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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 22, 2017****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Hon. Alfred Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. Wally Schumann, Hon. Louis Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuyne

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Transportation.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 141-18(2):
GNWT MARINE TRANSPORT PLANS**

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, last December the Department of Public Works and Services took measures to secure the core assets of the Northern Transportation Company Limited, or NTCL, a company that went into receivership after serving the Northwest Territories through more than 80 years of operation.

NTCL was the largest marine transportation service provider in the Northwest Territories, delivering essential petroleum products and cargo, including customer goods and construction materials, to communities along the Mackenzie River and across the western Arctic.

NTCL served ten Northwest Territories communities, including four that are inaccessible by winter road. Marine resupply is the only realistic option for these four communities, where it is prohibitively expensive or impossible to provide fuel and large cargo by air transport. For other communities accessible by water, marine transportation provides an economical and reliable alternative.

Mr. Speaker, in purchasing the vital marine assets once owned by NTCL, the Government of the Northwest Territories supports the continuity of dependable and competitive marine services and delivery of essential goods to our communities on the Mackenzie River and our ocean waters. The importance of a viable Mackenzie River marine transportation service to meet the needs of government, industry, and residents cannot be understated. The Department of Public Works and Services has made efforts to secure a marine

carrier to operate the assets purchased by government and offer the comprehensive transportation services once provided by NTCL. Those efforts were unsuccessful, and by November it had become quite clear that the gap left by this company's exit would not be easily filled.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has the staff, expertise, and resources needed to run this operation and is now focused on making sure that marine transportation services in the Northwest Territories continue unaffected through the 2017 sailing season. This requires that we inspect and make ready the tug and barge fleet and our port facilities and fill key positions to manage the operations of the 2017 sailing season. We will engage a professional marine crewing operator to hire experienced and reliable crews to maintain and operate our vessels. We expect many of these individuals will be Northwest Territories residents, knowledgeable people who worked for NTCL for many years performing the very operations that the government will now execute.

We are committed to ensuring that services are provided this sailing season, that fuel and cargo is delivered to all of the marine-accessible communities of the Northwest Territories, and we are committed to operating safely and responsibly. The experience of operating the business this season will inform the Government of the Northwest Territories as we determine the future model of operation. We are well into the development of maintenance plans to reactivate the tug and barge fleet. We are taking stock of the properties and assets purchased. We will draw upon our expertise in environmental site assessment and management of potentially contaminated lands to determine the nature and extent of any environmental contamination associated with these properties.

While our purchase was made out of necessity, it has also revealed opportunities. Our investment in the marine transportation sector can lead to improved marine infrastructure, the creation of meaningful jobs, and a comprehensive self-funding, made-in-the-North marine transportation service that is essential to our communities. The Government of the Northwest Territories' marine transportation services secures a vital link that connects Canada's northernmost railhead to its northernmost inland port and preserves the final

northern link of an intermodal supply chain that stretches all the way from the Gulf of Mexico to the Mackenzie Delta.

Mr. Speaker, this unique situation has presented us with a short window to prepare, but work is well under way to make sure that this sailing season is a success. Our future operating model is yet to be determined, but it will be one that balances the needs of government, residents, businesses, and small barging operators, who will all benefit from the continued presence of a reliable and affordable marine carrier. Our focus is on safety and reliability, and we will endeavour to limit increases in shipping rates that would negatively impact the cost of living in the NWT and, critically, in the service of citizens and businesses. We will preserve and deploy the marine assets that are so important to the future economic activity and to the development of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 142-18(2):
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to continue implementing the Early Childhood Development Action Plan to improve early childhood development, and by enhancing access to early intervention services for children zero to five years of age, and supporting community wellness initiatives with early childhood development funding and subject matter expertise.

Today, I want to share with you some of the progress our government has made in supporting children and their families through the first three years of the Right from the Start Framework.

Three early childhood intervention pilot projects enhancing access to services for children zero to five years of age in specific regions are showing early successes. These projects have improved access to rehabilitation services and increased uptake in early childhood development programs.

The Deh Cho Region Early Childhood Intervention Plan saw a 100 per cent increase in the number of children and families attending follow-up appointments with the service or program specialists to whom children and their families had been referred. Four workshops on early childhood development topics were also offered to parents, schools, and the community to help increase awareness of community resources.

Results from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation's Early Childhood Program have seen a 50 per cent

increase in accessing speech language pathology services, including increased clinic time and services in three communities through the addition of a half-time speech language pathologist. Nine workshops were held with early childhood educators that improved staff's speech and language intervention skills by 24 per cent, based on testing before and after the training. In addition, six parent speech language workshops were conducted in three target communities to increase awareness of the program.

The Tlicho Community Services Agency Speech Language Pathologist Plan showed a 300 per cent increase in accessing speech language pathology services. This included increased clinic time and services in Behchoko through the addition of one speech language pathologist. Improvements were also seen in the quality of services through the growth in children's speech and language practice.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has also made a commitment in its mandate to develop options to enhance access to birthing services and prenatal and postnatal care for mothers and their families, including the development of a territorial midwifery model. As part of our work on this commitment, the Department of Health and Social Services will be hosting sharing circles in several communities over the next few months to discuss the potential for a territorial midwifery program. The department is looking to hear from women and their family members with experience receiving maternity care services. People interested in attending these sharing circles or taking an online survey can visit the department's website for more information.

How we deliver the Healthy Family Program is also being reviewed, Mr. Speaker, to determine if there are more effective ways to reach families at risk. The Healthy Family Program is a voluntary home-visitation program that supports parents and caregivers with children under five years of age. This early intervention program promotes the importance of the nurturing parent-child relationship and aims to increase the child's developmental opportunities while fostering positive interaction for improved outcomes in the child's future. The department is looking at building on the strengths of the program with the potential of expanding it from the current 16 communities that it serves. A learning evaluation framework and a territorial workshop are also being organized to support continuous quality improvement.

Mr. Speaker, even though we have made progress in supporting children and families, we still have much work to do. As part of this work, the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services have collaborated in the development of a renewed

action plan that my colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and I will be tabling at a later date.

The renewed Early Childhood Development Action Plan supports the GNWT's efforts to offer high-quality, inclusive, and accessible early childhood development programs that are community-driven and sustainable, as well as culturally relevant. The GNWT is committed to developing a system that serves the needs of children and their families so that children are healthy, school-ready, and can reach their full potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 143-18(2):
PINK SHIRT DAY

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is national Pink Shirt Day, a day celebrated during the last Wednesday of February of each year. We provided pink carnations for all of the Members, and I am pleased to see all the pink in the House today, marking our acknowledgement that bullying in any form is unacceptable.

This initiative was started by two brave young men in Nova Scotia, David Shepherd and Travis Price, who gave away 50 pink shirts after a grade 9 student was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school.

These two young men raised national awareness of a significant societal problem that does not only exist in our schools. It is a behaviour that has spread around the world.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is well known for its tolerance and diversity. Global events of late have seen a surge of racism, bullying, and discrimination, and we must stand against that. We must all stand up for those who are ruthlessly harassed in person, online, and in whispers. We are the examples for our children as they grow and develop their sense of self.

The Northwest Territories is an inclusive, multicultural region where we celebrate our different cultures and lifestyles. We must work together to protect the growth and progress we have seen, do our part to change attitudes, and show the rest of Canada, and the world, that bullying stops here.

Mr. Speaker, we began this journey in 2013, with amendments to the Education Act that included bullying prevention measures. Since that time, we have engaged with schools and students across the North, with pledges and contests, and a Stop Bullying – Stand Up NWT Facebook page which

continues to grow. We currently have nearly 3,500 likes on the page and consistent engagements.

I am very proud to see that students across the North have heeded this call to action and are standing up in groups, through songs, videos, plays, and actions.

As I mentioned in my statement on responding to the mandate commitment of community wellness and safety, in September 2016 the Territorial School Code of Conduct and Safe Schools Regulations came into effect. The regulations set a standard of behaviour for NWT students, school staff, and the school community. The department has provided education bodies with templates and exemplars to assist in the required development of safe schools plans, and is currently providing support in the development of emergency response plans to be implemented in the 2017-18 school year. These plans will be reviewed and updated annually.

As well, the department is working with non-government organization partners and education bodies to develop policies and resources to support students and staff from the LGBTQ2+ community.

We are excited to see the progress that has been accomplished in this important initiative. Mr. Speaker, I am most excited, however, to see the faces of students as they fight against bullying, racism, and discrimination. They are the ones who will change the attitudes that will form the policies and shift the perceptions that bullying in all forms is unacceptable. I look forward to the day when Pink Shirt Day, Day of Pink, Bullying Awareness Week, and all of the great initiatives that have sprung up to fight bullying and discrimination are days marked in history. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY HOUSING
SOLUTIONS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, providing safe, secure, affordable housing for Northerners, especially in isolated communities, is among the biggest challenges facing the NWT.

We recognize this as a top-level priority in the mandate to which we committed ourselves at the outset of the 18th Assembly.

Solutions are not easy and nothing comes cheap. That is why the NWT Housing Corporation has a

budget of over \$50 million for community housing services.

There was a story last fall that I found inspiring, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to talk about it for a moment. In Deline there was a 53-year-old man who for 10 years had lived in a shack. His shack was made of crates and plywood, and it had no insulation. He had lived there for 10 years and he had not complained, but his shack was becoming infested and it was becoming too much for him. Unable to sleep, he asked a friend if he could borrow a camper trailer to live in.

Community members thought that they could do better than the trailer. They determined that, with some donated construction materials and volunteer labour, they could build the man a small home of his own. So over three weekends, local carpenters, electricians, and other volunteers built an insulated, wired, 16-by-16 tiny house for the man. They say, compared to what he had, this was 100 per cent improvement.

Mr. Speaker, I relay this story not because I think the NWT's housing issues can be solved by donations and volunteers. Clearly, that is not the case. This story is an example of what can be accomplished with resources you can find in any NWT community -- ingenuity, dedication, and commitment. New ideas, innovations, and partnerships can be brought together to achieve things that previously seemed impossible.

Here in Yellowknife -- and right across North America -- we have seen start-ups of new innovation of tiny houses, new ideas in storage, insulation, recycling all contribute to the viability of this new idea. They are inexpensive, have a much smaller footprint, and can be portable, meaning an inventory of tiny houses can be moved to different communities as and when needed.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT's housing challenges are not going away, but the Deline example shows just what can be accomplished when people come together. Innovation, new ideas, collaboration, and partnerships with communities can help us take on this major challenge. Tiny homes can be a significant part of the solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IRC/GNWT PARTNERSHIP ON HOUSING

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2015 the Government of the Northwest Territories signed a four-year intergovernmental agreement with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

That agreement exists to guide both governments working together to improve the programs and services in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, or the ISR.

One of the issues in serious need of improvement, Mr. Speaker, is housing. It is something that has been a problem not just in the Northwest Territories but across the 53 communities in the Inuit Nunangat. Here in the NWT, though, even just in my riding of Nunakput, single people and single-parent families are stuck on public housing waiting lists, living with overcrowding or other inadequacies. These families are among most likely to be hungry, too, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a full 56 per cent of Inuit single-parent families in this country have suffered from food insecurity and added stress on top of housing worries; and even if you do get through the housing waiting list or if you have market housing, about 28 per cent of Nunakput homes are still in core need, never mind that expense remains a huge obstacle, Mr. Speaker.

Last year's federal budget earmarked \$15 million to be delivered through INAC for housing in the ISR in the Northwest Territories. When I asked the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation about working with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to make the most of that money, she let us know that, while the IRC took the lead, she would be taking on a supportive role.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in responsible, effective working relationships, and this is a good example of coordination and corporation. I have talked a little about this before, but now we are almost a year on and I will be looking for an update from the Minister today on the progress of this agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON K'ATLODEECHE FIRST NATION HOUSING CHALLENGES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

"Houses are for display only."

"The housing issue is awful; nothing is being done."

"There at 16 houses sitting empty and have been empty since 2008."

Those are a few statements from residents at the K'atloodeeche First Nation.

I had understood that work was progressing between the Hay River Dene Band and the

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, but residents tell me that repair and maintenance program and services, not to mention the houses themselves, remain out of reach.

Mr. Speaker, residents have shared with me their frustration and their despair. They talk to me about the lack of available housing, houses sitting empty, unmanageable arrears, and debts carried over from family members who have passed on.

Young people who want to live on their own have no choice but to live with their parents or leave their community. If they choose to leave, families are separated and traditional ways of life are threatened.

Unfortunately, I have also heard of increased homelessness in Hay River, a growing concern when housing problems have driven young people, single adults, and single-parent families from the reserve. They are left to struggle through the housing waiting lists.

To secure stability, safety, and food security, to ensure basic human dignity, our residents need homes. These homes must be adequate, affordable, suitable and accessible.

This is a fundamental right that belongs to every individual under the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the Members of the K'atlodeeche First Nation are also party to Treaty 8.

When Treaty 8 was signed in 1899, it was understood by the Dene that they and their descendants would be served by the Crown's fulfilment of Treaty terms, including rights to housing.

Instead, today I see unfulfilled promises and commitments and empty promises, layers of excuses, complicated problems with land and program access.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of this, I could only conclude that the GNWT and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation are failing to meet their obligations because Dene people are First Nations and choose to live on a reserve.

We keep hearing that it's a federal responsibility; we are told that it's someone else's problem.

No, Mr. Speaker.

Immediate action is needed on the part of this government -- immediate action and collaboration with both the chief and council and the federal government.

A small bit of progress has been made with the recent purchase of 10 houses, but it will be at least

another year before residents can access them. Has the community not waited long enough? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TALTSON RIVER DAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker [English translation not provided] Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last November I spoke about the community of Rocher River and the people of the Taltson River. I mentioned a dam that was built after the federal government refused to rebuild the school that had burnt down.

The people of Rocher would say that the loss of the school in 1959 and the federal government's push to move everyone to Fort Resolution made it possible to build the Taltson River dam without any real opposition. Only the chief of the day told the government that he was in opposition to the dam.

The dam is needed to provide electricity to the Pine Point Mine; the mine operated from the early 1960s to 1988. When the dam went into operation, the muskrat and beaver that lived on Taltson either moved inland to small lakes and creeks or were killed by the fluctuating water levels on the river.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few years muskrat and beaver had been returning to the Taltson River; however, this winter there was a great surge in the water level and it appears that the ice belt was broken up. At least one outfitter sustained thousands of dollars in damage due to the flood.

This outfitter has been operating there for 31 years, and has only seen this change in the water level happen once before, in December 2006. At that time, the NWT Power Corporation was pursuing the Deze project that would have extended the hydro line from the Taltson River dam to the diamond mines.

A couple of trappers were affected by the flood, and the NWT Power Corporation made some sort of settlement with them. The problem was clearly caused by water released by the dam, which made it impossible for the trappers to pursue their traditional economy safely.

Mr. Speaker, sudden floods and ice breaking up in the middle of winter is not a natural phenomenon; the water is coming from water held back by the Taltson dam.

Elders speak of when the river sustained the livelihood for a community of 200 to 300 people.

Today, there is almost no traditional economy on the Taltson River. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a handful of trappers who continue to live off the land and a couple of outfitters who are still able to operate, but now, Mr. Speaker, one outfitter at the mouth of the Taltson River may be wiped out. He has built his business over years and employs at least six people each summer.

Mr. Speaker, at this point the NWT Power Corporation has refused to take responsibility for this problem. The Minister indicates the dam is too far away to have caused the problem.

This claim is not consistent with the traditional knowledge of the river and area. Ever since the federal government built the dam, there has been battle after battle over damage caused by flooding, and usually a refusal by the Power Corporation to take any responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that our new devolved and evolving government and the Power Corporation we own would listen to people on the land, but so far we hear the same old denial of responsibility. This is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. Marci cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NAHENDEH HOUSING CHALLENGES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when somebody or a department is doing something right or is improving the way we do business, we need to recognize this work.

In the past 15 years I've had a number of challenging issues regarding housing and, more particularly, arrears to deal with. In addressing the arrears issues, the Minister and the Housing Corporation sent out an e-mail regarding the eviction process this past year. To me, the most important message in this e-mail was that the NWT Housing Corporation and its local housing authorities want to ensure that tenants stay in their homes. To successfully keep tenants in their rental units, they need to meet their obligations of paying rent on time, not building up arrears, taking care of the unit, and not disturbing their neighbours.

However, like most things in life, challenges pop up and people end up in arrears. This is an issue and can lead to a notice of eviction.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say this is not the end. With the help of the corporation and the Minister we have been able to set up repayment plans that work for the tenants.

