Bisaro, your time is up but I have no one else on the list. Would you like to continue?

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up. First of all, thank you to Mr. Schauerte for the info. I wanted to follow up on the hotel levy, and I'm struggling to understand why the department is moving towards consultation. If we have at least one community that has the capabilities, has the desire and wants to use that revenue for marketing and promotion, I'm not too sure why there needs to be broader support. Why can we not provide the authority in legislation and if a community chooses to take advantage of the option, then they can do so. If they don't want to take advantage of that option, then they don't do so. Most municipalities, if they look at it seriously, will realize that it's going to benefit their municipality by having the excess revenue and putting it into marketing, tourism and promotion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Member is wanting us to enable the communities, if they choose to do so, to put in a hotel levy. I'm correct, I think, in saying that. That would require changes to possibly four pieces of legislation. I think we've committed to doing some work on this and I will have discussions with staff and see what this would entail, and looking at costs

and stuff like that. If there is an opportunity where we give them the choice, now they can't do it because of the legislation. I will commit to the Member that I will work closely with the department and we'll see how soon, if possible, we can roll this out, or at least start the work to get it going.

MS. BISARO: Thank to the Minister. I appreciate that commitment. From what I understand from the constituents in Yellowknife that talk to me, that's the desire, I think of the Yellowknife hotel operators, is that a community can choose... We need to give the authority to the municipalities so they can choose to implement the levy or choose not to. I appreciate the difficulty with four pieces of legislation having to be amended. I mean, it takes a long time for us to get any legislation anywhere to be amended, so I appreciate the Minister's commitment to try and bring it forward as soon as possible.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Okay. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I'll take that as a comment. The Minister has already replied to that. Moving on with questions I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad Ms. Bisaro brought this up. I, too, am a champion of enabling our communities on the hotel levy. I'm just trying to get a sense. I thought the NWTAC actually supported this and, if so, what was Municipal and Community Affairs' position on NWTAC having a position saying they wanted this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct. The NWTAC did pass a motion on this and that came to us. We had some concerns expressed to us from the Hotel Association. We actually have just been notified. They have requested a meeting here within the next couple of weeks, so we're committed to meeting with them and getting their views on this. I agree with the Member. The Members over there have said, you know, we talked about enabling the communities to have the authority and make the decisions, and I think that's the direction that MACA has been going for a while, and this is just another one of those. After we have a meeting with the Hotel Association, I think we'll be in a better position to update Members on what some of the options might be and what some of their recommendations might be, so I commit to doing that.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister had mentioned, I think he had said it in his words were, the hotel association expressed concerns. Perhaps he could elaborate on that, or did he refer to some communities that were expressing concerns? He did say there was expression of concerns of some sort, so let's narrow it down to who he was referring to and what were those concerns.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We've had some hotel operators from Fort Smith, and Inuvik did express some concerns. Exactly what those concerns are, word for word, I don't really know, but they have expressed some concern with this.

MR. HAWKINS: How long has the department been dealing with this particular issue of a hotel levy?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Last spring.

MR. HAWKINS: I seem to recall that this issue is about three to four years old, and I'm just surprised that it's only been brought to them since last spring.

My next question is under strategic planning. Can the Minister explain to me on what this section is working on right now?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I'll have Mr. Schauerte respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department's strategic plan currently in place is for the period 2010-2015, so we're about halfway to two-thirds of the way through that strategic plan. It would be the department's intention, going forward into the next business plan cycle, to undertake the work to begin the process of renewing that strategic plan, and it's all published on our website.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Schauerte. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: What are the main objectives of this strategic plan, the 2010-2015 plan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: If Members are concerned about the details of our strategic plan, I mean, we'd be more than happy to offer a briefing up to the members of SCEDI on the strategic plan for MACA.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm here as a member of the committee and not necessarily the chair. It just happens to be that way. That said, what are the main objectives of the strategic plan?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That offer was meant to all members of committee and that offer stands. We'd be more than happy to provide committee with detail and seek some input from committee.

