16th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Standing Committee on Government Operations


Reality Check: Securing a Future for the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories

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May 28, 2009

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During the review process the Standing Committee on Government Operations is sensitive to the fact that there were on-going court proceedings involving the Fédération Franco Ténoise, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. The Committee was also aware of the sub judice convention and the need to be careful in touching upon matters that are before the courts. The Committee in no way intended any aspect of this report to be disrespectful to the Courts or to influence the litigation that was on-going at that time. The Committee, however, was also mindful of its public duty to review the implementation of the Official Languages Act and this report is its discharge of that public duty.

In March of 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada has dismissed the applications for leave to appeal the Northwest Territories’ Court of Appeal decision.

This decision means that the ruling of the Court of Appeal stands with its direction to the GNWT relating to the Official Languages Act.
TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference were established by Motion 1-16(2) of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

WHEREAS, the Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories recognizes Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich’in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey and Tłıchǫ as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS, the Official Languages Act first came into force in 1984 with major amendments made in 1990 and 2003;

AND WHEREAS, the amendments made in 2003 by the 14th Legislative Assembly as a result of the comprehensive review of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act changed the roles of the Minister Responsible for Official Languages and the Languages Commissioner and established the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board;

AND WHEREAS, section 35 of the Official Languages Act requires the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly designated or established by it to review the provisions and operation of the Official Languages Act at the next session following December 31, 2007;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the 16th Legislative Assembly refers the review of the provisions and operation of the Official Languages Act required by section 35 of that Act to the Standing Committee on Government Operations;

AND FURTHER, that the terms of reference for the Review of the Provisions and Operation of the Official Languages Act by the Standing Committee on Government Operations be established as follows:

1. The Standing Committee on Government Operations in undertaking the Review of the Official Languages Act shall examine

   a. the administration and implementation of the Act including: regulations, policies and procedures established by the Government of the Northwest Territories;

   b. the achievement of the objectives stated in the preamble of the Act;
c. the effectiveness of the provisions of the Act and in particular the extent to which they are contributing to the objectives stated in the preamble;

d. the roles and responsibilities of the Minister, the Official Languages Board, the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, and the Languages Commissioner and the extent to which those roles and responsibilities have been fulfilled and are contributing to the objectives stated in the preamble.

2. The Standing Committee on Government Operations shall have access to such persons, papers and records as necessary for the conduct of this review;

3. The Minister, Languages Commissioner, Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board shall provide all reasonable assistance to the Standing Committee on Government Operations as required by the Act;

4. The Standing Committee on Government Operations shall be provided through appropriations of the Legislative Assembly with adequate funds to carry out its responsibilities;

5. The Standing Committee on Government Operations shall be provided by the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories with the necessary administrative and professional support to carry out its terms of reference and assigned responsibilities as they relate to this review;

6. The Standing Committee on Government Operations may make recommendations for amendments to the Act that it considers desirable through a final report;

7. The Standing Committee on Government Operations shall table a report, which may be an interim report during the life of the second session, and a final report no later than February 2009.

Date of Notice: February 8, 2008
Date of Introduction: February 11, 2008
Disposition: Carried
Carried: February 11, 2008

Moved by: Ms. Bisaro
Seconded by: Mr. Miltenberger
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Section 35 of the Official Languages Act requires the Legislative Assembly or a Special Committee of the Assembly to conduct a review of the Act “at the next session following December 31, 2007 and subsequently at the next session following each successive fifth anniversary of that date”. In accordance with this statutory requirement, the 16th Legislative Assembly adopted a motion on February 11, 2008 referring the review of the provisions and operation of the Official Languages Act to the Standing Committee of Government Operations (the Committee).

Background

The 14th Legislative Assembly initiated the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act (SCROLA) in 2001. SCROLA tabled its comprehensive final report in 2003. The reports identified 65 recommendations and suggested implementation and investment schedules for these recommendations. The GNWT tabled a response to this report in 2003.

Amendments to the Official Languages Act were made during the last session of the 14th Legislative Assembly. These changes introduced an Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, an Official Languages Board, and new roles for the Languages Commissioner and the Minister. The Act requires a review after five years.

The SCROLA review was comprehensive and provided much background research into the socio-linguistic field of language preservation and revitalization. The findings of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act are still valid and usable, allowing the scope of the this five-year review to focus specifically on the requirements as set out in the Act itself.
The 2008-2009 Review examined

• whether progress has been made since the changes to the *Official Language Act* in 2003;
• whether the Government implements and administers the *Act* effectively and efficiently;
• whether the objectives and goals of the preamble are being met;
• whether the changed roles and responsibilities of the Minister Responsible for Official Languages improved the administration and implementation of the Act;
• whether the changed role of the Languages Commissioner as an ombudsperson improved the implementation of the *Act*;
• whether the new Official Languages Board has met its mandate to review the rights, status and use of Official Languages;
• whether the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board has fulfilled its mandate to promote, maintain and revitalize Aboriginal languages.