Sometimes it is as simple as bringing in their income tax forms and the Housing Corporation does a recalculation and the arrears might be reduced.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister and the corporation for their willingness to work with the residents of the NWT. Mr. Speaker, I wish I could end my statement here and say everything is great with housing; however, like everything else in this world, things aren't always great.

In my budget address I wanted to share an issue with you about homes that did not have running water, power, and heat except for a wood stove. They also have sewer challenges. These people live in third-world conditions, and nothing is done because they live in private homes. They continue to try, but fail to get the government to put more funds into their homes for a number of reasons. The government needs to do a better job of addressing this issue of looking after our residents. Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation needs to look at this issue and start working on ways to help them.

Mr. Speaker, later on today I'll have questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LOCAL IMPROVEMENT CHARGES FOR HOUSING ENERGY RETROFITS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The City of Yellowknife has explored innovative ways to improve energy efficiency of our housing, reduce the cost of living, create local employment, and help fight climate change. Their focus is on reducing use of space heating energy, and the proposal is expertly researched in the excellent Pembina Institute Report, "Loans for Heat: Towards a Yellowknife Energy Savings Program." I will be tabling that document later today.

Energy retrofits could include installing wood or pellet stoves, improving insulation and air sealing, and switching to more efficient furnaces and boilers.

Many people lack savings or credit to apply for energy retrofits upfront; that's where local improvements charges, or LICs, come in and why they're being used across Canada. Under an LIC

program, the municipality enables homeowners to get low-interest loans for energy retrofits, then pay back the loans on their property tax bills through lower energy costs for home heating. The loan is tied to their property rather than to the property owner, so if an owner sells the house, the debt passes to the new owner. Because LIC has enabled people with limited savings and poor access to credit to go ahead with retrofits, LICs can bring lower energy bills to low-income families who need the savings the most.

Our Cities, Towns and Villages Act already allows municipalities to use LICs to help cover the cost of infrastructure investments such as sewers and sidewalks. LICs are not being used for improvements to individual properties, because the wording of the act is poorly suited for an effective energy efficiency financing program.

For some years, the city has been asking this government to amend the Cities, Towns and Villages Act to allow for LICs. A 2013 resolution of the NWT Association of Communities urges this action. The GNWT's 2013 Energy Action Plan commits to doing this, as well. I was very pleased last week to hear the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs say this legislative amendment has moved onto the department's list of legislated priorities for this Assembly. With a very simple legislative amendment, our government can enable our cities, towns, and villages to more effectively join the fight on climate change, reduce our cost of living, create local jobs, and improve our housing stock. Let us make this happen, Mr. Speaker.

I will have questions later today for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This government, as it draws closer to the budget completion, identifies and continues to support youth programming.

In preparation for tomorrow's generation on challenges and opportunities, the public alliance sector is a prime example of opportunities for careers and training positions. These and in preparation are listed in the Skills 4 Success strategy.

Last year the Sahtu Educational Division sponsored an excellent gathering turnout targeted to the region's youth. This group held career identification

through departmental visits, senior personnel presentations, and so on.

Marketing the public sector opportunities is not only the right thing to do, but provides awareness and confidence in the NWT residents, particularly the youths, to enhance further education on broadening their potential.

The benefits are twofold, Mr. Speaker: upgrading our youth into entering the workforce; secondly, provide life skills security.

Mr. Speaker, just the words "early childhood development" gives meaning to this government's initiative. This, however, starts with a sound and stable home. I will have questions for the appropriate Minister later. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INDEPENDENT HOUSING FOR SENIORS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, I want to speak about a catch-22 facing some of the retirement-aged seniors in my riding. They are well into their 60s, and they would like to retire after a long and full work life. They have worked hard, but for limited income, and they haven't been able to buy a condo or home along the way; and they don't have future income to look forward to, except the most basic federal pension. They cannot afford to retire and pay market rent for a place to live. Where will they live in the so-called "golden years"?

One potential remedy is Avens Court. It has 32 units that are subsidized so that tenants pay no more than 30 per cent of their income on rent. The down side is that demand for these units vastly exceeds the supply. There are about 60 people on the waiting list. Just three of these units turned over last year, so at that rate, people will spend 20 years on the waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, another potential remedy is Northern United Place. It also offers subsidized living to seniors. It also has a waiting list, although not as dramatic as Avens. There is also subsidized housing with Yellowknife Housing Authority, yet again, it has a substantial waiting list, especially of single people waiting for units.

There is another catch-22 working seniors face. While they are working, their income is too high to qualify for subsidized housing, and they have the money to pay market rent. Once they stop working, their income decreases dramatically. They have to continue to pay market rent until they get to the top of one of the waiting lists and into a subsidized

apartment they can afford. The problem is that when being evaluated for eligibility or seniors housing, be it Avens, Northern United Place, or public housing in general, their income is assessed not as it would be if they were retired, but as it is while they continue to work.

This makes no sense, Mr. Speaker. For one of my constituents, this basically means he can never retire. If he quits work and does not have a low-cost housing spot, he cannot make his rent. If he keeps working, his income means that he will never get to the top of a crammed list.

This individual set of circumstances obviously begs the larger question of the availability of seniors housing, or innovative rent supplement solutions which might enable the much lower-cost option as seniors age in place. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PINK SHIRT ANTI-BULLYING DAY

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago two high school students, David Shepherd and Travis Price, bought 50 pink T-shirts in support of a boy in their class, or at the school, who was bullied, and today we celebrate that as Pink Shirt Day. Those values, Mr. Speaker, today seem more relevant than ever. I honestly thought bullying was a thing of the past, left in the schoolyard, becoming a relic of childhood, and because adults, as we all know, should know better, be better, and act as role models for their communities, and especially for their kids. Mr. Speaker, this year I have been absolutely disgusted by the actions of some of those who occupy positions of power, or aspire to occupied positions of power, both in the world and in our own country.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I spoke in this House, the climate of fear, discrimination, and hate has been like we have not seen in decades. Bullying has always been a part of the human condition, but recently some have chosen to not hide this fact, and have celebrated it openly, fanning the fires of fear in order to seek power for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, these leaders are cowards. They are bullies, and their behavior is unacceptable. This kind of behaviour has no place in the schoolyard or in the outside world, Mr. Speaker. Canadians and Northerners demand better from those who choose to lead, and I am proud to say that we in this House conduct ourselves with respect and decorum due to the honour bestowed upon us by our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, today, on February 22nd, we are encouraged to practice kindness, to demonstrate that we will not stand by and let others disparage the most vulnerable in our society. My thoughts fall with the LGBTQ community, Muslims, women, and all those who feel unsure or unsafe in the current climate of political discussion in this world. I say to all of them, this is not the norm, and most of us are decent, positive, and highly uncomfortable with these types of bullying and will always rise to speak against it.

Mr. Speaker, this atmosphere of intimidation must end. Let us declare today here and now that Northern leaders will be the type of role models that the whole world deserves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize James Marlowe and his son River in the gallery. Also, I would like to recognize the interpreters from my riding, Mary Rose Sundberg and Dennis Drygeese, and the two pages from the Kalemi Dene School, David John Drygeese Jr. and Victoria Beaulieu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent and relative from Nunakput, Mr. Patrick Joss, and also a relative of mine who had been around here for a few days, Ms. Anne Peters from Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to take this opportunity to welcome and recognize a good friend in the gallery, and a good friend of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Patrick Joss. I know he is a big fan of the Legislative Assembly, and I am really glad that he could be joining here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Have we missed anyone in the gallery? Welcome to our proceedings. It is always great to have an audience. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 626-18(2): IRC-GNWT PARTNERSHIP ON HOUSING

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke about the IRC-GNWT partnership on housing in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. My questions are for the Minister of Housing. Mr. Speaker, my first question for an update: can the Minister speak to the Housing Corporation's plans to work with Inuvialuit Regional Corporations on seniors' units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I will be going up to Inuvik this Friday to sign an MOU, so it is a memorandum of agreement, with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Excuse my pronunciation. So we have been working with them for quite a while to actually decide what they were going to do, how we were going to work this, so we are looking at developing, within this fiscal year, a four-plex in Tuktoyaktuk and a six-plex in Inuvik. Both of them can be used for seniors' accommodations if that is the requirement, if that is the desire of the IRC, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: The Minister has answered a couple of questions. Mr. Speaker, my final question: is the Housing Corporation partnering or otherwise assisting the IRC in housing projects going ahead, specifically for 2017-18?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, I have made it a priority to try to work with Aboriginal governments and municipal governments to try to address their housing needs, so it was really an honour, actually, to be invited to sit in on a partnership with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

So during the next fiscal year they will be accessing \$10 million from the federal government towards their housing needs. We are working with them in partnership. We will be looking at defining what the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation would like to see as their needs, also taking into account the results of the survey that are going to be finishing here at the end of this month and presenting that to them and developing a game plan on how we will be moving forward.

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation does have funding for shelters. However, they are looking to partner with us to access our land, so that is the partnership agreement that we are putting in. We

are putting in the land. They are using their finances, which will bring economic development for their region, which is really important and will provide housing for people. So, yes, I am looking forward to a long-term partnership with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 627-18(2): TALTSON RIVER DAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I talked about the Taltson River dam on the Taltson River. When the dam was built in the early 1960s, or maybe mid-1960s, there were no public studies, consultations, or attempts to build relations with the people of Taltson River. Would the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation please describe the planning and consultation that would have to take place if the dam was proposed today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the Northern Canada Power Corporation did in fact build the dam on the Taltson River at Twin Gorges. The dam was completed in 1965. I am sure that what the Member opposite has stated was likely the case in that there was little or no consultation with local residents. Of course, any expansion of the dam would involve an environmental assessment that would be very comprehensive and take a considerable amount of time. So times have changed and the requirements for these types of projects clearly have changed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: It appears that the Power Corporation is not taking responsibility for flooding the Taltson dam, and I know that there is some question on, I guess, the hydrology around that. It would appear that is what the issue is, from the Aboriginal people. I would like to know how the Power Corporation will communicate any future issue where, this time around, it appears as though the water levels were unusually high and, for some reason or other, it got higher in the middle of winter? How would the Power Corporation consult with the people using the Taltson River at this time in the future?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The dam at Twin Gorges on the Taltson is a run-of-the-river dam, so the water either flows around the dam or through it, so it would have little impact on the river downstream. If there was something exceptional, of course, the Power Corporation should and I think would advise those who use the river.

MR. BEAULIEU: I was wondering if the Minister could advise the House when the current water licence for the Taltson River dam will be expiring?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I don't have that information before me, but I could look into it and supply the information to the Member opposite.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if there was a possibility that some independent expert could look at what the issue is currently and, if it is proven that had the dam not been there this unnatural phenomena of the ice breaking up in the middle of winter would occur, and would the Power Corporation consider compensation? Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I know that any complaints of the type mentioned by the Member opposite are treated seriously by the Power Corporation, are carefully considered, and promptly responded to. I think the Power Corporation, within its own staff, would have the ability to look into and respond to the questions of the type brought forward by the Member opposite. I don't think we'd be prepared to hire an independent scientist to look into this matter in view of the likely expense, which would have to be passed on to the ratepayers.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 628-18(2):
HOUSING ARREARS COLLECTION

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I talked about the Housing Corporation and the arrears situation as well as housing for people who don't have proper running water and that. So my first question is to the Minister responsible for Housing. What has the Corporation done to ensure that members, residents, clients, tenants, whatever name you want to call them, do not get into arrears? What kind of promotional items do they give to the clients so that they don't get into arrears? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of arrears was a serious concern for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation for many years and, during the last Legislative Assembly, in order to try to assist communities and the local housing organizations with the collection of arrears, the decision was

made by a past Minister to actually bring the collections internally into headquarters, which was, in my opinion, a very good move. It meant that the community people did not have to address their own neighbours with that, so a great move that I support 100 per cent.

Currently, what we do is, because it is through headquarters now and we are now in a day of computer literacy, we actually have really good records that show us as soon as someone is in arrears. At that point, we notify the local housing organization, who do try to contact the people. We do everything we can to address them, to try to contact people, but, if they do not answer our calls or open the door, at that point we are left with no recourse; but, like I said, we reach out in every way we can by personally trying to contact the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer, but she kind of answered my second question that I was going to ask. My first question is: what kind of promotion is the Corporation doing so that clients don't get into this situation? So what are they doing so that, as soon as they get into the homes, they understand that this could potentially be a situation? What is the Corporation doing to promote getting this information out to the people?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, the only method that we really use besides the one-on-one outreach to people is when people do sign up to the Housing Corporation, we actually sit down with them, have the paperwork signed for the landlord/tenant agreement form, and in that we talk about their obligations to make payments with them. We are recognizing, however, that we are not the best in communicating. So we are trying to beef up our communication plan and have a better way not only to address people with their arrears, but to also let people know what their rights and their responsibilities are in a variety of areas.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. That is great. Can the Minister make a commitment to share with committee what this plan is and how we can work together to get this message out to the residents so that, you know, they are not in these situations where they could end up with an eviction? So will the Minister make a commitment to committee that she will share this plan with us once it is complete?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, I can make that commitment. We had planned, as soon as the survey results were all compiled, that we would be providing a report on what we heard, and we would be providing that to committee as well. I am hoping that after that that we can actually meet more regularly with the committee to look at all of the feedback that we have got, to look at the areas that

we are doing well, to look at the areas that we need improvement, and to actually work together to define the next steps.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I greatly applaud the Minister for taking these steps. I think this is a great step to help the residents and hopefully eliminate people from getting out of the arrears. My last question is: part of my Member's statement was, we talked about people in homes who do not have running water, do not have power, do not have heat except for a wood stove, and they are living in third-world conditions. These homes are decrepit or basically should be torn down, and these people are living in them. So what is the government or the department or the Corporation and the Minister going to do to help these people get out of these third-world conditions so they can live in a good family home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, recognize that there are a lot of homes within the Northwest Territories that do not have basic amenities in them such as running water and flush toilets; however, as the Government of the Northwest Territories we have to be very careful in what we take on as liabilities. So therefore we have a useful life with our housing stock. If houses are deemed to be over 70 per cent in need of repairs, at that point we cannot invest financially in them because of the liability that may come and the huge expense.

So for people who have homes that in a fair condition, they can access a variety of homeownership programs, such as our CARE Program, that will give up to \$100,000 to provide renovations. They can access our SAFE Program that will provide up to \$10,000 for renovations. They can access our Care Mobility Program that assesses if they have disabilities. So we have a variety of programs that are available, and if their homes are not adequate and are at the point where the Member has stated that they are no longer habitable, then I would like to suggest that they actually put their name on our public housing list to get into a public housing unit.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 629-18(2):
LOCAL IMPROVEMENT CHARGES HOUSING
ENERGY RETROFITS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. In my Member's statement, I

made reference to the Pembina Institute Report, "Loans for Heat: Towards a Yellowknife Energy Savings Program." Is the Minister aware of this report and are her staff using it as a basis for developing changes to the City, Towns and Villages Act to allow for the use of local improvement charges for energy efficiency? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot say exactly if the department has a copy of the report that the honourable Member has spoken of. I would be more than eager to obtain a copy, if he would like to provide it to us. We are looking at the implications of changing the act to accommodate this, so any information that he would be able to provide we would be more than happy to receive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I would be delighted to help the Minister with this. I will be tabling the report later today. It includes all kinds of details of how the LIC enabling laws are dealt with in other jurisdictions. Would the Minister commit then to have her staff review this report and use that as a basis for developing amendments to the City, Towns and Villages Act for this purpose?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We are looking for cross-jurisdictional, about how other jurisdictions are implementing this request. I will commit to taking the document and to reading it. I cannot commit to it being a sole document that we use in determination. We work closely with all of the communities and the NWT Association of Communities, so it is important that we do not confine ourselves to one document when we are looking at developing partnerships.