MR. HAWKINS: Under legislative initiatives, what is MACA presently working on?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Legislation.

MR. HAWKINS: What particular legislative initiatives can we talk about here today?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll go to Mr. Schauerte.

MR. SCHAUERTE: I'm sure the Members are well aware that the current legislative priority for the department was the Tlicho Community Government Act, which is undergoing amendments as we speak. The department has also indicated on our legislative priorities that we have the Fire Protection Act and the Civil Emergency Measures Act. There are also two smaller pieces of legislation that we're repealing, or that we're intending to repeal. One is a Pawnbroker's Act. There's a Curfew Act. Both of these pieces are redundant pieces of legislation. And there are others that we've expressed to the Legislative Assembly that are on our priority list.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm wondering if the Minister can provide an explanation to what this activity means. It says information systems support the department by providing expert advice, departmental specific applications and information systems. I seem to remember every school teacher telling me that when you explain a sentence, you don't use the word you're trying to explain it with, so perhaps we can get a layperson definition as to what that line actually means.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm not sure if the Member is referring to the same document that we have. Maybe he can explain himself.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Minister McLeod, I believe it's page 6-12, last sentence.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I wasn't prepared for that particular question, so I will get the information and share it with the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, I accept that from the Minister. Under strategic planning, what youth initiatives do we have at this particular time being developed? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, as far as new initiatives and youth go, we're just continuing to enhance the programs that we already have in place. Obviously, we are always looking at ways we can improve the programs we provide to our youth. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Can the Minister elaborate what enhance the existing programs means? Maybe he can list the youth initiative programming that we offer under our strategic plan. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have a number of great programs designed for youth. When I talk about enhancing, I think if there are ways that we can improve on the amount of money that we give them, I think that would go a long way. As far as some of the programs go, we have our youth

contributions, youth centres, youth core and we have a regional youth sporting event. We have a number of great programs that are designed for our youth.

MR. HAWKINS: Under strategic planning, I have a particular question. I guess I will have to prompt myself because the Minister said I guess the questions were mine because he didn't want to answer them twice. Would this be the section to ask about active living for seniors? If not, maybe he could inform me as to what page that I need to ask this question.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, actually, I think the Member is free to ask questions on any page he chooses. If he chooses to ask them on this page, then I will do my best to try and answer it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, I accept that offer from the Minister. I guess he didn't mean that I shouldn't feel sorry for myself because my question wasn't asked, so I will ask it on this page. What type of application can we involve in getting seniors more active? I suggested it in the opening comments. I was looking for an answer of what type of programming, services we can offer seniors to maybe working with youth. This seems like an area or type of planning, development and research under policy support for the department. We do not offer specific budget line items for seniors in this regard. As I highlighted in my example in my opening comments, I wasn't specific at the time, but I was referring to the NWT Seniors had received a contribution through the Sport and Rec who gets their funding from MACA, but seniors cannot get support money directly from MACA because there is no programming mandate. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, was there a question or was that just a comment? I don't believe I heard a question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Hawkins, was there a question embedded in that?

MR. HAWKINS: Why?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I have all evening too, so I am prepared to answer all the questions that the Member is going to have on every single page that we are reviewing. If I missed an answer in all his questions in my replies to general comments, I apologize. Hopefully we can continue to debate the numbers in the budget and the work that we're doing. We do try.

We have a number of programs. Get Active NWT is one where through the Sport and Rec. I think it is the NWT Parks and Rec Association where they do a lot of fantastic work. We've actually had one group take us up on some funding. We had an Elders in Motion conference here about two weeks ago. It was well attended by folks all across the

NWT. They got a lot of valuable learning tools and a lot of valuable exercise out of there that they can go back to their home communities and use that when they're working with the elders and seniors in the communities. There was, I believe, close to 100 people taking part in this conference. I thought it was a great example of how we're using some of the money from the Sport and Rec Association specifically that put this program together. I thought they did a fantastic job.