As a first step, the Committee reviewed government reports, languages regimes of other Canadian and international jurisdictions and publications related to language endangerment and protection. This step was followed by extensive consultations with the public and stakeholders including Aboriginal languages, frontline workers and professionals and community language groups. The Committee provided further opportunities for public input including a questionnaire that was posted on the Assembly’s website and written submissions.

The Committee scheduled witnesses for hearings during public Committee meetings and invited the Minister Responsible for Official Languages, the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and the Official Languages Board, the NWT Bureau of Statistics, the Fédération Franco Ténoise and the NWT Literacy Council.

What Committee heard from the Public, Stakeholders, and Witnesses

People are concerned about the dire situation of the Aboriginal Languages in the Northwest Territories. They worry about the survival of their languages and how they can be kept alive as languages of every day use. There is a great awareness of the connection between language and cultural identity and that language loss has non-reversible impacts on the culture and identity of Aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories.

The intergenerational gap of language and traditional knowledge is growing to an extent never seen before. Elders describe this gap as a total communication breakdown because their grandchildren no longer speak the same language. People are also disillusioned and frustrated with the lack of accountability for implementing Government commitments relating to Official Languages.

The lack of Interpreter/Translators in the health and justice systems, the lack of adequate training for these interpreters and the need for on-going terminology development and standardization in an ever-changing modern environment was brought to the Standing Committee’s attention in every community.

Participants also identified shortcomings within the education and school system, for example:

- Aboriginal languages curriculum development and implementation is slow and under-resourced;
- Providing 30 minutes of language instruction per day is insufficient, particularly when all other subjects are taught in English;
- Language instruction often does not extend beyond elementary school grades;
- Lack of accountability to ensure language funding for schools is used for language activities; and
- Insufficient support, resources and training for Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructors.

This being said, people also acknowledged that some progress has been made, for example, in the development of Aboriginal Language curricula and the start of some language nest programs. At the same time, participants repeatedly expressed that if Government is serious about its role in Aboriginal language revitalization, then the implementation of such programs needs to be accelerated and resourced adequately in
order to counteract the language decline, particularly among children and younger adults.

The messages the Standing Committee received with regard to community language funding were unified, loud and clear:

- The major obstacle of the community language funding is that minimal and insufficient amounts do not match the needs for essential resources and programs that could contribute to the survival of the Aboriginal languages.
- There is no funding consistency.
- There are too many interruptions in the programs due to lack of funding.
- Insufficient funding also prevents program expansions for adult language and literacy learners and pre-school programs. Such programs would be crucial for the revitalization of the Aboriginal languages.
- The allocation by regions and by language groups does not consider needs.
- Existing community language funding does not allow for year-round programming. The proposal-based, year-to-year funding forces staff and community volunteers to spend their time on proposal writing in search of funding sources instead of on program delivery.
- Information is difficult to find about funding sources, criteria, and application processes. Participants stressed that this is of particular concern considering the expectations put on the communities by the *Official Languages Act* assigning them an essential role for language revitalization.

People are also disillusioned and frustrated with the lack of accountability for implementing Government commitments relating to Official Languages. Generally they found that the Government is not fulfilling its obligations for Aboriginal languages as prescribed by the *Official Languages Act*. There is no plan in place that supports central, regional or community Government offices and agencies to provide services in the Aboriginal languages. People also found that there is no accountability or reporting mechanism in place that assesses how the Government provides these services.

Many Aboriginal people said their languages are not treated equally with French and perceive this as a form of injustice towards First Nations. Other participants reminded the Members of the Committee that it was government policies of the past that contributed largely to the language loss experienced today. They believe that out of this past injustice comes a responsibility of today’s governments to fund and support the language communities to reverse this language shift.
Many participants were aware of the multitude of challenges the Government is facing. What they are asking for is an honest commitment, a willingness to work collaboratively with community language stakeholders and sufficient resources to implement a comprehensive action plan. Several participants expressed the view that committing to such measures will determine in the near future if the Aboriginal languages will have a chance to survive.

While some people had heard of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, most did not understand their roles and mandates or why two language boards exist. Participants also did not know who the board representatives were and were generally critical about the boards’ capacity to develop ongoing relationships and communication with the community language groups, frontline workers and advocates. In addition, the appointment process for the Boards, their dependent relationship with the Minister’s office, and the lack of powers and resources were questioned frequently. Participants also found the absence of any reporting mechanism or any publicly available information relating to the activities of the boards inconsistent with their mandate and intended purpose.