MR. O'REILLY: I am not suggesting that the Minister only look at this document, but it is a fantastic review of how it is done in other jurisdictions. It even has an appendix with the proposed wording that could be used to adopt right into our City, Towns and Villages Act. So I guess what I am suggesting here is there is an opportunity fast track this amendment, a very simple one, so can the Minister, though, tell us when we would be seeing a legislative proposal to make this happen?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I cannot actually give you a date on when the legislative proposal will be submitted. We are in the process of looking cross-jurisdictional to see what other provinces and territories do. After that, we are also engaging with the six municipal governments that changes to this act will impact. So we are looking to meet with them all coming up here in the spring, and once that is done we will be looking at their feedback and then developing a legislative proposal and taking it to the

Legislative Initiative Committee for their review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that. There is a NWTAC motion of record supporting this sort of work, but I earlier spoke about extending the benefits of energy cost savings to people in low-income brackets. So would the Minister commit to confer with her colleague, the Housing Corporation Minister, to look at providing rebates, some form of assistance, or incentives for retrofits for low-income families to help offset local improvement charges, create local employment, reduce their costs of living, and help with climate change? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can commit to talking to my colleague, the Minister responsible for Housing, to look at suggestions, specifically for low-income families. Actually, we are doing some work around energy conservation and just green energy in principal. We are rolling out a LED Lighting Program this year that we will be putting in LED lights within every home. We are looking at redesigning homes so, that instead of having single units that are not so energy efficient but also very expensive, in order to address both energy efficiency and cost of living, we are looking for more shared boiler systems within residential units. So we are looking at a whole variety of ways that we can help low-income families both to address the cost of living and to become more green in our provision of housing.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

QUESTION 630-18(2):
EMERGENCY HOUSING SHELTERS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recall the Minister of Housing saying she wanted a homeless shelter in each region. What communities have shelters at this point in time already? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, at this point in time, the only communities within the Northwest Territories that have actual homeless shelters are Inuvik, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: My second question is: what communities is the Minister putting new shelters in this year?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: During the current fiscal year, actually, we are building four-plex shelters within the communities of Aklavik, Behchoko, and Fort Simpson.

MR. MCNEELY: Now narrowing it down to the Central Mackenzie, the only region left without a homeless shelter is the Sahtu region. What is the Minister going to do in this area?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I did say in the House here that one of my goals before I have finished my position with the Government of the Northwest Territories is to ensure that we have homeless shelters in every region, so we have reached out to the region of the Sahtu and, through that process, we received two proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned by my colleague next to me in his Member's statement, being innovative took the community of Deline to create their own shelter for the homeless. My question is: when will the Minister build a homeless shelter in the Sahtu? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report that, actually, we will be looking at the Sahtu to build a homeless shelter within the next coming fiscal year. Both proposals, we were actually excited to receive and we were able to accommodate. One of the proposals was only for more of a drop-in day shelter idea, so they can access some food security funding to accommodate that. The other proposal actually will be an overnight shelter, so it's really exciting to say that, within the next fiscal year, we will have a homeless shelter in every single region within the Northwest Territories and to be able to say that we can accommodate both proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 631-18(2):
BENEFITS OF HOUSING COOPERATIVES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Kam Lake is home to two of the Northwest Territories' housing cooperatives. These are great community-driven housing communities that allow for housing options that are below market rent. In fact, the average price for a three-bedroom apartment in Yellowknife is around \$2,300 a month in rent, whereas, at one of the housing co-ops in my riding, it is \$1,400. That is an incredible amount of savings. I am wondering if the Minister has looked into starting a pilot project to develop more housing

cooperatives here in Yellowknife and across the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, the cooperative housing unit that the Member does speak to, I used to live in that just a couple of years ago, so I am very familiar with that unit that he addresses, and it is a nice unit. We, the NWT Housing Corporation, actually provides partial funding for those, as well. We provide funding to most of the cooperatives. In all honesty, I had never thought about that, but I am hoping that it will come up within the housing survey. Now that it has been brought to my attention, I will consider that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister. Ask and you shall receive. Just a few more points on this: the Minister spoke to her own personal experience in one of these particular housing cooperatives. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation did a study of the Borealis Housing Cooperative, and they found that over 2,500 hours of voluntary labour are produced by the housing cooperative every year, which results in considerable savings for the community. These projects, they also found that to get a new project like this, it requires the goodwill of the community. So if the Housing Corporation could commit to more than just looking at this but actually actively engage community members who want a change, perhaps through that survey, will the Minister actively engage survey participants and forge a new housing cooperative from those respondents?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated, being a resident of that cooperative, I do remember the volunteer hours, and sometimes it was not eagerly volunteered. It was more of a requirement of being in the cooperative, but it does give back to the community, and it is a way of working together, and it does build community relations. It made me actually go out and meet my neighbours, so I am an advocate of that type of housing unit.

However, I have committed to doing this survey and, depending on the results of the survey, we will be defining what I do within the coming year. It would be disrespectful of me to put my needs above the survey, so I will be waiting until the results are compiled before I define my action plan in the future.

MR. TESTART: I am unsure what the Minister's needs are, but the needs of my constituents are lower rents and more affordable housing. Mr. Speaker, it is not just the Housing Corporation that provides support for co-ops. It is also the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment

and the Department of Justice who all provide either administrative support or are some way responsible. Will the Minister commit to forming a working group with those three departments to build on the success of housing cooperatives?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I have already committed to exploring the idea of more cooperatives as an option. I will also commit to bringing that to the other departments.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, the Minister, in my honourable friend's questions, the Member for the Sahtu, she did make a commitment to a certain amount of shelters by the end of the year. Can she make a commitment to me today, Mr. Speaker, that we will double the number of housing cooperatives in the Northwest Territories by next year? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, like I said, that would be, in my opinion, disrespectful if I make commitments before the results of the surveys were in, so the answer is no.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 632-18(2):
K'ATLODEECHE FIRST NATION HOUSING
CHALLENGES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. What I seek is, the urgency of the situation of the housing matter on the reserves, I am seeking some action. I am seeking a commitment from this Minister, also, at the same time, reassurance to the K'atlodeeche First Nation members that the senior-most official, the Minister of the Housing Corporation, will do something.

You know, thus far, in terms of this side of the House, every time we have raised our concerns and issues on behalf of our constituents, what we have heard from the Ministers and their departments is to say, well, we are going to respond by an action plan. I don't think we need an action plan at this point. I think we need to have some real action. My question is: the Housing Corporation has entered a tendering process to repair 10 previously unoccupied homes on the K'atlodeeche First Nation reserve; how will the corporation act to ensure those homes are available to residents as soon as possible, sooner than the estimated 12 months? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to say that I take a little bit of offence to the Member's statement. As the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation, I feel that we have done a lot of work with the Hay River Reserve. Especially, before, we didn't have land tenure; it was a huge issue. We have negotiated with the federal government. We have gotten the land tenure for the 10 units. We are still negotiating with the federal government to get land tenure for six more units. We are working with the community. The community can access services through the Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: What I'm expressing is, in my recent visit to the band or the K'atloodjeeche First Nation are residents on the Hay River Reserve. I'm not saying basically to criticize her position in the GNWT, but these are real concerns from people who want access to housing. So building a relationship seems to be the steps that have been taken forward, and it's good, you know, we're making progress and we're trying to build homes. How is the corporation working with the Hay River Dene Band to explore new and innovative ideas to meet housing needs on the reserve, such as establishing a new local housing organization or supporting people in building their own homes?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do believe that we are working with the Hay River Reserve as best as possible. These units that we're talking about, the 16 units, actually belong to them. Because they did not want to deal with the provision of community housing we did an agreement that we would take them on as NWT Housing Corporation.

We are more than open to meeting with them if they wanted to look at other options and other suggestions that they have to address the housing needs within their community.

MR. NADLI: It's good that the Minister is offering to meet with the Hay River Dene Band; I hope that happens. In that meeting, perhaps the Minister could explain what new actions will the corporation take to change its working relationship with the Hay River Dene Band, such as regular meetings and a subsequent action plan or the development of assured projects?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The Government of the Northwest Territories does meet bi-annually, I believe, regularly -- actually, two times a year, with all of the First Nations Aboriginal governments. We will commit to continuing to do that, and, as stated, if the band wishes to meet with me individually, I am more than open to meeting with them.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in September 2016 the GNWT and the K'atloodjeeche First Nations signed an Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding, and in that agreement they wanted to enhance their working relationship and only the subject matters that they want to work on is housing. So my final question to the Minister: what will it take for action to be taken to address the housing issue on the Hay River Reserve? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do believe, as stated, that we are working in partnership with them. I am more than willing to meet with them and to continue regular meetings if that is their desire to address the needs within their community.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 633-18(2):
ADDRESSING HOUSING CHALLENGES WITH
TINY HOMES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I talked about the need for innovation in housing and how it might meet some of our serious housing needs here in the Northwest Territories, and in particular I spoke about tiny housing. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, we know that tiny housing will help with housing of singles. It, of course, helps reduce the cost of living and helps us meet some of our affordability goals, and, of course, it has a great impact of preserving the environment and, in particular, reducing our carbon footprint.

Can the Minister tell us if the Housing Corporation has had any discussion about tiny housing and the possibilities of the Housing Corporation investing in tiny housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like I'm getting up and down a lot; I want to remind Members it's anti-bullying day.

We have looked at the idea of tiny houses, Mr. Speaker, in seriousness to the Member's question. We are bound, however, by national building codes and our own standards around energy efficiency, so those are issues that we are conscious of, but we have made agreements with some municipalities to actually explore some options around tiny houses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for her reply. Mr. Speaker, recently the City of Yellowknife conducted a survey last spring and some of the results of the survey indicated that folks were fairly supportive of tiny housing and in promoting some development of tiny housing. I wonder if the Minister can indicate whether the Housing Corporation's survey had any questions along the lines specifically toward tiny housing?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At this point the survey is starting to be compiled. It's still open for feedback, as I agreed to leave it open for the extra month, so I haven't seen all the results for the survey, but I do make an assumption that tiny houses will be one of the issues on that survey.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate the Minister's reply. I know that tiny housing seems to be a fairly significant conversation going around the territory. Not just in Yellowknife; I've heard it in other communities, and so I expect that there will be some responses on the survey relevant to tiny housing.

I guess at this point can we get some kind of commitment from the Minister that tiny housing can be put on the Housing Corporation's kind of, call it, agenda for consideration, at least for future consideration? It just has so many positives for checking off so many of the goals and objectives that we're trying to achieve as a government. Will the Minister commit to that?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I can absolutely commit that tiny houses will be one of the areas that we look at, and go further to stating that we are looking at developing partnerships with municipalities and Aboriginal governments to address their own housing needs within their communities, and we are already forming partnerships with some municipalities on a form of a tiny house.

As the corporation, though, I do want to stress that my own worry is that when we only look at tiny houses within an independent, solo idea, then we're not perhaps looking at the cost of living and the energy efficiency. So I am also looking at ideas that we can use, things like shared boiler systems to address the cost of living and the energy efficiency.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad to hear from the Minister that some effort has already been under way with regard to working with communities and municipalities in this effort. As the Minister even alluded to earlier, there could be some challenges around building codes and the like. Will the Minister commit to working with her

colleagues to make sure that red tape and regulations that would stymie this good opportunity can actually be reviewed and given full consideration so that we can actually work towards some successful development in tiny houses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can commit to working with my colleagues to actually look at how we can address red tape within housing standards, but I also should make the Speaker aware that some of the red tape will be on behalf of municipalities because the municipalities will have to make sure that their bylaws accommodate for tiny houses as well, and that I have no say over.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 634-18(2):
INDEPENDENT HOUSING FOR SENIORS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of the Housing Corporation, also known as the Minister of Yes. What I described in my Member's statement is an immediate problem. This solution isn't tied to the housing survey or a new federal housing deal; it's a matter of assessing what the applicant's income would be on the day after they retire. That's all we need to do. So will the Minister direct her officials to adjust their own processes and initiate talks with the low-cost housing partners to take into account the differences between their pre- and post-retirement income? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although I do not want to be known as the Minister who always says yes, in this case I will say yes that we will consider that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I would like to ask my favourite Minister to consider that the best solution is to enable seniors to stay in their homes as long as possible, whether those homes are owned or rented. It may be financially advantageous to offer a rental subsidy to seniors to stay in place when they retire. To do so would probably be both less expensive than moving them into public housing and also less of a drain in having them move. So I wonder if the Minister will consider some kind of a rental subsidy specific to seniors that would allow to stay in own homes?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I am feeling like it is my birthday. In all honesty, seniors are a huge issue not only for myself but for all the Ministers

sitting at the table here. We will be focusing a lot of effort within our program renewal on our provision of supports to seniors. So, yes, we will contemplate a rent-subsidy program on top of what we already have to accommodate seniors to age in place.

MS. GREEN: Just to clarify my question, I think the Minister understood the question, but I am not talking about people who own their own homes. I am talking about people who are in public housing. So they would get a subsidy to stay -- no, sorry, I am making things worse. I am talking about keeping seniors in their current rental units with transitional housing support, and then that would bring them off the waiting list for public housing. That is where I was going with that.

Moving on, the lack of available spots demonstrates the need to devote more of our limited budgets towards meeting the infrastructure need and, as I said, to keep people here in the territory. We keep hearing about meeting our road-work needs in the first two weeks of this mandate and easing people's misery later. Can the Minister offer any assurance that someday shelter for people will get its turn at the till?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do want to address it even though it was just brought up as a comment. The Transitional Rent Supplement Program would not be one that I would look at to address with seniors in its current form, in that it is only a two-year program and it is one of the policies that I do want to change. I do not believe that a two-year program is the most effective use of that funding. I also state that, when it comes to the till, to the money for housing, we are strong advocates federally. We have been knocking on the federal door. Our Prime Minister has promised us that there will be exciting news in the budget. I was hoping that would have come out at the end of this month, but it looks like it will come out in March. So we have been lobbying as the three territories -- not just the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut as well -- in partnership, and the federal government has committed to having a three-territory housing strategy. So we are assuming that we will be receiving more money in the till soon.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a two-pronged approach. I think that we need more housing units, and we need to help people who cannot afford housing on the income that they have as retired people, and so I am interested to hear that the Minister is working on both of these fronts. Would she consider a rental subsidy program that would tide seniors over from the time they retire until they get to the top of one of the waiting lists for subsidized housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will consider the suggestion brought forward, and even though it was not suggested, I was hoping it would come out. We are looking at other options for seniors. I did have seniors come to me since I have been the Minister and state to me that it is not only a matter of accessing affordable housing, it is a matter of accessing safe housing. So I have had a number of seniors come to me and say that they do not feel safe in some of the apartment buildings in this community, and so we are looking at perhaps doing a pilot project where we can actually blend seniors, so only a seniors' complex that has market housing and low-income housing to provide more safe, secure housing that addresses the socialization and the safety needs of seniors.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 635-18(2):
OVERFLOW WATER ON MACKENZIE DELTA
HIGHWAYS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask some questions to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, I brought this issue up a couple of days back, which is the overflow at Georgetown. Mr. Speaker, as you know, with climate change, many of the regions are facing extreme warm temperatures. All this winter, even before Christmas, we have had melting up in the Mackenzie Delta, which started a lot of overflow up in my riding, two locations actually that I mentioned the other day. They are both creating a lot of damage. As you know, the Minister may be aware of all the work that is being done on the way from Tsiigehtchic to Inuvik, but at Georgetown, which is just across from Tsiigehtchic at kilometre 140, there nothing really has been done except the work that has been taken on by George Nadichi-- sorry, Mr. Speaker -- as George himself has been doing.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to ask the Minister: will the Minister ensure that work is done to divert the water flow at kilometre 140, also known as Georgetown? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in the House a couple of days ago, safety is our number one priority. We will have a look at the situation and, if it is impeding on the highway and the safety of travellers on the highway, we will have a look at it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: It is pretty clear that safety is an issue, as we people know who are living just right where this water is flooding right now, Mr. Speaker.

You know, this could have been avoided if a heat trace line had been put in these culverts. Whether it is bringing a backhoe there, will the Minister ensure that equipment is brought to this location? That way the people who are living there do not have to use chisels and shovels to do this work themselves.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: It is my understanding that the access to this housing unit along 140 is actually an unauthorized access along the side of the highway, but as I have said in this House, if the overflow is impeding on the highway and causing a safety issue we will have a look at doing something.