If there are ways that we can improve how we distribute money or if there are ways we can work with the seniors more closely, I know we welcome any input from all Members of the Assembly. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, just for the record, I don't take issue with the Minister offering to answer my questions. I more so took issue with telling me not to feel sorry for myself because he didn't answer my questions.

Specific to the issue at hand, what will it take to get policy initiatives that develop opportunities for seniors to be active in their living? The Elders in Motion sounds like an example of it. How do we make it policy? How do we support it? How do we give it a budget? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chair, yes, we work closely with our social envelope partners, Department of Health, Justice, and Education. It is some initiatives that we always look at active living. We have a strong partnership with the Department of Health putting together Healthy Lifestyles. I think certainly our seniors across the NWT will benefit from the work of this committee and recommendations that will come out of the social envelope committee.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, I appreciate that answer, but one of the problems with that is we don't have a direct policy for a mandate under a department. How do we get a policy statement by a department where it falls under an activity description that supports seniors and active living? We have one under MACA that truly represents and bolsters the needs that fall under youth and certainly what support the youth need. How do we get one in the Municipal and Community Affairs that supports seniors with dollars? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can commit to working with committee and receiving some input from them. When we go through the next building business planning process, there's an opportunity. If committee comes forward with some recommendations, then I will commit to the Member that we will look at that and I will work closely with the Minister responsible for

Seniors in the NWT to see how we can improve our support for active seniors across the Northwest Territories.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, I will accept that as a fine answer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, we are on 6-13, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$4.395 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 6-14. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under community government, although I don't need to go back to 13 because it's just the page here, but it is the break-out of that particular page. Under community government, can the Minister explain how community government at \$168,000 is broken out and proscribed?(sic) Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll go to Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: If you're speaking to the community government funding under grants, that money is the Extraordinary Funding Policy which is an application-based policy for expenses the community government incurs that are not anticipated or not planned for and fit under the Extraordinary Funding Policy. That funding is not allocated per se. It's an application-based process.

MR. HAWKINS: What is the framework of the application-based based on? Thank you.

MS. YOUNG: As I said, the policy is intended for use of an expense that's incurred that a community government could not plan for, could not anticipate and cannot absorb within their financial resources that they have. Since the New Deal was implemented in 2007, most community governments have access to funding that can deal with most things that do arise. We actually haven't seen an application that met the criteria of this policy funded since prior to 2007.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. The next question was going to be, could I have some recent examples. So I guess there are none. Followed by, I guess the only other question of that is what would be considered a normal example if the New Deal trumps this? What's left to apply for? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll go to Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As Ms. Young said, the last time it was used I think it was prior to 2007 and it was for a landslide in Fort Smith, but the Member is correct in talking about with the New Deal is there anything left we can fund. So we'll have to go back and have a look at it, and if there's an opportunity to remove it from this

or re-profile it, then I think we'll have to go that direction. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm trying to understand why it would be still there since 2007. I could see 2008 may make sense, maybe even 2009, but considering the fact that, if I understand it correctly, we're six budget cycles in and it hasn't been used in six budget cycles. So why has it been left there? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. I take full responsibility for that because I've been Minister of MACA for going on four years now. So I should have been able to pick that up. But I will commit to the Members that we'll review this \$168,000 and if there's an opportunity to re-profile it or take it out completely, then we'll do that. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I look forward to that commitment and update.

Under contribution funding, we have contributions to the NWT Association of Communities and Local Government Administrators, as well as the Arctic Energy Alliance. Now is a good time to sort of ask what does our contribution work towards. Is it base funding or what type of accountability does our funding provide and what type of relationship have we struck with this, other than being a funding source? In some cases I know we sit on the board and I want to know what relationship. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. The Arctic Energy Alliance, our deputy is actually the vice-chair of the alliance and we're with LGANT and NWTAC. The money goes towards base funding and we have a really good working relationship with LGANT and NWTAC. We rely on them a lot because they do represent the administrators for pretty well all of our communities and councillors and mayors from all of our communities. So we rely on them, we work with them very closely on initiatives and some things we run by them. They have their annual general meetings, they put motions forward, they submit them and we have a look at them. So we have a great working relationship with these organizations. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Our contribution, do we have any requirements attached to it? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. They have a requirement to report to us on an annual basis.