During the witness hearings the Fédération Franco-Ténoise representatives explained that they withdrew from the Official Languages Board as they deemed it ineffective for dealing with the needs and realities of the francophone community. Instead they suggest a “cooperation committee” between their organization and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to deal directly and exclusively with issues relating to the francophone community. The Fédération Franco-Ténoise also commented that government services offered in French are insufficient and that bilingual positions are not publicly identified. Generally the organizations agreed with the spirit and intent of the Act, but found that it has not been properly implemented.

There was a general concern about the role and functions of the Languages Commissioner: People did not know who the incumbent is or what the Languages Commissioner does. They did not know the role and responsibilities of the Commissioner had changed. Participants stated repeatedly that they had not seen the Commissioner in their communities nor did they know whether Annual Reports were published.

Several participants doubted that the Minister, who is also responsible for the government-wide implementation of the Act, could effectively promote Aboriginal languages. The language stakeholders also felt that the Minister did not connect with
communities and is not seen to provide support for the language communities to achieve their goals of language preservation and revitalization.

In several communities, the Standing Committee was also reminded of its role to hold government accountable for its commitments to language activities and its responsibilities under the Act. Those participants who were aware of the 2003 SCROLA recommendations remarked on the lack of implementation and lack of transparency related to Government commitments and activities. People asked the members of the Standing Committee to play a more active oversight and accountability role, for example, insisting on detailed implementation and progress reports.

Many participants in the public hearings expressed their disappointment and distrust in the effectiveness of the Official Languages Act. Some participants believed that since the last review and the amendments to the Act in 2003, the situation for Aboriginal languages has worsened; that the status of Aboriginal languages as Official Languages of the NWT has become more and more meaningless. People have also lost faith in the review process.

Many participants expressed their disagreement with the status of French being equal to English in the official languages legislation of the NWT. It is perceived by many who participated in the review process that because Aboriginal languages have less protection and rights, there has been unfair treatment. The main concern was that this translates directly into less funding for programs, services, and support for the communities. Several participants suggested that the official status for Aboriginal languages should be no less than that for French.

Research and Analysis

Implementation of the SCROLA Recommendations

The Committee looked at what progress has been made since the Special Committee on the Official Languages Act Review (SCROLA). One of SCROLA’s intentions was to develop a Northwest Territories’ language revitalization framework. With this in mind, SCOLA’s recommendations were structured to support such a framework. The recommendations address legislation and policy, management, financing, service delivery, human resource development, language research and development, education, promotion, and media and technology. The Government of the Northwest Territories tabled its response at the dawn of the 14th Legislative Assembly in 2003.
The following section provides an overview of the recommendations and highlights the Committee's most important findings on the progress of their implementation.

**Strengthening Legislation & Policy** (section A of the recommendations)

- The *Official Languages Act* was amended following the SCROLA recommendations. Amendments included the recognition of collective Aboriginal language rights in the preamble, the important role of language communities in preserving and developing their own languages, and the changed roles of the Minister and Languages Commissioner.
- Government Institution Regulations were established to clarify which government boards, agencies, corporations and so forth are bound by the provisions of the *Official Languages Act*.
- Contrary to the SCROLA recommendation to establish one Aboriginal Languages Board, the GNWT introduced the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board (the languages boards). The GNWT established regulations to create the two languages boards. These regulations only address the appointment process and the terms of the appointments and not the terms of reference or consultation functions of the boards.

**Improvement of Management and Accountability** (section B of the recommendations)

- SCROLA had hoped that an empowered Official Languages Secretariat directly reporting to the Minister would create and monitor a government-wide implementation plan and evaluation framework. The Secretariat was to support the development of Official Languages regulations and policies and to provide operational support for the languages boards, in addition to its managerial and administrative functions related to various contribution agreements, and intergovernmental relations concerning languages.
- The GNWT restructured the Official Languages Division within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, creating a direct reporting relationship to the Deputy Minister. The Government did not add any resources to the division to address its expanded mandate.
- To date, no implementation plan for the *Act*, no evaluation framework, and no regulations or new policies addressing language services have been developed.
Effective and Adequate Financing (section C of the recommendations)

- SCROLA recommended that the GNWT ensure all language funding to schools is actually used for language activities, that funding for the language initiatives indentified in the recommendations be put in place, and that maximized federal participation through the NWT-Canada contribution agreement be negotiated.
- Very little progress has been made in this area. While some areas have seen funding increases, no comprehensive funding approach that would match the suggested initiatives has been created. This may be linked to the non-existence of an implementation plan.
- Community language initiatives and even departmental Official Languages funding continues to be provided on a year-to-year basis, increasing the difficulty for these organizations and institutions to make long-term plans and allow continuity of their activities.