MR. BLAKE: Will the Minister work with his colleagues in the Yukon to see what they do when they deal with overflow, Mr. Speaker? Because I travel to the Yukon, you know, on a yearly basis and it is pretty clear what they do. They put a heat trace line through their culverts that cause these sort of issues so they do not have these sort of problems.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: This is something we can look into, and I can reach out to my colleague in the Yukon just to see how well this is actually working.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear. If everything goes well with his discussions, will the Minister ensure that heat trace lines are put in in these two locations for next year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would have to check to see if the culverts are even ours. That would be the first thing I would need to do. I will look into this situation in the Yukon, and I will report back to the Member on what my findings are with the Yukon.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's 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 Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 297-18(2):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES' RESPONSE TO MOTION
27-18(2): A NEW DAY MEN'S HEALING
PROGRAM

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table to following document entitled "Government of the

Northwest Territories' response to Motion 27-18(2): A New Day Men's Healing Program." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 298-18(2):
LETTER FROM THE YWCA NWT TO THE
AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
REGARDING FUNDING FOR SOCIAL WORK
AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

TABLED DOCUMENT 299-18(2):
LETTER OF RESIGNATION FROM AURORA
COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS SOUTH
SLAVE REPRESENTATIVE LYNN NAPIER-
BUCKLEY TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION,
CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two documents. The first is a letter from YWCA NWT to the Aurora College Board of Directors requesting a reinstatement of the social work program. Mr. Speaker, the second is a letter of resignation from the South Slave representative on the Aurora College board because she does not support the cuts to the college. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 300-18(2):
LOANS FOR HEAT: TOWARDS A YELLOWKNIFE
ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table to following document: "Loans for Heat towards the Yellowknife Energy Savings Program" by the Pembina Institute, dated February 2015. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notice of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 7, Bill 13, Committee Report 6-18(2), Tabled Document 261-18(2), with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 18-18(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider business before the House

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 261-18(2): Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018, and committee wishes to consider the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Department of Lands. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We will continue consideration of the document after a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 261-18(2), Main Estimates 2017-2018 beginning with the NWT Housing Corporation. I will turn to the Minister responsible for opening comments. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2017-2018 Main Estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The main estimates propose a budget of \$132,888,000, a decrease of \$14,019,000 or 9.5 per cent from the 2016-2017 Main Estimates.

These estimates continue to support the Government of the Northwest Territories' objective of ensuring a strong and sustainable future for the government and its programs by managing expenditures due to limited revenue growth.

The 2017-2018 Main Estimates include a decrease of \$7,814,000 from the 2017-2018 Business Plan reviewed by standing committee in September. This change relates primarily to the reinstatement of \$745,000 for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's homeownership repair programming and the introduction of a \$500,000 renovation and energy-retrofit program for seniors to allow them to live in their homes longer and more affordably. Other changes include an adjustment of \$10 million to reflect federal funding flowing, not to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, but directly to the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, or IRC, for the delivery of social housing projects in the Beaufort Delta Region, and an increase in amortization of \$990,000.

The major changes from the previous year's main estimates include sunsets of \$6.75 million for the market housing program initiative for non-market communities, \$783,000 for the rental housing in rural and remote locations initiative, and \$3.5 million for the first year of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police housing project. As part of reduction initiatives, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be implementing partial reductions of \$644,000 to the CARE Major Program, \$300,000 to the Transitional Rent Supplement Program, and a \$216,000 reduction related to local housing organizations.

In fiscal year 2017-18, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be receiving an \$8.79 million federal funding allocation, a decline of \$7.84 million from the previous year. This change is primarily explained by the re-allocation of the Inuit housing funding component directly to the IRC. This allocation will include:

- \$4.1 million for public housing replacement and modernization and improvement projects;
- \$750,000 on repair support for third-party social housing providers;
- \$375,000 on semi-independent housing-first units within emergency shelters;
- \$156,000 for repairing family violence shelters;
- \$1.2 million for homeownership programming; and
- \$750,000 for the demolition of surplus housing units, including opportunities for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's Working Off Arrears and Community Training Programs.

An additional \$1.4 million will be used for minor capital repairs and fuel and hot water tank replacements, including an LED lighting initiative for public housing units.

The 2017-2018 Main Estimates also reflect the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's priority to work with other levels of government for their housing needs by investing \$5.5 million in developing RCMP housing, which will help ensure that our communities are able to staff policing personnel. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is also committed to the priority of the 18th Legislative Assembly to improve community wellness and safety by supporting seniors to age in place. The new seniors repair program that addressing housing quality issues and energy efficiency will support seniors to remain in their homes longer.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Do you have witnesses you'd like to bring into the Chamber? Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses to the committee?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Tom Williams, the president and CEO of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. On my immediate right is Mr. Jim Martin, the vice-president of Finance and Infrastructure Service. On the far right is Franklin Carpenter, who is the vice-president of Programs and District Operations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the witnesses for appearing. We will begin with general comments from the committee, followed by an opportunity for the Minister to respond. First, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we and our committee have been looking really hard in looking at this budget and so the first thing, our biggest challenge we're looking at was the elimination of the Transition Rent Supplement Program. We understand that this program has not met its goals, but this should be addressed. Instead of getting rid of the program, the goals should be looked at and, if it's not efficient, then maybe the fund should be allocated to different housing programs instead of being removed. That is very important to us. Housing is important, as we all know, and this has an impact on all our residents.

So by this Transition Rent Supplement Program being addressed and saying it's not being efficient, maybe the department should be looking at it and seeing how it can become more efficient; and if it's not going to do that, then maybe allocate the funds instead of getting rid of this program. So that is what committee has been trying to very much stress.

The other part of it was the CARE, and CARE is an important program. I mean, I understand when the government talks about it's a 10-year program and that, but there are lots of homes out there that need to be repaired and need to be addressed, especially our seniors. For our seniors, there are some challenges because, in my riding and hearing other people talk about it, is that the commitment to be in their forgivable loans seems to be a little bit more challenging for some of these seniors, and so this needs to be looked at.

So we looked at CARE as an opportunity for the government to actually increase it to help address our seniors and the residents, the people who have homes. Yes, we have lots of people who have accessed it, but there's still more people who have

the opportunity to access this program, and if we're not going to help them we're going to have a huge deficit as we move forward, so the committee has stressed this important part of it.

On a personal note, in regard to housing, I'm not a big fan of modular homes; I've said that in the past. However, bringing the modular homes to be built in the North has had a huge impact on providing employment opportunities. We've had, to my understanding, up to 50 people being employed to help build these modular homes and other opportunities this company has been able to do. However, in saying that, we still need stick-built community-built homes in some of the communities.

Also, in regard to these modular homes that are brought in as market rents, some of these trailers or modular homes are not being used. In my riding, they sit vacant. I've had the opportunity to see some pictures of these homes, and they're starting to fall apart, and this is non-usage. So again, the corporation needs to address this. If they're going to be sitting there in these communities, then we should be utilizing them for homes so we can help the market rent.

Finally, my colleague here today talked about tiny homes, the small homes, and talked about the success of Deline, and there was a person here in town who was building these tiny homes that would have a huge impact on these single individuals, and I'm hoping that this corporation will start looking at this. I understand that there are land issues, and stuff like that, but if you build these things and provide this opportunity for them to have these homes in place, then I can guarantee you these communities would be willing to work with you to provide land and get these people in homes, which will help the homelessness, the couch surfing. There's a whole list of people there.

So I'm hoping that the Minister and the department -- I know it's not on here, but I hope you will bring it next year, because we need to put people in homes, and if we don't do it this way we're going to have struggles and we're going to continue to be doing the same. As the old saying goes if we continue to do the same thing we're going to get the same results, and that's just crazy. So I'm hoping that the Minister will look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Further general comments from committee? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'd like to start just with a general comment on the Minister's opening statement, where the budget for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is

going to be reduced by 9.5 per cent in one year. I think that says something about the priority that this government is placing on housing.

I understand some of that reduction is related to reduced funding from the federal government, but not all of it. I think that's a sad statement about the priorities of our government, quite frankly, that you can find money for other big infrastructure projects, but when it comes to housing we don't seem to be able to find it; in fact, we're going to be facing cuts.

So I know that my colleague talked about some of the other reductions in this department. There are some good things here: that the Minister has committed to an additional half-million dollars for keeping seniors in their own homes, aging-in-place, that's a good thing, but there are some other cuts in here that are just not good for our residents, and certainly I can't support this budget overall for the Housing Corporation. I'll have more to say as we work our way through. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Further? Seeing none, I will -- Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's quite appropriate that we're reviewing the main estimates for the Housing Corporation today after we had a line of questions for the Minister earlier, and I think a lot of good ideas have been shared, not just today but throughout the life of this Assembly. I think we all know that this is a key concern for our constituents, the people of the Northwest Territories, and for individual Members. Housing remains a priority. I know the Minister feels the same way, and the government feels the same way. It is about how we act on that priority and ensure that we have the best possible housing support for our residents.

I know the Minister has rolled out a very extensive survey to support those goals. I think some of that process, although well-intentioned, has created a bit of frustration. From personal experience, I know that I have constituents who have been waiting for support but have been running into policy barriers. This survey is supposed to be designed to inform the department's response to that, but I do fear that the survey is only the beginning of a long series of strategic plans and action plans, and further reporting and planning, rather than taking decisive action. I wanted to make that very clear before we start going into the detail that, although well-intentioned, we really need to act.

The survey has already been delayed once to allow for more respondent time, and it does seem to be what the Minister often relies on when questions are being brought forward about these policy changes. It is very clear that we want those changes sooner rather than later, and we really

need to get on with this very important work. I do stand in support of the recommendations that the honourable Member for Nahendeh has brought forward in his opening remarks and that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning has made very clear that need to be reflected in these main estimates for our support moving forward. With that, I will end my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Housing Department is a very common concern throughout all 33 communities. A house in downtown Nahanni Butte is similar to a house in downtown Fort Good Hope; therefore, the demand is high for the same unit. It is a controversial one, and one that has continuous support of the government in previous Assemblies to try to address the growing demands. So I look forward to going through this budget, more so on the operational side of things. I just highlighted some issues of concern; land tenure, vacant home ownership units. I am thinking and being mindful of what we had years ago, half units and the sharing program, and the RCMP allowance or the endeavour of the RCMP, and the transitional rent supplementary program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Next, I have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as you may recall, Members on this side of the House proposed a motion in June of last year where we asked the government to make a commitment to reduce the level of core need in NWT housing at the rate of 2 per cent per year for four years.

It is my understanding that this hasn't happened. In fact, the same number of units are available in social housing today as there have been for many, many years. Without adding new units to our stock, we are never going to get on top of the waiting lists which are common to all social housing LHOs. That hasn't changed, to the best of my knowledge, and nor has level of core need. I am not aware of an investment in the three areas of core need, which are overcrowding, affordability, and suitability, meaning the condition of the house, that there has been an investment that would reduce the level of core need by 2 per cent.

We are well aware that CMHC's support for the Housing Corporation O and M has been declining for about 25 years at this point, and it will continue to decline for another 20. The Housing Corporation has not been able to come up with a plan to offset that decline in revenue. I know there are some new initiatives, for example, the RCMP housing and

having tenants pay a greater proportion of their utilities, but at the end of the day it does not offset the amount of money that is being taken out of the Housing Corporation by declining CMHC support.

Mr. Chair, we are at a moment when we need transformative change in the Housing Corporation. We need to rethink the way that we provide social housing in the Northwest Territories. I appreciate the Minister's commitment to her housing survey, and I am looking forward to seeing the results, but at the end of the day I don't think that crowd-sourcing housing policy is going to give us the transformative change that this agency needs in order to meet our current needs, let alone our future needs, in terms of social housing.

I recognize this is an expensive area to make investments in, both for the construction costs and the operations and maintenance cost, but, at the same time the needs keep getting greater. I don't know to what extent we can keep asking people to defer their need for a house to the need to build a road to one place or another. It does not seem to me that housing benefits from these roads or from economic development generally. There has been no evidence that that has been the case in the last 20 years, where our economic fortunes have gone up and down according to the resource economy that sustains us.

All of that to say that the Minister has a very difficult portfolio. She has a portfolio where the budget is not meeting the needs of the people who are depending on it, and there is no prospect of it doing so anytime in the future, short of this transformative change that I have just spoken about. Having said that, those are my opening comments, and I look forward to asking my questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have much to say other than I know my colleagues talked about the cost of doing business in the North and the cost of shipping and construction in the territory, as well as maintenance. I just want to point out that the Minister, earlier on, mentioned during question period that she would be going to Inuvik to sign an MOU with the Inuvialuit, and I want to say that I am in support of that. You know, with other governments in Canada, as well, they are looking at focusing on the needs of Indigenous people all over Canada, and I think what the GNWT and the IRC are doing is a good partnership to lead the way, as well as to show a good example of cooperation and coordination. It also gives other Indigenous groups a chance to refine these agreements and MOUs, as well as a way working forward. That is all I have to say for now, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. [English translation not provided.] I just wanted to provide some comments, but I think my colleague indicated the obvious, that this is a big department and it is fairly contentious because you are basically dealing with people's castles, if they have access to them, at the community level. It is a very difficult portfolio, and I applaud the Minister for leading the way to this point. You know, we look forward to the continued working relationship at this level but, most importantly, at the community level. Just some comments I wanted to make: as I said, housing is a big issue in my riding. People want and desire their own homes. How can we get people to own their own homes? The common is that you get a job if the economy is good, and then you can mortgage your own home with the support of your bank, and buy your own home. If you're in the NWT, we have fairly limited industrial and resource development, and some parts of the NWT that are far out of reach for small communities. Therefore, people rely on government to provide housing.

There are some things that I wanted to note that, again, we did pass a motion back in June in terms of the core needs, in terms of ensuring that we provide programs and services to people in the NWT. I think at that point it was noted that there is a need in non-market communities of 32 per cent, and that it continues.

We are dealing with an aging infrastructure of people who had brand new houses perhaps 30 years ago are now at a point where the houses need to be repaired or replaced, or else in some instances, demolished.

It could be an opportunity for local governments to become involved in terms of how it could become, possibly, if they are going to refurbish or renovate or make improvements to housing, then the opportunity is maybe to bridge an alliance with local governments to ensure that local resources are used to the max.

The other point I wanted to make is on the homelessness issue. People make sincere efforts in terms of the people who I work with at the community level, and there is a recognition that we wanted to do something in terms of addressing the homelessness issue. There are people who are couch surfing, and do not have a place to stay. Out of the compassion of our hearts, we moved to ensure that we had an organized body to try to work with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. We saw other communities get priority in terms of pilot projects, in terms of piloting the need to address homelessness issues. On the part of the local body, there was some conceptualization

of at least how units could be constructed, perhaps bringing other departments such as Health and Social Services in terms of almost bringing a person into the home, but also bridging other services that they could access in terms of getting a strong footing in the community to own their own homes.

Another point is, I applaud the progressiveness of working with First Nations people. We are directly transferring the resources and agreements of First Nations people, and that's commendable, but I wonder if that is predicated on Aboriginal governments having to have a land claim first, and if that is the case.

Just another point that I wanted to highlight is, as I said, home ownership, ultimately, is what we try to strive for, but it is a challenge. The opposite side of home ownership is public rental, and that is pretty common in our communities. You have to rent out with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, and in that instance, it is local housing organization that we have to work with.

Those are just some things I feel have been very common in terms of concerns and issues that profile the riding that I serve, and I look forward to the continued working relationship with this Minister and the department to ensure that everyone has homes. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, housing is a very, very big issue in my riding. Housing is a very big issue across the NWT. One of the things that I have talked a bit to the Minister about, recognizing that the Minister is currently gathering data, maybe to make good decisions moving forward on what is really needed in the communities.

What I think is really lacking in the NWT Housing Corporation is a good plan by per community. The NWT Housing Corporation at one time had quite a few programs. I think the number is like 18 or 14 programs comes to mind, and it was reduced in many of the programs and consolidated into a few programs. Those few programs are difficult for people who really need it to access.

One of the issues that I have in my riding is the requirement for insurance, fire insurance, that is, or else the corporation cannot spend any money on the people and on the homes. I have situations where there are elders who could use a fairly large project in order to get their house up to standard. The policies sort of run along the line that they need to have secure insurance. You secure the land; in order to get their land secured, they have quite a

substantial tax bill, or quite a process to go through even to get a lease. We have situations where property becomes rental/lease. I have one situation and others that -- I don't know the exact number but one that I am currently dealing with, an elder had land tax/rent for \$4,000 a year. We are talking about property that is a 1980 HAP house. These guys know what the HAP houses are, of course. 1980s HAP house. That is the first obstacle for this elder who actually makes about \$1,000 a month. First obstacle is forking out \$2,000 because he gets the tax release. That was two months' salary for the lease. The second obstacle is the fire insurance. That is a couple more months of salary because, if you have a community where there is no fire hydrant and there is only a small volunteer fire department, then the insurance puts some surcharges on.

If you go see an insurance company, on the face of it just say, how much is it to insure a house in Lutselk'e, as an example, the chances are they will probably say, there is no different than Yellowknife, until you get into the application process and find out there are no fire hydrants, there are only three firefighters. With all of those things, even a fire truck that does not function all the time.

I think that as the NWT Housing Corporation, the mandate should be to make sure that people are living in adequate and suitable accommodation. With the policies, I do not think that can happen. I do not think individuals can afford to pay the requirements in order to get their house fixed. It has become a program, I think, of who could afford. When you talk about the NWT Housing Corporation, and you talk about social housing and the history of NWT Housing Corporation, it is definitely designed to support the people who can afford to support themselves. It is not really designed to help people who cannot afford the help. What has happened now is that individuals cannot afford to get into housing programs because their incomes are too low, and their incomes exceed a certain amount, and they cannot get into a program because their incomes are too high.