MR. HAWKINS: What does that actually mean? Do they have to file a report, do they have to do a presentation? I'm trying to understand that. We've heard these stories before about annual reporting and we found that several places had been late in their annual reporting. So I'm trying to understand what are they required to report back with and in what form. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. Reporting on an annual basis means they have to report to us once a year and there's a number of requirements. We have audits and we work very closely with them and advancing some of the issues of the people from the Northwest Territories. So we do have some requirements. If the Member wants a hard copy of some of the requirements we have with these funding partners, then I'd be pleased to provide it to him.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Would the Minister be willing to provide that? I know he alluded to if I wanted it. So that is the request.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. We'd be willing to provide a copy.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Under Arctic Energy Alliance under contribution funding, I think the Minister had mentioned that Deputy Minister Williams here sits as vice-chair. What's the role of MACA on the particular board? I don't want to say the Arctic Energy Alliance is an NGO, but they are sort of akin to one. If government is all on the board or assaulted the board with government reps all through it, where is the role of the public and the public help guiding it? I'm just trying to understand how government funds it, but lets it go, but manages it, but it's independent. So I'm trying to get a sense of their role here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. For that we'll go to Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess our role in the Arctic Energy Alliance, we're a contributing member that has voting rights. They also have other memberships where we have industry reps that sit, like Avalon Industries sits on the board, it's made up of not all GNWT representation, but also we'll have it open up to industry and others such as the Power Corp sits on there as well. Our role is set in policy. We're a voting member, we guide the organization to make decisions. We just recently had a board meeting just a couple of days ago with full attendance. Representation at that meeting was the NWT Association of Municipalities, the Power Corporation, we had Public Works and Services, ENR, MACA, and Avalon, I believe, was on the call. Basically setting direction and approving work plans for the future of the operation. So we let the administration look after the day-to-day activities, but we're more the guiding board to guide the activities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Williams. Mr. Hawkins, one last supplemental.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The deputy minister was very helpful in providing a bit of a list as to who is on there. Perhaps I could get a formal copy of who sits on this board of governance. I'm just trying to understand what does

voting rights mean in this particular case. So if I could get a list of its membership as well as its membership activity. So, in other words, I think he'd mentioned Avalon being a rep, but obviously Avalon is not government. So are there two or three seats signed to industry, other agencies, et cetera? I'm just trying to get a sense of their role on why they're there and if he could explain what voting rights mean in this regard. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. All of the information that the Member is asking for is on the website. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Hawkins, your time is up. I will go to Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just have one question here and it involves the Arctic Energy Alliance. We, and I can't remember in how many other budgets, but I think certainly within ENR the government provides a contribution to the Arctic Energy Alliance. So I'm trying to understand why we have a contribution here under MACA and another contribution under ENR and maybe somewhere else. I can't quite remember; it might be in ITI as well. Why do we as a government not make one contribution to Arctic Energy Alliance in one place, one department for wherever the government decides it should be? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For that we'll go to Ms. Young.

MS. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The departments that belong to Arctic Energy Alliance all have four membership fees and then there are other programs that government departments sponsor and provide money to AEA for.

You may remember a few years ago there was community energy planning funding dedicated in the MACA budget where we provided \$150,000 a year to the Arctic Energy Alliance to support energy planning in communities. That money has since sunsetted, but other departments continue to fund specific programs within the alliance.

