



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee
Report 6-20(1): Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report
of the Northwest Territories Ombud and
Special Report on Recommendations for Amendments to the *Ombud Act***

Background

The Northwest Territories *Ombud Act* (the “Act”) became law in 2018. The Ombud is an independent officer appointed for a five-year term by the Legislative Assembly. Their role is to investigate complaints about the administrative fairness of government practices and to promote fair, reasonable, and equitable government administration. The Act requires the Ombud to file an annual report on their activities.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (the “Standing Committee”) conducted a review of the Ombud’s 2022-2023 Annual Report. The Standing Committee’s report summarizing its review was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on June 6, 2024. It included three recommendations. The GNWT thanks the Standing Committee for its review and subsequent recommendations.

The following is the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) response to the recommendations contained in Committee Report 6-20(1): *Report on the Review of the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Ombud and Special Report on Recommendations for Amendments to the Ombud Act*.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories take immediate action to enact the ten recommendations of the Ombud or provide the rationale and justification as to why the Government is not proceeding with the recommendations.

GNWT Response:

The Department of Justice (the “Department”) has committed to reviewing the *Ombud Act* during the 20th Legislative Assembly to address concerns that have been raised by the Ombud, the Legislative Assembly, and internally within the GNWT. The Department has noted the ten recommendations contained in the Ombud’s Special Report and will actively consider these as work to review the Act progresses.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories, in consultation with the Ombud, identify and address any shortfalls in budget or resources that may inhibit the Ombud's Office from fulfilling their mandate.

GNWT Response:

The GNWT has noted concerns that the Ombud's Office is facing a workload of high volume and complexity. Although the Office did report a small decline in inquiries from 2021-22 to 2022-23, workloads remain high. The GNWT is committed to working towards long-term fiscal sustainability in accordance with *Restoring Balance: A Fiscal Sustainability Strategy for the 20th Legislative Assembly*.

The GNWT will continue to work with the Ombud to identify and address potential resource shortfalls that may inhibit the Ombud's Office from fulfilling their mandate, while ensuring government spending is appropriately allocated to the priorities of residents and ensuring value for money in program delivery.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to the recommendations contained in this report within 120 days.

GNWT Response

The GNWT is pleased to provide this response to the Standing Committee on Government Operations.