That is something I think the NWT Housing Corporation has to look at very closely. One of the ways it was proposed that they create housing development plans per community to see what is on the ground, in what type of inventory that is in each community, and using that to develop some sort of a plan to be able to assist the people who need the help the most. That is the intent, I believe, of the social housing department or social housing organizations such as this, but it is not really meeting its intent. It just kind of misses that target group. I have an elder in a wheelchair who can't afford repairs. I wish I could get \$3,000. That would get her through one year. We could never get anything substantial to fix her house right up so that

she is sitting comfortably. That, I think, is something the corporation could look at. I find the biggest issue seems to be repairs, the repair to units. Those are the programs that people are having trouble accessing.

One thing I have harped about for a long time, since I have been in this Legislative Assembly, has been the Housing Corporation staff going to the homes of the people to sit down with the people in their homes and have a first-hand look at what is in there, with a couple of officers, maybe the programs person, one, maybe a technical person, two, to be able to go into the home and focus in on individuals who really need the help. It is very easy in the community to determine which people really need the help, and it is also very easy for me to say because I represent small communities. It may be a little more difficult to be able to do something like that in Yellowknife or in some of the regional centres. Certainly, in the small communities is where, as we have proven in the House many, many times, is where the poorest of the people live, and the NWT Housing Corporation is a program that is targeted at that group, targeted at that group but inaccessible by that group. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my colleagues have mostly touched on some of the detail, especially as it relates to programs and the mandate and what have you. I want to look, just for a moment, at some of the overarching challenges that we have in trying to deliver housing and, in particular, meet our mandate.

This is the part where I am actually going to have to disagree with a previous colleague speaking on roads. As most know, I have had some experience working with the Housing Corporation from the technical side, and so I know some of the challenges that we have had to deliver affordable housing in some of the communities.

You know, when I see communities like Whati, as an example, where there were instances where someone might have a frozen-up house, that obviously leads a lot of problems that will require attention. There were just instances where we simply could not afford to get a plumber on a plane and get them in there to assess this house only to come out and have to identify a bunch of materials and equipment that would have to go in to help repair the house, so you had to essentially wait for another three, four, or five houses to have some degree of maintenance or problems that needed addressing so that you could actually afford to fly someone in and address these needs.

Clearly, there are a number of communities, as well, that have to wait annually for a winter road in order to get housing packages or significant amounts of materials in to do major renovations. That is all very costly. So, transportation is one of the challenges that is a barrier to delivering affordable housing, in my view, and that is why I continue to stay committed to investing in critical transportation infrastructure that is within our mandate.

Land tenure is another one, and it comes in all forms. I don't care to get into the detail, but there are instances where certain program eligibility and/or the delivering of new housing, whether it is public or otherwise, is challenged because of land tenure issues. So I think there needs to be some focus worked interdepartmentally and, as well, with our federal partners in making sure that everybody understands that land tenure needs some degree of streamlining because arguably a third or more of our challenges with regard to delivering housing and successful housing programs are troubled by land tenure.

The other thing is regulations. We have good intentions when it comes to some of our programs, and CARE is a good example, where a person applies for a CARE major and they might be in a community -- I will use Yellowknife as an example -- that has EnerGuide 80 standards in place at the municipal level, and now this family has grown and they need an addition put on their home to put on a bedroom or two, but now, because of that being such a significant renovation to that person's home, the municipal regulations kick in and now there are going to be some EnerGuide 80 standards type thing that have to be met. It turns what could have been, say, a \$20,000 major project into a \$200,000 major project and, therefore, the client just turns it down and says, forget it. At the end of the day we are not serving anybody. We realize then that the person does not get to enlarge their home to meet their family needs, and the house is certainly not meeting any kind of EnerGuide 80 standards and continues to be energy-efficiently challenged.

Lastly, it is the federal government. We have to be clear with our message to the federal government about the challenges that we face. We can't just continue to accept that funding for community housing services is going to just fall off the map here, somewhere in 2033 or 2035, whenever it is proposed to end. There has to be some kind of negotiation, meaningful negotiation, that takes place sooner rather than later that establishes our unique needs for continuing to support public housing.

As much as we all want home ownership, home ownership in some communities is just not going to

ever be a reality. Public housing is the reality. We can't wait around for the funding for public housing to just fall off the map. Then we will be in a much more dire situation.

Then, just lastly, Mr. Chair, I want to always give credit where credit is due. I really want to commend the department for the efforts made recently as it relates to the commitment of Housing First. We are seeing some success in that already as it relates to the capital city here. Of course, we are all aware that there is some investment being made in a few other communities with regard to Housing First, so thank you for that. Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister, you have 10 minutes to respond, keeping in mind that much of this will be touched on as we go through the department. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Excuse me, Mr. Chair, if I have to speak really quickly. I don't have a clock here, and I am going to try to address as many as I can. I will be going all over the place because I didn't have time to format it.

Thank you for recognizing that it is a difficult portfolio. I also recognize housing is a difficult portfolio and really important. When we were doing the Cabinet shuffle, I actually asked to keep housing because I believe that it takes someone with experience, with a social degree, actually, to provide some necessary changes, so I did ask to keep this portfolio, good, bad, or ugly.

The elimination of the transitional rent program, in all honesty, that program was not working. It was a two-year program, and we weren't giving people the skills to be able to address their living situation after. We are looking at changing programs, so, yes, we will be re-profiling perhaps a lot more money than that, actually, because programs that are not being effective or are not being efficient need to be changed into things that work, and that will be part of our program renewal project that we are doing now.

The CARE program, there were some cuts to it, and, yes, people do need CARE packages. They need major renovations. However, we put more of a focus on prevention. There is lots of research that says prevention is better than intervention; in-home maintenance as well. If we go into people's homes every year and provide preventative maintenance and we're there every year, we should not have to spend \$100,000 every 10 years to deal with huge renovations that people could have alleviated if they had done things like clearing the snow off their roofs or cleaning their furnaces or little basic home maintenance, preventative maintenance things that

people are not doing, and perhaps because they don't have the knowledge. So we're focusing on prevention with that.

Modular homes versus stick-built and tiny homes. Agreement. Modular homes are actually more suitable for the southern communities than the Northwest Territories, where our climate is a little bit more tempered. Northern communities, I agree, it's probably not the best structure for it. It's certainly not good for community development, economic development within the northern communities.

So we did a project, we tried to get modular units developed in the Northwest Territories so they could sustain themselves and take off. We've done that. We're looking at more different types of housing units, not only stick-built, not only modular, but also tiny homes; a lot of different options, and I've been working with IRC looking at even Inuit-based and culturally appropriate homes. So we're looking at all different types of housing units.

Vacant homes. I was floored as well when I actually took over and found out that we have market homes in the communities that have been sitting there for a couple of years. We will be re-profiling all of those; if they're not going to be used for market homes, then maybe they would go into a homeownership or a public housing unit, so those will all be taken off.

Less money for housing. The federal money, we've been lobbying big-time with the federal government. We've gotten the partnership with the three territories. We've done a northern strategy, a northern business plan. We've gotten a commitment from the federal government that they will do a tri-territorial housing strategy specifically. In fact, I have been lobbying so hard that the last time I went to an FPT meeting they asked me when was I going home because I spoke so much, and I told them I will go home when I get what I want. So I am working hard to get the federal money, just to let you know that.

The survey, yes, it was a long time coming, I do recognize that. It will not be, hopefully, long action plans; I am not going to allow that to happen. We have been talking about it. We will be meeting fairly quickly here to decide how we're going to disseminate all the information. We will be looking at the easy situations, the medium, and the hard situations. The easy ones are things that affect just the Housing Corporation, that don't affect any other departments or any other government, so things like student housing and things like that, people leaving their homes for wellness, they should not be penalized. Those things will be off the table; we will be dealing with those ones.

The medium ones, the long-term ones, things that implement other departments, like land leases, et cetera, will be a little harder to deal with because we are dealing interdepartmentally and sometimes inter-jurisdictionally with some things, so we'll be looking at that.

Reducing the level of core need. Yes. So there hasn't been a lot, in all honesty, and we do have to look at that. I am anxious to get this survey done. My thinking is, in all honesty, it's costing us an average of \$22,000 per year per public housing unit. We give CARE major program to people every 10 years of \$100,000. That means to me, my little layman thinking, is that every five years we're spending over \$100,000 to keep a person in a public housing unit. So why would we not support those people in getting into homeownership? We'd be saving \$100,000 every five years by doing that. If we can move more people into homeownership, then we can actually provide more public housing units, so it's a win-win situation. So that is one of the things we will be looking at, and how to do that.

Economic development in housing. I beg to differ. I believe that economic development is critical for housing when people actually make a decent income. One of my fellow Members has said many times a good job is the best social program. I'm not 100 per cent sure I would agree 100 per cent with that, but I do agree that people who have secure income are better off and can afford more things in life if their income is sufficient. So I think that jobs are important to address the needs of not only housing but all social issues.

Working with other governments, Aboriginal governments. It was an easy win-win for me; it just makes logical sense. So not only are we working with IRC, we are working with other Aboriginal governments and municipal governments, and that has nothing to do with land claims. The Member has gone, but it has nothing to do with land claims, it's only if people approach us and want to work with us, then I am willing to work with them. Because the more governments that are working towards housing people in their communities, the better the services, the more services we will be able to provide. It's a win-win situation.

The lack of community plans. Like I said, when we developed the survey, that's why we've asked people what are their communities they live in. Because actually with the survey completion we are able to, using the Survey Monkey -- thank goodness for technology -- we can actually tap in and say what did people in -- I'll just use: what did people in Yellowknife want, and we can actually get rid of everybody else's surveys and only look at those replies from Yellowknife. So it will be easy to do community plans when we eyeball the inputs. We will be basing further work, future budgets,

future program delivery, based on what the communities themselves say; it won't be a one-size-fits-all.

Insurance and land tenure. Huge issues. We need to address it. It's kind of a hard issue because it's not good to invest up to \$100,000 if people don't have insurance or they don't own their own land. However, maybe we can restructure our programming so that insurance and land tenure is part of the package when we're giving out the \$100,000, is that maybe we provide that. So there are options we'll be looking at. However, in saying that, I will not support squatting. There are people in the communities who are living on Crown land or -- what's the term for the territories? Oh, Indian band lands.

So if we start to provide renovations to theirs or stuff then we set a precedent, and that is not appropriate. So I've been asking people, if they illegally have houses on lands that are not theirs, to deal with the bands, with their communities, to try to get that secured. It's not a precedent that I want to start doing, too, because it tells people that it's okay, you can just go anywhere and build a home, and I don't personally believe that's the right way.

Repairs. We do need more repairs in the communities; however, we need more than just repairs. The problem is is that -- like, I went into a community just over a month ago with just over 200 homes in that community. In the one summer alone we fixed 108 windows. So we also need training with that.

So we need training, we need a lot to do. We're working with the federal government and we also have to be careful we don't put too much money in because there is also contractor capacity within communities, and so what I'm noticing now is even we're carrying forward some capital from last year because sometimes contractors and communities don't have the capacity to do it. So we want to make sure we don't over-flood the market. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister, and I appreciate that there's not a clock at the witness desk, so sometimes I might sort of let you know when it's time to wrap things up.

The NWT Housing Corporation in the main estimates starts at page 345, but as always we'll defer the total until we look at the activity summaries, the first of which is on pages 352 to 354, community housing services. So I'll give committee a moment, and if we have comments or questions on community housing services please indicate when you're speaking which page you're talking about so we can all follow along.

I also ask that the first time, at least, that committee uses some of these abbreviations like IB land, CMHC, these type of acronyms, if you just let us know what it is so people following along in Hansard know what we're all talking about. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd like to start by asking about the surpluses that some of the local housing authorities have last year. The witnesses produced a total number, and I believe it was in the range of about \$10 million. I'm wondering what the status of those surpluses is now and what plans those local housing authorities have made to spend those surpluses? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The total at the end of the fiscal year was \$5,762,221 with the local housing organizations. I agree, it is not appropriate. We have asked all of the local housing organizations to provide us a game plan on what they are going to do with their surpluses because that money should be going into people's homes.

Also, in our budget, you will see there is a decrease of \$212,000 that we have put into the local housing organizations. The reason we are doing that is, if they have over a \$5 million surplus, we need to reuse that money for different areas, but it will be case-by-case because not all LHOs are equally at the same surplus. Ones with huge surpluses will be getting less funding until they can address their surpluses. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the answer. Could the Minister tell us what guidelines she is giving the LHOs to come up with their plan? What kind of guidelines has she asked them to meet in coming up with the plan? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The direction that we have given to the local housing organizations is that they need to use their surpluses, provide us with a plan on how they are going to use those surpluses to reinvest in housing stock and/or to do renovations to existing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, could the Minister clarify that, if an LHO had enough money to buy a unit or more than one unit, that they would be able to do that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are open to any of the recommendations that the local housing organizations do provide. However, recognizing that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will have ownership of those, it does need to fit within our own capital plans. If they have something that works with our capital plans, we are more than willing to work with them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not really sure what it means to fit within the capital plan. Could the Minister clarify, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A few months back, in the fall I believe it was, all of the departments provided their business plans to the Legislative Assembly. Within that business planning process was broken down a list of capital projects, and so each community has, within those approved business plans that we have already done, a list of the capital projects for each community. That is what I am referring to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will leave that issue and go on to another one. That is utilities. During the business plan review, the corporation presented a plan for increasing the cost of utilities to tenants. I am wondering if we could have an update on when that plan is going to be implemented and whether it is the reason that utility costs are shown as going down on page 353? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The increase will be implemented April 1st. The goal of that is to try to actually get more people to conserve energy. When people don't pay for their own utilities, we tend to find a lot of open windows in communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, what kinds of energy efficiency and furnace maintenance and so on is being offered to ensure that the houses themselves are in the best possible condition, in addition asking people to lower their utility consumption? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of the initiatives we are doing is preventative maintenance, where we will go in and actually check their furnaces, et cetera, so that we are on top of the game instead of behind the game. The other thing that we are doing is all new buildings and all retrofits are now using higher standard of insulation, triple-pane windows, LED lights, and boiler systems, to name a few of the energy efficiency things that we are implementing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister remind us please how much the utility costs are going up this year? I believe it is a multi-year plan, so what the utility costs will go up by each year rolling out? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As was mentioned, the Housing Corporation plans to proceed with the adjustment to our user-pay subsidy program for power. We will be increasing the rate an additional 6 cents per kilowatt hour. That will translate to an increase from 15 cents to 21 cents per kilowatt hour that our public housing tenants would be paying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer. So there are no additional increases planned beyond April 1st. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are additional adjustments planned for an additional two years, actually. This is intended to be a multi-year initiative as opposed to implementing a larger increase in one year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the witness tell us what years two and three look like in terms of cents per kilowatt hour increase? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2018-19, there is a further increase planned in this initiative, again a further 6 cent increase. Then, the year following that, the plan is to see final adjustments to bring our public housing tenants' power rates in line with other residents'. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that in year two it will go up by 6 cents again, and then it will be 27 cents a kilowatt hour, but what is the figure for year three, please? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The final year of implementation would see tenants paying 28 cents per kilowatt hour. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, by the time full implementation of these rate increases takes place, how much money will the Housing Corporation be saving on utilities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The expectation is that at the end of this initiative we should be saving approximately \$3 million. That funding, Mr. Chairman, will be directed towards addressing the declining CMHC funding. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I just really want to add on to that that this is not only about taking costs away from the Housing Corporation. Really, it is one thing to address the CMHC declining funding, but it is really about energy conservation. I would rather lower my cost of rent than keep providing utility bills where people are opening doors and leaving windows open in the winter. It is

about energy conservation, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green, your time has expired, but you can go back on the list if you wish. Next, I have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I may have asked this question here last year on reviewing efficiencies by social housing ownership divesting the social housing unit; and maybe picking a house downtown Tulita, for example, okay, so-and-so has a three-bedroom housing unit. Sharing the information of operating this unit, utility copies for the last three, four, five years, whatever, and seeing if there is interest of the current occupant if they want to buy that social unit. Is there any progress that has been made in that area, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is actually one of the areas that we are looking with our program renewal. Like I had said earlier, currently we are spending for homeowners you can access \$100,000 every 10 years for renovations; for public housing it is costing us over \$200,000 for 10 years. It does make sense that people who have shown, not for everyone but people who have shown that they have the ability to pay and they have been reliable that they would move into homeownership versus public housing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my next question is on page 354. There are allowances there for workshops, training, administration for the LHOs. Has there been any community-based workshops between the LHO and the regional office and with Lands, like a joint workshop directed to land tenure and how it works to access the appropriate programs, an educational-type workshop at the community level? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The corporation itself does work with Lands, so when they offer workshops we do attend those and we offer them out to the communities. Currently, though, we meet with their local housing organizations once a year to provide training opportunities. So I will take that into consideration. The big focus, though, this year with our training of local housing organizations will be on customer