MS. BISARO: I guess I'm struggling to understand, and I would just ask the Minister to discuss with his other ministerial cohorts, why it could not be just one lump sum. It may be targeted for programs, it may be targeted for base funding, but it doesn't make much sense to me that we've got three pots of money. As the Minister knows, I've said that before.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member staying off youth and moving on to this one. I will commit to

Ms. Bisaro that I will have a discussion with my colleagues as to why we have three different pots. If we can pool them into one, then I will commit to Ms. Bisaro that is something we will do before the next budget cycle.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Page 6-14, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, directorate, grants, \$168,000, contributions, \$470,000, total grants and contributions, \$638,000. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Something I didn't get an answer on and I was sort of looking for some detail – yes, I can go to the website to find out who sits there, assuming it's current – what are voting rights when the deputy minister was speaking to that? Maybe if you could help explain what those privileges do from a departmental point of view.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. For that we'll go to Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As any board of governors, voting rights would be passing administrative policies for the alliance, any projects. The Arctic Energy Alliance gets involved in some consulting work and we would approve any future projects that the Energy Alliance should entertain. Most recently we had the last board meeting, for example, the Government of Nunavut wishes to join the Arctic Energy Alliance, so we had to vote on that decision to allow them to become a member of the Arctic Energy Alliance.

MR. HAWKINS: Then it sounds like it operates like a normal board. By the same token, do certain representatives not have voting rights? I find it odd that you'd point it out, and why would people not have voting rights?

MR. WILLIAMS: Certain members don't have voting rights and it's on the level of contribution that you provide to the organization. They are just members of general interest but still want to partake in board meetings, and get information and provide some guidance to the Arctic Energy Alliance.

MR. HAWKINS: Under this activity it's a bulk number of \$470,000. I'm wondering what the actual breakout is between the three activities. Are there multiple activities that may not even be seen under this area? Can I get a breakout as to what the funding contribution goes to? In other words, community association gets what, government administrators get what, et cetera?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. For that we'll go to Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It will be my pleasure. The NWT Association of Communities gets \$240,000. Local Government Administrators of the Northwest

Territories get \$180,000. Arctic Energy Alliance gets \$50,000.

MR. HAWKINS: Although we're still under the directorate, and I harken back without going to the page that is under the direct to be description, we have strategic planning and policy support. When I draw that to our attention here, do we use our support mechanisms to develop policy or policy initiatives, in relation to direction given to Arctic Energy Alliance?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: No, not for the Arctic Energy Alliance.

MR. HAWKINS: Then what role does MACA actually play other than a contributor of financial resources to the Arctic Energy Alliance? What do they actually contribute to the board? Obviously, other than its physical membership, does the department itself provide any support or mechanisms and, as such, why are they on the board if they're not providing any strategic advice or policy or direction for initiatives?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: MACA sits as a very active member on the board. As our deputy has pointed out, he sits as the vice-president. We're a very active member.

MR. HAWKINS: How does the Arctic Energy Alliance move... Well, let me ask it this way. Does MACA, as a department, propose any policy initiatives that are taken up or dealt with at the Arctic Energy Alliance board?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We always act in the best interest of community governments.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm not sure what that actually meant but I will assume that means something, but it didn't answer my question. Does MACA provide any policy direction or make proposals from the departmental point of view at the board level of the Arctic Energy Alliance and, if so, what kind of examples?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Not currently, and we're not sure of things that have gone on in the past before. Our deputy became vice-chair. I guess the answer would be I just don't know.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm just trying to understand why we have a departmental head on the board and what relationship it has with the department other than being a funding source. If the government sat on every board we were a funding source for, we would be on the Centre for Northern Families, we'd be on the John Howard Society, we'd be on all these boards. I'm just trying to understand the role. Maybe if the Minister could provide a better description as to why MACA... I think this is a fair question probably for every department, it's just one that has popped up as the obvious for this department, is what role does MACA itself play on the Arctic Energy Alliance board. I'm just trying to