service. I do agree with the Member who says we need to get out and knock on people's doors and reach out to people more. So part of that is actually making sure that people have the tools, and that means we need to focus on customer service training as a priority. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In most communities they have an interagency group. I would suggest that the department maybe use that group to get the word out through education on land tenure. My other question is related to the previous page 353. I am just looking at the historical statements, and there really has not been a lot of change to the bottom line, but in some cases some funding has been increased or decreased, and I am thinking about the property taxes and land lease. It is budgeted to go higher. Could you explain that a little bit there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The additional money for the property tax and land leases, there is a \$92,000 increase and it is for the additional property tax that will be for the lots for the planned RCMP units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will have my question related to the RCMP units later. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister how many apprentices the housing associations have and if they are getting any support from another department to pay for the salaries of the apprentices? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, we have positions for 10 to 15 apprenticeships. At this point, nine of them are filled, but it will be an area that we will be looking going within our program renewal because providing capacity within the communities is part of the answer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to the sale of public housing, also on page 353, I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister actually had a target on the amount of public housing they wish to divest in this coming year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point we do not have a defined number in the department. They have been talking about the pilot project of at least 10. I have been moving them and saying a pilot project with at least 33. One per community would be my pilot project goal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, earlier the Minister talked about a user-pay program. I was wondering if that would have any direct impact on the actual rents. It would seem that, at the first look, the power bills are fairly significant across many of our communities, and I was wondering if, once the NWT Housing Corporation moves that cost from their books to the tenant, that tenant will pay less rent according to how much more power they are required to pay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we are investing in energy-efficiency things that will actually help save money. For example, replacing fuel tanks, hot water tanks, putting LED lightbulbs in every single public housing unit. So we are expecting that there may be an increased cost until people learn to close their windows and to conserve energy. What we have decided not to do is that we will not be increasing our rent. I need to point out that the Northwest Territories, between 4 and 14.5 per cent of income goes to public housing. The standard across Canada is 30 per cent. So even though we have a lot of room that we could actually charge people more rent, we have made a decision not to. Once we do the utilities, we will be watching them very closely over the time to make sure that people can still afford to keep them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just back on the rent scale, did I hear correctly that the rent scale is now maxed out at 14.5 per cent? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am really glad that the Member asked that question because I thought it was, but the actual answer is between 4 and 19.5 per cent and it is maxed out at 19.5 per cent. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for asking the clarifying question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I see nothing further from Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to build on my colleague's questions about the apprenticeship program. In regards to the apprenticeship program, how many have we done in the last three years, how many positions have been filled? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Jim Martin.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The NWT Housing Corporation targets between 10 to 15 positions for apprentices. We have three apprentices who were journey certified in 2014, bringing the total journey certified apprentices to 12 since the program began in 2007. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have got 12 certified journeymen apprentices for nine years. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct that we only have 12 certified. It does, again, lead an area that we need to look at. We do have nine who are in currently in our apprenticeship programs, and it does identify that we need to look at the reasons that people are not completing our apprenticeship programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will probably come back to this part a little bit later on, but I am going to ask the next question with regards to the apprenticeship. What areas are we looking at identifying apprentices? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The areas of apprenticeship that we are working with are carpenters, oil burner mechanics, and housing maintenance serviceperson. I should also state that many apprenticeships actually take a four-year period, so even though you have only 12 over the term, it does take four years for people to finish their apprenticeship. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for her answer. I am well aware that it takes four years to do this, but I guess I am looking at this apprenticeship. We have 2,800 rental units across the Northwest Territories, and we have a large discrepancy in the skilled workforce in these areas. My big concern is, if we have nine taking the program, we still have six outstanding positions. What type of plan is the Corporation looking at to make sure we have maxed out at 15 per year in this area, and realizing that some people may be there for four years to finish their apprenticeship? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are working very closely with the local housing organizations to identify the apprenticeship needs within their communities. We do have funds for it, and we will be rolling out the extra positions right away, as soon as we can get people. Like I said, training in itself is a huge focus that we will be looking at within our program renewal, not only on training people to maintain their own homes, but training community people to be able to provide the services within their communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer. Is the Minister able to provide us a breakdown on how many positions are allocated into each of the LHOs? Thank you, Mr. Chair. Specifically, I guess, Mr. Chair, each LHO? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our aim is to try to spread out the apprenticeship programs throughout the whole of the NWT as best as possible. However, in saying that, though, we do take a more of a community

focused needs. If, for example, in one community, we already have two or three oil burner mechanics, we might not look at that community for an apprenticeship program at that time. We might focus it more on a community that has no oil burning mechanics at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I am naive, but you need a Red Seal Journeyman to actually apprentice under. If you do not have an oil burning mechanic in the community, you cannot actually do an apprenticeship. I guess what I am looking for is if the corporation can identify, or provide us with a breakdown of how the apprenticeship program is utilized across the territories. Well, we have 12 certified, and nine in the program, so that is only 21. Can the Minister identify where these 21 are, the graduates and the nine who are taking the program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have that information with us here today regarding the 12 LHO apprentices who have become journey certified since 2007. We have had one housing maintenance supervisor in Aklavik. We have had a plumber in Behchoko. We have had two housing maintenance servicemen in Deline. We have a housing maintenance serviceperson in Fort Good Hope. We have two oil burner mechanics and a carpenter in Fort Simpson. We have one plumber in Fort Smith. We have housing maintenance serviceperson in Inuvik, two of those. Tsiigehtchic, we have a housing maintenance serviceperson. As well as in Tulita, we have a housing maintenance serviceperson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thanks to the Minister to provide that list. As I was writing it, I could not hear the whole thing, so if we can get the Minister to provide that information to us, that would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Cochrane, supply the question?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we will get that information to the Regular Members tomorrow. I do want to clarify, I do recognize that you do need a Journeyman to teach apprenticeships. When I was talking about

that, I meant only apprentices, not journeymen, who need to train. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to come to an understanding in terms of the progress of the need towards establishing LHOs, and understand the challenge in terms of moving from home ownership to public housing rental systems in some communities, and more so, too, in my riding.

I just wanted to see if there has been some progress made. I understand there has been the realization that it might make sense to establish an LHO on a reserve, as an example. I just wanted to see if there have been some advances. I know the Minister has stated that she is planning to meet with chief and council from the Hay River Reserve. Is that, perhaps, an item for an agenda to be discussed? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is open to having the band come to us and to talk about the development of a local housing organization on the reserve. We do need the Aboriginal government to approach us on that, and we would be more than willing to look at their proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is encouraging. The other aspect to this question is again a challenge in terms of administering at least accountable measures of collecting people's rent. Some communities do not have LHOs, and again, I think in Kakisa there has been some movement towards, perhaps, a model of an LHO that could be established, and whether the Minister is maybe waiting upon the initiative of the band to enter into dialogue on that matter? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The issue of actually collecting arrears should no longer be an issue to communities because the corporation actually took that internally into headquarters a number of years ago. We do not need LHOs to collect arrears at this point anymore. Again, Kakisa is a very small community, but if they wanted to approach us, we would consider it. I can't commit, but I can consider looking at a local housing organization if the need justifies it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the other question I wanted to ask is on page 353. It is regarding grants, contributions and transfers, whether that is perhaps the line item that is within the scope of agreements that the Housing Corporation is entering into with the Aboriginal governments?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do need some clarification. Are we talking about page 353 or 354? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Nadli, could you refer to which page your question was on?

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, 353.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The grants and contributions have nothing to do, actually, with the Aboriginal governments. This is actually the 2012 dollars that is for the local housing organizations. That was the surplus, and so, if they have \$5 million in surplus, then that \$200,000 is coming from the monies provided to local housing organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I will hold off on my other question for the appropriate time. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The MLA said that he would hold off until later on, and so thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Nothing further from Mr. Nadli. I have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in my opening remarks, I spoke about the need for transformative change by the Housing Corporation to meet the needs of people in the Northwest Territories for social housing. What we know is that the core need rates are fairly steady over time. We also know that the waiting lists are fairly substantial and not going down. We also know that the number of seniors in the NWT is forecast to increase by 40 per cent over the next seven years. As I spoke about earlier today in my statement, there will be a big need for social housing for many of those

people. How is the Housing Corporation going to reduce core need in housing in the NWT? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do recognize that there is a huge need to provide seniors' housing, so we are looking at that. For many years, we focused on multi-family units. We are looking at continuing with multi-family, but also looking at singles' units that will work with seniors, as well. We are looking at seniors' market rental units so that we can actually have combined seniors' units, and that will bring in some income. So, it will be a combined seniors' centre that has some market rental units that people can afford and some public housing, which would supplement that, as well.

Like I have said many times, currently, for over 20 years, at \$22,000 on average per public house, that is \$220,000 every 10 years we are providing to keep someone in public housing. If we can move people who have the skills and the financial means into home ownership, we will be able to address our core need by actually having more people in home ownership and being able to reinvest money into public housing units to meet the need. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I realize that my initial question was quite a large question, so I will break it down into a bit more detail. Not only are there not enough units for seniors, there are not enough units for families, either. We know that the core housing need for the size of the home is at very high levels in some communities. I can think, off the top of my head, of a couple of the Tlicho communities that have very high core need based on the size of the house. What is the plan to provide more units in all the different ways that there is a demand for social housing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I just asked the question. You need to ask the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I apologize. It is been a long few weeks. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It would have been interesting to have the Member actually answer that question, though, and just kind of see her input.

---Laughter

So to address the whole issue of core need, like I say, we are looking internally to see if we can be more effective, more efficient with our current programs. If it makes sense to move people out, we are trying to do training programs so that, out of 200 houses, we don't have to fix 108 windows every year. We are trying to train people so that they can actually maintain their homes better. We are trying to look at home ownership versus public housing.

The other thing we are doing is we are really strongly lobbying the federal government, all three territories, actually, to not only have a tri-territorial housing strategy but also to address the declining CMHC funding, because, right across Canada, that is an issue that all provinces and territories are struggling with. So, united, cross-jurisdictional, all housing corporations are lobbying the federal government to do something about the declining CMHC funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I might have given an answer that was similar, as a matter of fact. I think that it is important to recognize that social housing is for people who have low to moderate incomes. It is my understanding that there are people living in public housing who have six-figure incomes. Public housing is not for that income group, so, if there is a way to move people on, I think that that would be very useful.

The other thing I want to address is affordability. Affordability is a big issue in Yellowknife, not so much in other places. People are in core need because they can't afford the rent. I know the Minister is keen to ditch the transitional rent supplement, so what other approaches might make housing more affordable for low-income people in Yellowknife? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just on affordability, within the market communities, we try not to compete with them when it comes to public housing units, so we are not going to flood the market and build a whole bunch of new public housing units when we actually have vacancies within communities. Like I said, I am not a fan of the transitional rent supplement program. It was not, in my opinion, an effective program. We did not give people the training that they needed to be able to get off after two years. So, instead of a transitional rent supplement program, perhaps we need to look at a rent supplement program versus transitional. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am a little unclear. I understand how the rent supplement program potentially could help with affordability. Are there other measures that might help with affordability? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is a question that I am hoping that will come out with more ideas within the survey. I don't have all the answers, but I am open to any feedback. If I do not see it in the survey, if the Members have ideas on how I could do that better, then I am more than open to hearing their feedback. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My final question is about the National Housing Strategy. I know the Minister and her colleagues in the other territories have been lobbying. What is your expectation about when the strategy and the dollars are going to be delivered? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That question is really hard to give a definitive answer to. I was expecting that there was going to be a federal announcement on the National Housing Initiative when it was National Housing Day. That never came to effect. I was hoping that the federal budget would have come in February; that has now been pushed to March. The only thing I do know is that they have committed to doing a tri-territorial housing strategy separate and we have been told that there should be funding coming with that, substantial. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I see nothing further from Ms. Green. I have Mr. McNeely.

MS. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As my colleague mentioned earlier, give credit where credit is due. I know housing is a challenging department here, but with respect to one of the LHOs in my riding, I receive no more phone calls. So something must be done right by the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Sorry, Mr. Chair, I will need clarification of the question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I believe it was just a comment. It sounds like a comment. Any further compliments or comments, Mr. McNeely?

MS. MCNEELY: None, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. McNeely. Next we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to follow up with a couple of more questions hopefully regarding the apprenticeship stuff. So when I was given the list of positions there, I was told that there were three types of apprenticeships, but I have heard of a plumber. So do we look at all five trades or is it just the three trades that we are looking at? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do look at them all. All we need is to have a Journeyman within the communities who can do the apprenticeship. So we are open to all apprenticeships. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You forgot to start my clock. In regards to this apprenticeship, so is it the Red Seal has to be working for the LHO or can it be somebody in town?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Thank you for reminding me about the clock. We are on the second round for most of the MLAs and we do have to keep in mind that we have a lot of information to get through. So, Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do try to do the apprenticeships through the local housing organizations. We have made exceptions, though, when the local housing organization does not have the Journeyman certification to provide the training. So again, clarification saying that preferably within the local housing organizations but we will make exceptions if there is no other option. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I apologize for that there. I am sleepy and I noticed my time was not started yet. I thank the Minister for that answer and I guess I am looking forward to seeing this corporation having 15 apprentices every year in place. I understand that there are some

challenges of people succeeding, but we should have 15 apprentices out there because we have a shortage of the trades in the Northwest Territories, and so I am looking forward to the Minister's plan and the corporation's work on it.

Just back to my last concern in regards to utilities. You have heard me say this before: has the corporation looked at developing an incentive for the tenants to actually save, whether it is the power, the fuel, the water? Has there been an incentive in place? Have you looked at developing it yet? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So currently right now and we at the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation are subsidizing all of public housing tenants, utility costs. Once the utility costs are transferred over after the three years, yes, we will definitely look at it an incentive program and training program so that people can actually be rewarded for conservation. It is important. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Next we have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I was trying to come to an understanding in terms of where it could be appropriate to ask this question, but I understand in the section community housing services within the department I think the Minister had stated that there are working agreements with Aboriginal governments and they are continuing on building that positive working relationship. So if it is okay, I would like to ask the question in that respect. The simple question is: whether it be Inuvialuits or with the K'atlodeeche First Nations, how are these agreements contemplated? As I said earlier, whether these agreements are borne of the intergovernmental agreements that some First Nations have entered into the GNWT as a follow-up. Subject matters include housing, and so is it predicated on that or is it predicated that, you know, they have a land claim and then the GNWT, through the Housing Corporation, could engage them in terms of building or working relationship. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding, MOU I will call it so I do not stumble on my words anymore, was kind of a unique situation. They lobbied the federal government directly to get the

access to the funding. We cannot tell Aboriginal governments to lobby or not to lobby, so I cannot say what the federal government plans are in the future regarding that. I know that the federal government is really supportive of First Nations and of building partnerships, but I cannot say any more than that. I can say within the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, though, that we are looking at any form of partnership with Aboriginal governments.

I believe it is the right way to move. I think that self-government is, for me, a priority that the Government of the Northwest Territories takes seriously and works towards. So it does not need to be formal. Aboriginal governments do not need to have land claims to be able to enter into partnerships with the NWT Housing Corporation. All they need to do is to approach me and we will try to work towards some kind of partnership. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is very good in terms of building a relationship and I think it is integral and in some instances critical that, you know, agreements and understandings be made so that we look at efficiencies, but it seems clear that, you know, if you engage the GNWT, especially the Housing Corporation, it is not necessary that you have a land claim agreement to come to an understanding with government to, I mean, in one instance deliver houses or its program or services.

So if that is not the case, then what is perhaps the guiding principle in terms of these agreements with the Housing Corporation and First Nations in terms of ensuring that local housing at the community level are made available to people who live in the communities? What is the key principle? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the Member is correct, it does not have anything to do with land claims; however, the guiding principle is that the Government of the Northwest Territories does believe in self-governance, does believe in land claims, and so within that we are looking at ways to partner appropriately with our Aboriginal governments. It is not okay to just put lip service to it. So we are very flexible on what they look like. For example, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, they get their money now directly from the federal government. We have a partnership that says we'll provide land and we'll take ownership and deal with the collections after. They get the economic development.

The Yamoga Land Corporation came to us. They want partnership. They have \$500,000 that they're going to put on the table to deal with some of the issues with their residents. Salt River First Nations are actually doing some housing ownership programs within their communities, and so we're looking at how we can partner to give them materials.

So each Aboriginal government that has come to us is looking at a different type of partnership. We are open to whatever Aboriginal governments come to us; whatever they're putting on the table, we are open to looking at and trying to form a true partnership. Not a partnership that is dictated by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Housing Corporation, but a partnership where both organizations come to the table and provide something. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Very progressive in terms of ensuring the capacity is made and, you know, just to position First Nations in the spirit of self-government and land claims to take on the responsibility of administering their own housing programs. The Minister states that these agreements are flexible in terms of ensuring that both parties can come to some broad terms and principles, and I just wanted to understand: where is the federal government in these agreements? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I cannot speak for the federal government. I can say that when I attended the FPT, Federal-Provincial-Territorial, meetings with the federal Housing Minister, that I did state that by making individual agreements the federal government -- with Aboriginal bands/governments, that it does put all of the other Aboriginal governments in a place of conflict and it puts the Government of the Northwest Territories in a place of conflict as well. It leaves the perception that all you have to do is ask, and if you ask you'll get more money, and not all Aboriginal governments have the resources or the ability to be able to lobby as hard as the Inuvialuit have.

So again, I cannot speak for what the federal government decides to do, but I can say that as the Minister for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation I have shared my concerns when the federal government does negotiate singly with Aboriginal governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at a motion that was passed in the House back in June of last year that called for the government to develop a comprehensive and fully costed strategic plan to get our housing out of core need at 2 per cent per year for four years. The response that came in from the government, the motion ended with a request that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days. That comprehensive response was four paragraphs; there were not any dollars mentioned in there.

That was tabled in the House in October, so here we are four months later. Does the Minister have a costed plan now that she can share with the House and Regular MLAs, a strategic plan to get our housing out of core need as this motion requested? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have done some preliminary figures on what it would cost to actually take a residence out of core need. At this point, though, we still have to put it through Cabinet, so we will be putting that through. We're just finalizing up the figures and then we'll be putting it forward to Cabinet before we provide it to the Regular MLAs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I really sincerely thank the Minister and her staff then for pushing that along. She knows that I've been urging her: that's the sort of document you should be taking to Ottawa. I know you've got to work closely with the Yukon and Nunavut governments, but that's the kind of proposal that should be taken to Ottawa. We've taken enough road proposals to Ottawa; now let's start talking about people.

So does the Minister intend to table this in the House before the end of the session? Is that the plan? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I cannot commit to tabling it at the end of this session; it does need to go through the process to go through Cabinet, but I will table it at the earliest possible opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Again, my appreciation to the Minister and her staff for putting that together, and the sooner she can provide it to us I think the happier I'll be. So thanks again. No further questions, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I will now call the page. Call the activity. Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, community housing services, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$56,062,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Moving on. The next activity is executive. It begins at page 355 and ends on page 356. Do we have comments or questions on the executive two-page activity? I will give committee a moment. Seeing none, I will call this activity. NWT Housing Corporation, executive, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$1,385,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Moving on to the next activity. Finance and infrastructure services begins at pages 357 to 359. If committee has comments or questions, please indicate which page you are speaking to. Comments and questions, finance and infrastructure services. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know it's already been discussed in this review, but I just wanted to follow up on one of the Minister's points on the Transitional Rent Supplement Program. The Minister indicated that she would like to see these resources reallocated towards a rent supplement program. Is that a direction the department will be taking, or is that just an aspirational statement the Minister wants to give us as food for thought? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do take my role as Minister very seriously and I recognize that as Minister I don't need to make aspirational statements to the department; that I can actually say this is the direction that we

are taking. So we are looking at more comprehensive supports all across the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation with the goal, the single goal, that people can obtain, maintain, and retain housing supports. Rent supplements is one piece of that puzzle. So, yes, it will be something that we are seriously looking at implementing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the Minister's decisive attitude when it comes to providing some relief to renters. Just to again be very clear, is the corporation in the process of developing a rent supplement program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this moment, no, we are not. These are ideas. The home ownership ideas, the rent supplement ideas, all of those things are on the table. Once we compile all survey results, we will organize them into categories and all of the suggestions will be considered, not only the ones that we have identified, because I am assuming that, out of 44,000 people within the Northwest Territories, people have incredible ideas that will assist us in the goal of helping people to obtain, retain, and maintain their homes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate where the Minister is coming from on this. Before this role, as an everybody member of the middle class, I made use of the transitional rent supplement program, and I think I was given something like \$10 a month for my needs as a single parent in a very expensive apartment.

We have heard that this program isn't really working. At least, it is not working to meet the objectives that have been set out for it, so why are we retaining it? I think we have been looking at finding efficiencies throughout this budget. That has been a sticking point and an issue of debate. When I think we can all agree this program isn't working, why are we retaining it at all instead of repurposing the funds for something that actually works? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason that we are retaining it is that we

will be phasing it out over a three-year period because some people are still using that. Until we have moved into and have a defined program that will assist people in being able to afford market rents, then I am not willing to take it off the table. So it will be in place until we have something, a rent supplement program, which is better suited to the needs of the residents that can take its place. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, music to my years. When can we expect this new program to roll out, and will it require a supplementary appropriation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The program renewal is the biggest priority of the corporation this fiscal year coming up, and so I see that the rent supplement program will be -- like I said, there are easy, medium, and hard ones to do; it is one of the easier ones. It is not something that we have to go cross-departmental or cross-jurisdictional, so I see it as happening within the first six months from today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Minister's clear and, again, decisive answer. So, in six months I look forward to the new program and voting in favour of it if it meets the expectations that we have set out for it.

Finally, just a comment. I appreciate that the corporation and the Minister responsible have not eliminated a program completely that they recognize still meets a need but needs fine-tuning. Perhaps the Minister can share that wisdom with the Minister responsible for Education vis-à-vis the Aurora College cuts and a number of the other programs that we have addressed that lack strategic direction but are going ahead as in favour of the reduction exercise. With that, I will end my line of questioning. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart, for those comments on the NWT Housing Corporation. Next, I have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just looking at page 358, at infrastructure services, and wondering if this would be the appropriate time to ask a question related to the RCMP units. Can the Minister provide some comments on the progress

of this initiative and basically where it is at? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Can the Minister advise if this is the appropriate section and provide comments?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The section is actually in capital, for the building of the units. There is some in here, as well, for land, et cetera. The update on what is happening with the RCMP units, though, is more important. At this point, we are waiting. The RCMP at first wanted to hand over all of its units to totally get out of housing of its members. At this point, they are rethinking that. They are looking at perhaps maintaining a couple of their units, so we are not sure. We actually are working with them, still, and we are waiting for them to decide which way they are going forward with it. It is still going to happen; however, it may not be full housing. They may decide to keep some of their units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We mentioned it earlier, the Minister mentioned, we budgeted some tax expenditures for this project. I don't really have a question. I just would like the Minister to brief us on it periodically or when commitments are made on progress by the federal counterpart? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize. I should have actually done an update. As soon as we hear more from the RCMP, we will do a Minister's statement to keep the Members informed of what is happening with the RCMP initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. McNeely. I have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am looking at page 359. There are a couple of reductions on this page that I would like to better understand. Let's start with transitional supportive housing. The revised estimates for last year were \$600,000. Now it is down to \$375,000, so can the Minister explain the reduction here? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The transitional rent supplement program, like I said, was not one of my favourites. The

uptake on that program was only a utilization of 30 per cent, so we have done a reduction, the \$30,000 reduction, of year one of year three. Again, that money will be re-profiled. The transitional rent program will no longer exist. It will become, within six months, a rent supplement program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. The Member was indicating the transitional supportive housing. It is about four lines above the transitional rent supplement program. Would you like to answer again, Minister?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Sorry, I gave the wrong answer. I will let Mr. Martin speak to that one, then.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there has been a decrease of \$225,000 from the 2016-2017 Main Estimates to the 2017-2018 Main Estimates. The \$600,000 is essentially committed and designated for a couple of initiatives that are under way this year. We do, obviously, recognize the importance of the transitional supportive housing investments. This is federal funding. This is a component of the federal funding that the Housing Corporation is receiving, has received from 2016-17, as well as will be receiving some additional funding in 2017-18. These are dollars set aside for additional investment in this area in 2017-18. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So the reason why our contribution is less: the federal government is getting out of this; the project is finished, or projects are finished? I am just trying to understand the reduction a little bit better. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct. The level of federal funding in a couple of pots actually did reduce from 2016-2017, so we have less funding to work within 2017-2018, and as a result of that, there is a reduction there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm try to be kind here, but just because the feds are backing out of funding our programs, it is not necessarily an excuse for us to pull the plug on them. I will just leave my comment at that.

I want to go down to a different line, rental housing in rural and remote locations. Last year, it was \$783,000. This year, zero. Perhaps I can get an explanation of that one as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This funding for rental housing in rural and remote locations, it was a three-year pilot program that has now concluded. The \$783,000 will be sunsetting.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Williams. I will just remind the witnesses and the Members to indicate when you are finished. Maybe a "thank you" just so that the tech team knows to change the microphones. I appreciate that. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the information about it being a pilot project. Does the corporation have any initial results of this pilot project? Is this something that we would look at continuing on our own? What happened there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This program, we had very low uptake in the program. Certainly, we will be evaluating it and looking at it. As you are well aware, we are doing a program renewal. If we could come up with a program that is more suitable for the residents, we would certainly look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Williams. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. The \$783,000 sounds like a lot of money. There might have been other money that had been spread out over three years. Is there some kind of a report, a formal evaluation of the project and the money that was spent? Is that something that could be shared with the Regular MLAs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we know exactly what we spent on the program. We do know that there has been low uptake on the program. We have not done a formal evaluation, but we can pull together a report that we can actually share with the Members. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you very much. I appreciate that commitment from the Minister, and that is all the questions I have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wanted to talk about on page 359, in particular, the line items respecting the Homelessness Assistance Fund, and also the Small Community Homelessness Fund. It seems very prominent that there has been some efforts in terms of tackling the homelessness issues. The most visible, of course, the efforts have been made here in Yellowknife. In light of that, there was the recent report of people moving from the small communities into the regional centres and, of course, Yellowknife as well. In light of that, I wanted to understand what features of perhaps successful programs or projects that this government has seen in respect of those two funds? I know for a large part, perhaps, these two funds are targeting programs that are NGOs that do exist in small communities in terms of whether it is just purely, at this point, a program supplement. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The monies that actually support homelessness are more than that. They are Housing First, the 150, then 125, 280 for Pathways, and 200 for Small Community Homelessness Fund. That is actually the operating and the provision of services that the funding is for. The rest is coming out of capital and other departments for the renovations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think it gives me a clear picture or understanding of how this is being work done. Recently, there was an effort, as I stated in my opening comments, to tackle and address the homelessness issue. One particular community, there was an organized body and organized effort to try, at least, to work in cooperation with the Housing Corporation to address fundamentally the homelessness issue, and to try and bring some resolve to the matter. I understood, then, there has been a part from the program supplements that have been successfully delivered in communities. I just wanted to come to an understanding. There were some pilot projects, and whether those pilot projects were focused on, either been program supplements or building

projects in small communities, I understood there were a few communities that were working with the Housing Corporation in addressing this matter? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there was a request for proposals out to support three communities; actually, four communities. Only three communities actually applied for that funding at the time. We did save the money for a fourth community, which allows us to branch into the Sahtu to deal with that money. We are open to all ideas to address homelessness. Homelessness is not only about having shelters. Homelessness is about having permanent residents to support people. Within that continuum of care, you need to look at shelters. You need to look at single units. You need to look at training for people to be able to maintain their units. It's a huge continuum to deal with homelessness. It's not easy to save this alone. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One thing that I am curious about. In terms of the attempts of defining homelessness issue, especially homelessness in the context of communities, they could be presumed that people who are homeless are not homeless per se, but because the system that is there, sometimes they don't fit the criteria. One of the challenges that people face in the communities is that they have gone through the public rental system. For some reason or another, they have defaulted on their rent. Over time, they have accumulated their arrears. Sometimes, it works against them. They cannot qualify for public housing units. Especially, these people are single. Sometimes, they are bachelors, and they are looking for a place to stay. I wonder if, perhaps, part of the homeless initiatives that this department could maybe review, like instances where people have arrears, and whether there may be some ideas to try to resolve the challenge, and at least bring more opportunities for people to access the housing program, including homelessness for that matter? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. People who currently owe arrears to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, we try not to penalize anyone. Although at the same time, we do have to be fair to all residents in the Northwest Territories, so we cannot allow people not to pay their rent and then expect their neighbour to be paying their rent, and we have people waiting

to get into units. People do need to know that if they come in and they make a repayment plan, and they pay for six months consecutively, they get back on the waiting list, so nobody actually should be penalized for longer than a six-month period.

We are looking at other ways to address the arrears because it is not acceptable when people have arrears that are \$50,000. That is not something that I am comfortable with. We are looking at ideas that we have come up with such as programs that people can actually provide sweat equity into some work programs so that people can actually look at arrears, and I am hoping that. There are some ideas that we have come up with. We are not going to write off arrears. That is not fair to everyone, but I am hoping that the survey results will actually show us more productive ways that we can actually support people in addressing the issue of arrears.

I should say that, hopefully, in the future this will not be an issue at all. I have given direction that after two months we automatically start the eviction process. It is not that I want to evict people, but if someone is paying \$70 a month, it is a lot easier to pay off a \$140 bill than it is to pay off thousands of dollars in bills. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further question. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am wondering, on page 358, the debt repayment, is that the total amount of money that is owed to the Housing Corporation by tenants?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, that actually is the annual pay-down of the CMHC, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, debt. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Thank you for clarifying that acronym. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. In that case, where will I find the number of the amount of money that is owed to the NWT Housing Corporation by current or former tenants? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That information is not in this. This is about

money we are spending, not money we are collecting. That is in our audited financial statements. That amount is in there as a receivable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Okay. It sounds like I need to find that information in another place. I am going to just ask now a little bit about the transitional supportive housing. Is this the money for the capital upgrades to the Salvation Army and the Centre for Northern Families to create the semi-independent units? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If we are talking about page 359 and it is the \$600,000, then that answer is correct, yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, has work started on either of these projects? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sadly, at this point, we are still waiting for both organizations. The Salvation Army is still waiting for land tenure from the City of Yellowknife. I have tried to talk to Mayor Heyck and asked him if there is any way that he could speed that process up. The Yellowknife Women's Society, when they were doing the renovations to the daycare that they are moving into, found asbestos, so that is just being cleared up. We are expecting that, by the end of this month, their renovations will be done. At that point, they will need the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to go in and approve it because it is a daycare, a licensed daycare, so there will be some paperwork with that.

I should also point out, though, that within our mains, we do have an extra \$375,000 that we will actually be looking at utilizing to build more and maybe to work in partnership with other organizations to provide the same support in this coming year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wonder if the Minister could tell me what happens if we get to March 31st and these renovations at the Centre for Northern Families and the Salvation

Army have not been started or not completed?
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Any amount of work that is not started, completed, by the end of March 31st, and that is right around the corner, actually, so it will not be completed, those will be carried over into the new fiscal year. That money will not disappear. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the line above, there is the shelter enhancement fund. It was \$416,000 last year, and it is \$256,000 for the coming fiscal year. Could the Minister tell us the source of this money, what it is used for, and why it went down? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is federal money, and that was the shelter enhancement fund for the victims of family violence federal funding. It decreased from \$316,000 to \$156,000, so that meant a decrease of \$160,000. Again, with the family violence, even though the federal government has decreased, we are still providing support.

One of the communities in Tuktoyaktuk didn't have a suitable unit. Their victims of family violence unit was at such a point that it was non-repairable, so even though the federal government money did not cover it, we have given them accommodations through the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation so that they could have a shelter within the community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, if I understand the Minister correctly, for \$160,000, the difference between the current year and the next year, they were able to obtain a family violence shelter in Tuktoyaktuk? I must be missing something. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize for the miscommunication. No, the money that the federal government gave us we used to renovate the other four family violence shelters. Tuktoyaktuk actually, above and beyond

the federal money, the Government of the Northwest Territories through the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, so outside of this money, we provided them a unit that they can use for their shelter because their shelter was beyond economical repair. That is on top of the federal money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, this shelter enhancement program, is it now in its last year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the victims of family violence component has one year left. We are expecting that the federal government will renew that after the term, though. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Seeing no further comments or questions, I will call this activity. NWT Housing Corporation, finance and infrastructure services, operation expenditure summary, total activity, \$19,432,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Thompson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 60-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, NWT HOUSING
CORPORATION, DEFERRAL OF FINANCE AND
INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES ACTIVITY,
CARRIED

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity, finance and infrastructure services, under the NWT Housing Corporation Main Estimates 2017-2018 on page 358 at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Thank you, committee. We will defer this activity. Moving on, activity four, programs and district

operations. This activity is on page 361; well, beginning on page 360 to page 362. Committee, do we have comments or questions on programs and district operations? Page 360 to 362, programs and district operations. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Regular MLAs have been asking for an additional \$1.3 million to be added to the main estimates for the SAFE Program. The primary reason for asking for this addition is to enable renovations to happen to seniors' homes so that they are able to age in place. This subject has been canvassed many times, but just to briefly reiterate. We believe that it is the most effective use of the money and what seniors themselves want to allow them to have supports in place to age in place. So the kinds of renovations that we're looking for are ramps, easily accessible bathrooms, and those kinds of things which would help seniors to move around in their places safely and within their own resources.