get a sense of what value they bring. If you're not bringing policy advice and strategic resources from the department, and this is not any criticism towards the activity and energy that the deputy brings, I'm just trying to understand the role of MACA, why the MACA hat is there at the table.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: MACA plays a valuable role on the board and our deputy takes part in a lot of the discussions that go on there as to what type of programs they should be looking at. We play a valuable role on the board. We're not just a financial contributor. I can gather more information and do a little bit of research, and I'll be happy to sit down with the Member and share my findings with him.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd be happy to accept the Minister's offer if he wants to make it official.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I've already committed to sitting down with the Member and having a very good, frank discussion on the role that we play in the Arctic Energy Alliance and any other part of MACA department. I'll be more than happy to sit with the Member and we can have a good discussion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Page 6-14, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, directorate, grants and contributions, grants, \$168,000, contributions, \$470,000, total grants and contributions, \$638,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 6-15, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, directorate, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 6-17, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, public safety, operations expenditure summary, \$1.629 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Fire Prevention Act, they appear to review plans for new construction. Can the Minister explain how this gets done if you happen to be somebody who lives in a community?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll go to Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For reviewing of plans at the community level, we have assistant fire marshals in every region. They work closely with their plan review officer based in headquarters. That is the mechanism we use utilizing our AFMs at the regional level.

MR. HAWKINS: What region specifically is the deputy minister referring to?

MR. WILLIAMS: We have assistant fire marshals in all five regions.

MR. HAWKINS: How do we deal with site inspections on these particular initiatives? When the plans are submitted, sometimes site inspections are required.

MR. WILLIAMS: Our assistant fire marshals travel out to all communities in their regions. They do regular inspections as required and as requested. That's the way we deliver service at the regional level.

MR. HAWKINS: What is the cost of that particular travel based on, or who actually pays for it if you're outside of the specific community the assistant fire marshal is placed?

MR. WILLIAMS: Each of our regional budgets has a travel budget allocated for community travel. Our role as MACA is to support community governments, so our travel budget dictates to that so we ensure it is in the work plan that we have community visits outlined on an annual basis of what communities we have to visit.

MR. HAWKINS: What types of requirements or parameters are put on timely visits? There must be some constraints as to when something is filed and needs to be reviewed in person. What type of travel requirements or constraints around the code causes the travel or necessity to get out to site visits?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. For that we'll go to Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Usually when there's a request to have a site visit, we would go in. If the Member wants more detail, then I'd be happy to have a briefing note put together for him.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd be happy to hear that. The travel is \$165,000 on this under the public safety division, but I'm not sure if that's all applied to fire prevention. Maybe if I could get a sense of what the travel budget is for the five regions that need to make these community visits.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm sure you'll notice in MACA's budget that we have travel in there, and part of our duties as MACA is to get out and visit all the communities and work with the communities as many times as is requested for us to go in and work with the communities. They prefer face to face as far as the public safety division goes. They have to go travel around for helping communities with their emergency plans and helping put together their emergency plans. We get a lot of requests from the communities for our staff to go in and meet with communities. That's why our travel budgets are the way they are.

MR. HAWKINS: Under fire prevention section to do community visits on the five regions, what type of travel budget is associated with this?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'll get the detail and provide it to the Member.

MR. HAWKINS: Under emergency management, a few years ago one of the safety management people, personnel, under EMO section was laid off due to setbacks in the government. I think there were 100-and-some positions; 130 were originally eyed to be rolled away. I'm just wondering, under the scale-back, has emergency management grown or, specific to it, what is its present composition of personnel? I'll start with that.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We did a reorg and we re-staffed that.

MR. HAWKINS: What is its present composition of staff?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I believe the actual positions are in the budget document a few more pages over. I'm not sure if the Member wants to wait until we get to 6-19 before I answer that question or should I just answer it now and say we've got six.

MR. HAWKINS: The problem with page 6-19 is it doesn't break it out in detail so you just see it as headquarter positions without that...(inaudible). What community or public activities do the emergency management folks take on about public engagement and planning, so that the public know and understand what they do, as well as public relationship of the preparation and planning for emergency measures? I suspect that this is a high intensity area where you spend a lot of time developing policy and relationships with community, community organizations, peoples, partners, et cetera.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Our folks go in there and they support the communities, because the communities are taking the initiative to put their emergency plans together, so we go in and we support them and we work with them. We do have some expertise, so we share that with them.

MR. HAWKINS: I wasn't expecting such a detailed answer such as they go in there. Can the Minister maybe elaborate just a little further by explaining what type of partners and relationship they have with the public?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: They go in and they work with the local emergency personnel, and the local emergency personnel would share that information with the folks in their communities such as their town council, but the community is quite informed as to the work that the emergency folks are doing. It's a great partnership and we'll continue to grow that partnership.

MR. HAWKINS: Under emergency management, I'm curious as to how many communities in the Northwest Territories have emergency response plans and does the territorial government fund them

at the community level and support the development of them.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have 16 communities that have updated emergency plans and 15 that need some updating. We have two that don't have updated plans and we continue to encourage them to come forth with an emergency plan. But communities have done a great job in responding to emergencies and now that we're getting the plans in place, I think they're going to be better equipped in the future to respond to any particular type of emergency in the community.

MR. HAWKINS: What type of funding or expertise support do we provide? Do we provide any resources? Do we help write them? Do we help draft them? How complicated are these particular plans? I'm just curious as to why two don't; 15 need updating, and 16 sound like they're on track.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have funding within our budget to help train these folks and we also help them write up their emergency plans. But again, the communities have done a great job taking the initiative to come forth with their emergency plans and we support them any way we can. We provide any type of expertise that we're able to provide, so I think it's a good partnership and one that's just going to continue to grow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Hawkins, your time is up. Moving on with questions on this page I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a few questions here. I'll start with the emergency preparedness. The Minister heard a number of people, in their general comments, talk about emergency preparedness and our need to have capacity for communities and the government as well, but communities and the government to be able to deal with things that happen, either major items within the community but also on our highways which, unfortunately, we had evidence of in the last little while.

My first question has to do with staff, and we did have a larger complement of staff in the emergency preparedness section of MACA, and it was reduced. I can't quite remember how many years ago, but certainly sometime in the 16th. Am I correct? We have one staff person there now, and does the Minister see a need, if that's the case, no matter how many staff we have there, for us to increase the number of staff and to bring our focus on emergency preparedness back up to where it was a number of years ago?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was a reorg a few years ago and I think we had a new public safety division, and I believe we're staffed with four members in that division now. The

Member asked if I feel that it's important that we try to get more resources and more staff members, but I think she was asking on the assumption that we had one staff member there. We do have four and they're doing a pretty good job working with communities and trying to get their emergency plans and everything all up to date. The Member is absolutely correct. We've been hearing it here in the last four or five weeks, the importance of emergency plans. We take that to heart and we want to make sure that all our communities are able to have good, up-to-date emergency plans.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'm glad to hear there is more than just one poor soul trying to deal with emergency preparedness. I'd like to encourage the department, in conjunction with the rest of government, to look beyond just communities in terms of emergency preparedness. I know quite a few communities have their own emergency plans, but when we have an emergency that occurs outside of a community, I think it's been pointed out by a number of Members that we don't have any policy, we don't have any framework that people can rely on and that they can act upon. There are jurisdictional issues, all that stuff. I would like to simply encourage the Minister to talk to his officials within his department but also talk to other departments and seriously consider whether or not we should be looking at emergency, I hate to say the word policy, but something that will deal with emergencies that occur outside of a municipality – the elections office calls them hinterland – so when stuff happens in the hinterlands, we do have something that we can use to deal with those actions.

I wanted to also ask a question here with regard to 911. I wasn't quite sure where it would go, but I presume it's under public safety, and it's basically to... I guess my question to the Minister is: Does the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs see that they are the focal point for assistance with any community or even if it's the government that's going to implement 911? Is MACA the focal point or does the Minister see that this would happen in another department?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The highway rescue, I mean, it's something that's really come to light lately, and we have an interdepartmental working group, I think ourselves with Health and Social Services, Justice and Transportation, and so they're doing some work there as to the next steps we can take. The Member is correct, though, in saying that if you have an accident out on the highway, we need to have some kind of protocol as to who is going to respond first or who should respond first. Obviously, you always have your Good Samaritans that will act quickly. I think we need to do some work in trying to establish a good, solid protocol so we know who's going to respond to what. We are continuing to work on that with our

interdepartmental group. I commit to keeping the Members updated on the work that we are doing.