So this is something that we would like to see in this budget. I realize there's no agreement in place with the government for this, but this is an area where we think this is an investment that would produce distinct returns. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. I would like some clarification for the committee. The Member mentioned SAFE, which is Securing Assistance for Emergencies Home Ownership Program, but the Member was describing the CARE Program. Is that what the Member meant? Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you for catching that. Yes, in fact, I am talking about the CARE Program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green, and CARE is, of course, is Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancements. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the Government of the Northwest Territories did actually acknowledge that seniors aging in place is a priority and so, therefore, we agreed to do the \$500,000 increase to the SAFE program on page 362. So we actually have an extra \$500,000 that we are putting into assist seniors to age in place, so it's not that we're not working with you. Then again, like I say, we are expecting the federal government to come with substantial -- in fact, when Prime Minister Trudeau was in Yellowknife he said that there would be billions of dollars for housing provided, so we are expecting that we will get substantial monies coming. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Billions of dollars would be very welcome in all different dimensions of our territory, not only in homeownership. I appreciate that there is more money in SAFE in this Securing Assistance for Emergencies. The thing about CARE, though, is that we need the money now. The number of seniors is, as everybody knows, growing very rapidly, and that includes now, and so this is one of these areas where we really need the investment so that people don't advance down to the more expensive options in the continuum of care.

So I urge the Minister to consider an additional investment in the CARE Program. Those are all my comments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, yes. Currently, we have budgeted in our budget \$4,410,000, and it's the same as it was for the last year. At this point in time, which we're almost at the end of the fiscal year, we only have expended about half of that money. So I don't know if the issue is that we need to put more money in or the issue is that we need to focus on a communication plan, that we actually have to let people know that it's out there. So I don't think it's appropriate to put more money into a program that is being under-utilized until we see if there is an actual need for it. That is, I take responsibility; we need to get word out better. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm just looking for a bit of clarification. I'm going to just indicate what I think PATH is going to try to do.

So when a public housing unit is determined for sale and the tenant in that public housing unit has an opportunity to buy it and the house is valued at \$100,000 and the corporation makes a decision to apply PATH, and the person is making under a certain amount so that the tenants get 48 per cent of the cost of the house, so one house worth \$100,000 would be \$48,000. I'm wondering if that \$48,000 is budgeted or if it's just a reduction on what the corporation will receive?

Mr. Chairman, what I'm getting at is if, in that instance, where the house is valued at \$100,000, the NWT Housing Corporation actually gain a capital amount of \$52,000?

So the Minister said earlier that she was targeting 33 units; whether they're one in each community or not, the point, I guess, 33 units. So we're talking 33 units at an average cost of \$100,000 a unit, with the application of PATH then there should be a fairly

substantial chunk of capital coming back to the Housing Corporation over the year. I was wondering if that's the type of formula the corporation is using when they're determining the PATH budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. PATH is Providing Assistance for Territorial Homeownership Program. Minister Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The current PATH program actually does not put that money out to get mortgages that are outside, so they're actually units that are already within the capital of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. So it's not like there will be actually an increase of money coming because we already own the units. When I do the initiatives, it's more of rewarding good behaviour. So it won't be actually cash. Again, it would be looking at people's payments, have they been substantial, and there would be a host of other ways we would do it. The areas that we're looking at doing is like a rent-to-own idea so that people would still be paying but that money, that unit would actually be theirs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, so I just want to make sure I understand this clearly.

So the requirement for the individual tenant who is at a certain income level and is purchasing a public housing unit then will take over the operations of the public housing unit almost immediately at the point of sale. So \$22,000 is no longer needed by the NWT Housing Corporation to put in to the LHOs because that's the operating cost of the unit, and, in addition to that, that tenant has a requirement to go to the bank and pay their portion. By "their portion" I mean the portion that's not applied as PATH, right, so again, at \$100,000, \$52,000 in capital.

So if that's not coming to the Housing Corporation, where is that capital? That that individual is walking down to the bank borrowing to buy that house, where's that capital going? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm a bit confused. I'm going to try to answer it if possible. So again, we're open to a lot of different areas so that we can look at home ownership. If the survey comes back and says that people want us to look at cash and carry to the bank, then we'll look at that, but at this point we aren't looking at doing a new program that

addresses giving out mortgages. We are more looking at using the available stock that we have and turning those over into home ownership packages for people, people who have been constantly paying their rent, have been showing that they are responsible, that they do not wreck their units, that they have the abilities to maintain their unit. We are looking at transferring over our current stock to them and then we would be looking at like a rent-to-own.

So we have people who have been paying for 20 years in units. At some point, it should become their unit, and a lot of people say that. So hopefully with this new looking at it within 20 years, I mean, people will own their own unit. So what they are paying, it will be like a rent-to-own idea, and that is only one idea. Like I say, it is one of the ideas we have thrown out, but we are open to whatever comes in to the other surveys. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just so I understand this clearly, there is no requirement for an individual buying a public housing unit to go to the bank to borrow their share, that their share can actually now be a rent-to-purchase, so the Housing Corporation will come along, say you are a good tenant; you paid rent for the last 20 years without missing rent payments. We are going to sell this house to you. First thing we are going to do is we are going to reduce the cost of the house by 48 per cent. The second thing we are going to do is we are going to take the 52 per cent and we are going to make you rent-to-own, so a portion of your rent payments will go to the purchase of that unit or, in other words, the 52 per cent. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Carpenter.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What we currently do in our PATH program is we do offer the contribution towards the purchase price, but we found in terms of selling public housing units we do not have a lot of uptake in that area of our business, so we have added an additional incentive in the program of an additional \$25,000 off the sale price, and still the uptake is low.

In terms of the sale price, if the contribution plus the extra \$25,000 still does not cover the full purchase price, then the client is obligated to get that portion through bank financing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that does clarify this, but I am going to just repeat it again. So we have got a \$100,000 house, it gets 48 per cent off, so it is down to \$52,000. The \$25,000 incentive is added, and the individual has to go to the bank for the other \$27,000 if the 52 per cent that is remaining in the cost of the public housing unit is more than \$25,000. If it is less, then it is okay; if it is more, then the option is available for the individual to pay cash, like going to the bank, paying cash because he has got the cash. Or am I still hearing that rent-to-purchase is still a possibility for that small portion that may be left? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. You are making us all think tonight. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So the current program, like Mr. Carpenter explained, may require going to the bank. When we do the program renewal, we will need to look at those. So we have the idea of what we are doing. We have not defined what it will look like specifically because there may be ideas coming within that, but we need to be cognizant that we need to be fair to all residents.

So if people have gone to the bank and taken out a loan to be able to pay for housing, then it would be not fair to just let other people not do anything. So I am not saying that this program would be looking at they have to go to the bank to get a mortgage, but I am saying that we might not give the discount that we give that we are doing currently if it is a rent-to-own versus paying it out and getting it now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one quick comment. With the way Housing Corporation describes the sale of public housing, I think they will sell like pancakes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Do we have further comments or questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to the Nahendeh District, I see an increase of \$310,000; is this because we got an LHO in Fort Liard or is this just forced growth? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. I am sorry, what page were you looking on, Mr. Thompson? Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The increase to the Nahendeh District is actually \$310,000. That is the modified SAFE program for seniors. We will get Aging-in-Place, we will get \$82,000 of that and they amortization increase is \$228,000 for additional assets coming into service. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for her answer. So where is the cost for the LHO if this is a program in district operations in this budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The costs for the local housing organizations is on page 354, administration and maintenance. Currently we do not have them broken down by riding, but if the MLA would like we can provide that to him tomorrow as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. So this is for the Housing Corporation office not the local housing organization? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was looking for the LHO and I apologize if it is on the wrong page. I am done questioning on this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Nothing further. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The only comment I want to add maybe is relevant to CARE. I mean the Minister and the department are aware that Regular Members not only want to see the amount maintained but would like to see an increase in CARE, especially as it relates to the ability to support Aging-in-Place and allowing seniors and elders to stay in their home as long as they can.

Maybe consideration even of a senior-specific-type care program, but to the program itself, I mean, if we are identifying that some of the challenges are the uptake and that we are actually not delivering the money as expected, then maybe we have to look at the program itself and the parameters of the program. Maybe after accessing CARE, what is known as CARE Major, the parameters currently, I believe, say that you cannot access it again for 10 years; but if somebody is accessing it, you can almost be assured that that client is someone who would almost have other work that would need to be kind of done. There is a bit of a matching dollar program going on there. I mean the Housing

Corporation does not pay for the project in full. The owner has to pay a particular portion of it.

So they themselves might only be able to afford to do so much of a renovation or an addition, or what have you, and then maybe in two, three years, four, five years from then they might be ready to do more. Putting them on hold for 10 maybe would be part of the problem or part of the challenges as to why the pot is not getting accessed as often as it possibly could, because I find it hard to believe that there is not enough clientele out there to access this pot.

So again, having the parameters around the accessibility of this pot reviewed might increase the uptake considerably.

The other aspect was what I suggested or commented on in my opening comments with regard to housing, was that we have to kind of give consideration to what other kind of regulations might be in place or problems that might be in place that don't allow somebody to be eligible for this program, or one that makes it just clearly obvious to them that they have to turn it down. The comment I suggested earlier was, in Yellowknife, the EnerGuide 80 standard that the city has in place, and what that affects.

If I am going to come to the Housing Corporation to get a rather large sum of money to go do a major renovation on my home, either to lower my cost of living because I am going to improve insulation factors or I am expanding for an expanding family or what have you, and it is so significant that now, all of a sudden, I have to fulfill a whole bunch of additional requirements that the city is going to put on me because of EnerGuide 80 standards or whatever other standards might be affected by this, then I am throwing my hands up in the air and, next thing you know, I am not accessing your pot of money anymore.

So I think there is considerable work that has to be put into those efforts to make this pot more accessible. I am just not comfortable with saying this is something that we have to just park and say it is not getting enough uptake. Any time I hear that, that means that there is something internally going on, not necessarily directly to the Housing Corporation. There are other outside factors. In this case, I believe that there are internal and external factors that are causing this pot not to get the right amount of uptake. We have to not wait for studies and what have you; this is something we have got to be responsive to because we know we could get this money out and have direct effects and it will have a positive effect on our goals as a government and as an Assembly as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In all honesty, since the time I have been a Minister -- I can't speak for the time before me -- I have had no one come to me and complain and say that they couldn't access the CARE major or any of our programs because your EnerGuide 80 is too high for them. I have never heard that complaint.

What I have heard, complaints for the CARE programs, is the co-payment, so I am not a hundred per cent sure. If people do come to me and say it is because they can't meet the energy efficiency, I would look at that, but that hasn't been my experience. It has been around the co-payments, the land tenure, and the insurance, so those are the areas that we are focusing on at this point, is how do we make it easier for people so that they can access the program by lowering the co-payment or eliminating it in certain cases, by perhaps rolling in the insurance and the land tenure into the money that we give them. If energy efficiency is a reason, at that point, if it does cross my desk as an issue, then I am more than willing to look at it and see how we can address that barrier as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I use it as an example along with land tenure, and you've referred to co-payment, so the point being it is just the whole identify the reasons as to why there is not enough uptake and let's start to address those so that we can successfully deliver. I hate to claw back from this pot when I just know that it is ready to be accessed by probably a number of people throughout the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you. I will take that as a comment. We are trying to address the issues. The other thing, too, is our communication. We do acknowledge that we are not the best about communicating and so we are looking at how to work that to get the word out to more people. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further? Mr. Vanthuyne.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Nadli. My apologies, not Mr. Nadli. Any further comments or questions? Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not too sure if this was addressed here last year, but I have a feeling it was. Has the Housing Corporation ever looked at designing a self-insurance program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I will let Mr. Martin answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the NWT Housing Corporation does have insurance arrangements in place, they are actually with the GNWT, and we do insure everything above a duplex; so multi-family dwellings would be insured. Anything below that, though, like a duplex as well -- I guess you could call that a multi-family as well, but a duplex and a single unit, we self-insure those units at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: To the other half of my self-insured package or question: if you're selling a house there would you self-insure that as well to the buyer if it is somebody who is currently occupying social housing or a potential buyer out there for surplus assets, call it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As stated, currently at this point we do not provide insurance for people who are looking at buying, except for our own units that we're keeping for public housing. Insurance has been identified as an area of concern that limits people, so it will be an area that we are going to be focusing on along with the other issues, co-payment and land tenure, other obstacles that we have seen as barriers for people. So yes, it will be something that we will be contemplating within the program renewal and figuring out how we can actually help people so they can get insured. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further? Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Nothing further there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Seeing no one further on my list, I will call this section. NWT Housing Corporation, programs and district operations, operations expenditure

summary, total activity, \$31,707,000. Mr. Thompson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 61-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, NWT HOUSING
CORPORATION DEFERRAL OF PROGRAMS
AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS ACTIVITY,
CARRIED

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity, Programs and District Operations, under the NWT Housing Corporation Main Estimates 2017-2018 on page 361 at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There is a motion to defer. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

We have deferred this activity. Next, committee, we have an information item. This is an information item only on page 363, lease commitments. Do we have comments or questions on the NWT Housing Corporation lease commitments from any Members? Seeing none, we will head back to the -- actually, there's another information item on page 348 that I will draw committee's attention to, back near the very beginning. Page 348 is the financial summary information. It's quite a detailed section, so I will give committee a chance to look this over and see if they have comments or questions before we move on the total corporation. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now I'm looking at this page, is the number of the amount of money that has been paid back from the NWT Housing Corporation on this page? Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Martin.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of dollars reinstated within our budget, that would have flowed through the GNWT contribution amounts presented at the bottom of this page. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: No questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are looking at the GNWT contribution line here. Last year, it was \$81,702,000. The proposal for next year is \$74,943,000. Can the Minister explain that reduction? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Ms. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Martin.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reduction from 2016-2017 in the GNWT contribution is attributable to a few significant sunset adjustments. The first sunset adjustment was \$6.7 million, representing the last year of the Market Housing Program Initiative. The second adjustment related to the rural and remote housing program that was discussed previously. That program has sunsetted at \$783,000. We also had sunsetted a three-year initiative for additional funding for hazard assessments over the last three years to deal with hazard assessments prior to modernization and improvement projects. That was \$250,000 that was reduced. In addition to those sunsets, we did have the first year of the RCMP funding that would sunset in that budget as well, and that was \$3.4 million. That was funding that was allocated for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. In addition to that, we had a number of budget reductions that have been discussed previously. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Martin. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do not have a problem with this, but does the corporation have the budget reduction number handy, just so I have got that for reference so that I know what our contributions is, how it is being declined or reduced for next year? The fiscal strategy, what that total amount is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The total reduction amount for the Housing Corporation for 2017-2018 was \$1.3 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to make it clear to the public, then, the reduction strategy, or the fiscal strategy, of Cabinet is driving down the contribution to the Housing Corporation by \$1.3 million. I do not agree with that, and I just wanted to get it on the record. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Do we have any further comments or

questions on page 348? If not, we will continue on to the total corporation. On page 350, there is also the active position summary on page 351. Do Members have comments or questions? Pages 350-351? Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 62-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, NWT HOUSING
CORPORATION, DEFERRAL OF FURTHER
CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES FOR THE
NWT HOUSING CORPORATION,
CARRIED

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration on the main estimates of NWT Housing Corporation at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to defer. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

We will defer consideration of the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried. I will now rise and report progress.

---Carried

First, I would like to thank the witnesses for joining us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you to all the pages for sticking with us all night. I will report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Hay River North.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 261-18(2): Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2017-2018. I would like to report progress with three motions adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we have a seconder? Member for Range Lake.

---Carried.

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, February 23, 2017, at 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 Commissioner's 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
 - Motion 31-18(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 28, 2017
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 - Bill 13, Marriage Act
 - Committee Report 6-18(2), Report on the Review of Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 - Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018
21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 23, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:41 p.m.