As far as the 911, the Member asked if I see us as the focal point for the service or another department. Can I use this as an opportunity to pass it to another department? No. We see that we are contributing greatly to potential 911 with money that we're giving to the communities. I know the Members heard that for the last five years. There is some work that needs to be done, I admit. I won't go as far as saying that we will fund it completely, but I think we have to start exploring all options now, especially with the telecommunications improving throughout the Northwest Territories, because there was a time where I think even 20 kilometres outside the capital you couldn't get cell phone coverage.

The point to having 911 is to respond to things within the communities or just outside the communities. I think with the improved telecommunication capability, I think we are going to sit back and have a look at this, maybe work with the communities, work with the NWTAC, but again, I go back to my standard line that I have used on Member Bisaro for the last five years. I see us contributing, as far as capital into the community, as a good contribution towards establishing the service at this time. I do admit we need to do some work on this. I will commit to the Member that I will do that. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, thanks to the Minister for finally acquiescing and agreeing that we complain to him. I'm not proposing that the government implement a service, but I think the government has a bit of a responsibility to assist the community or communities that do want to try and put the service into place. I appreciate the Minister's position here. As long as some support is provided, I think that's fair.

The Minister mentioned ground ambulance. I was going to wait for the next page, but I will mention it here. It's kind of all part of the same thing. I wanted to just point out that the Minister has heard, in the last week or two, quite a few Members talk about the need for a number of things relative to ground ambulance. One is equipment. Particularly Mr. Nadli has mentioned Fort Providence, who is quite concerned about the responsibility that the community has, relative to the highway on either side of them. We have equipment. We have training of first responders which is required. Then there is the cost just to kind of run an operation, whether it is just emergency response or whether it is fire and rescue.

The \$200,000 that's in this budget is peanuts, really. I know it has changed a bit. With pressure from Members over the last year or two, that it still is being used for training, but even if the department recognizes that communities, for

instance like the City of Yellowknife, do incur costs when they go outside their city boundaries in order to... Whether it is ambulance or whether it is fire, and if reimbursement could be done based on actual invoices or something like that, there really needs to be a look at what it's costing communities, but there also needs to be a recognition that communities on the highway are taking their responsibility to assist people in trouble. They are paying for it. I hate to use the word downloading because it is not being downloaded, but the government is basically kind of turning a blind eye and saying, you guys are taking care of it, that's all well and good.

I think we need to provide more support, because communities fall in your basket. I just would like to exhort the Minister to seriously try to expand what we have in this current budget, maybe not for this year but for 2014-15 budget year. If we can resurrect that joint working group that was looking at ground ambulance a number of years ago, I know that what came up was hugely expensive, but maybe modify that and find something that's halfway in the middle that we can maybe afford. I think a number of communities would be happy if we could get there. More a comment than a question. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thanks, Ms. Bisaro. Will the Minister want to reply?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member raises a number of fairly good points. I do want to assure the Member that through the departmental working group, we are looking at a number of things that she actually spoke to. She talked about equipment and that's one thing they're looking at, maintenance, administration, training, planning, budgeting and operations. I take the Member's point very seriously, though, that we do have some folks that are responding to accidents outside their boundaries and they are actually paying for it. So the Member's point is well taken and I can assure the Member that as part of the departmental working group, there are a number of different options they are looking at at present. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Moving on with questions I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'd like to thank Ms. Young, Mr. Schauerte, Mr. Williams and the Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could escort our witnesses out of the Chamber. I'll now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you are aware, your committee reported progress last night with one motion being adopted. Unfortunately, we were unable to adopt a concurrence motion for the report of Committee of the Whole due to loss of quorum. As we now enjoy a quorum of Members, I now wish to report on our committee activities and decisions for both days.

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The seconder is Mr. Moses.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Schauerte): Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 6, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014
- Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 6th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