Enhance Service Delivery (section D of the recommendations)

- Little has been done to address these SCROLA recommendations or the GNWT's commitments in its response to these recommendations. There are no regulations or policies addressing “Active Offer”; nor are there any government-wide procedures and measures for tracking demand and service delivery in Official Languages.
- Some progress has been made on addressing improvements for French service delivery: a Single-Window Service Centre pilot project for French opened in Yellowknife in June 2008; and Education, Culture and Employment is working on a plan to improve French language services generally.
- The GNWT has preliminary plans to phase in the establishment of a Single-Window Service Centre for Aboriginal languages.
- No public registry of Interpreters/Translators has been made available. Instead, the Official Languages Division continues to compile a contact list for Interpreters/Translators that is shared with government departments and institutions.
- A certification process for Aboriginal Interpreters/Translators has still not been established. The GNWT actually put this renewal initiative on hold when it was discovered that there was a lack of qualified Aboriginal evaluators. The GNWT hopes that it can revisit this initiative when more Interpreters and Translators have been trained.
Build Human Resources Capacity (section E of the recommendations)

- Progress on the reinstallation of Interpreter/Translator training is very slow. The Akaitcho language groups are presently offering a regional community-based training program. The GNWT supports this initiative through a pilot project that it hopes will be adaptable for other language groups.
- Progress has been made on the Aboriginal Culture and Languages Instructor Program (ACLIP): the part-time one-year certificate program delivered has been expanded to a two-year diploma program delivered fulltime. This new diploma program is currently being delivered for the first time in the Tłı̨chǫ region.
- The Committee found that the GNWT does not lend sufficient support to build the human resources capacity for professions related to Official Languages. This is a concern as the success of revitalization efforts will also depend on the availability of qualified language professionals like teachers, instructors and interpreter/translators.

Support Research and Development for Official Languages (section F of the recommendations)

- The Committee is particularly concerned that the GNWT has not addressed the SCROLA’s recommendations relating to terminology development. The urgent need for terminology development was identified by all stakeholders in all regions and languages. These needs, along with proposed actions and solutions, have repeatedly been brought to the Government’s attention. Its inaction has contributed to the frustration expressed by language stakeholders to the Committee during the consultation process.
- Furthermore, the importance of terminology development for language survival and revitalization has been well documented. Failure to support and advance terminology development has devastating consequences for languages already under threat.
- It should be noted that in its response to the SCROLA recommendations, the GNWT suggested that much of this work should be conducted by the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. The Committee questions whether the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board is sufficiently resourced and adequately supported for this undertaking.
- Similarly, the GNWT did not address a recommendation to establish a coordinated cataloguing and distribution process for Aboriginal language resource materials.
Increase & Improve Aboriginal Languages Education (section G of the recommendations)

- The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment issued a directive to the Divisional Education Councils and the Divisional Education Authorities in 2004, setting minimal standards for Aboriginal language instruction (30 minutes per day and 90 hours per school year) and outlining funding and reporting requirements. While this has led to some improvements of Aboriginal language programming in the school system, there are still concerns that the funding is not always used for language activities, and that 30 minutes of language instruction is insufficient to impact language revitalization in any meaningful way.
- The Committee was glad to find that support for language nest programs improved. Presently the GNWT provides funding to 18 registered early childhood facilities for language nest programs. However, the Committee was concerned that in recent years this funding has been reduced.
- The Committee also saw the improvements to the regional delivery of the Teacher Education Program and the Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program as steps in the right direction.
- There is no overall strategic Aboriginal languages education plan that would link the different activities and allow for the measurement of successes and overall progress.

Promote Official Languages (section H of the recommendations)

- The GNWT did not issue a progress report on the implementation of its commitments for action to the SCROLA recommendations.
- The GNWT provides on-going support to the French language community for their cultural activities supporting French.
- The Government and the Minister responsible for Official Languages have not addressed any of the recommendations concerning the promotion of Aboriginal languages.
- The Committee questions whether this inaction means that the responsibilities for language promotion are not a good fit with the Minister’s role and mandate.
Language indicators and trends

The Committee examined the state of the Official Languages in the Northwest Territories using statistical data, language indicators and trends.

The availability of language data is important for the assessment of the health of a language. Measuring the number of speakers over time indicates if a language is losing or gaining vitality.

The following data on language speakers is typically collected to provide information on language trends:

- “Mother tongue” refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual.
- “Home language” refers to the language spoken most often at home.
- “Ability to speak” means that a person is able to carry out a conversation in that language.
- “Language Shift” is an important tool for assessing the vitality of a language. Language shift measures the number of speakers a language gains or loses over time. It measures the ratio of home language to mother tongue speakers.

If language shift shows a declining trend over time, it is fair to say that language loss is occurring and the languages may become endangered. In a situation of declining language shift, more and more children will no longer learn the language of their parents as their first language. This means that the intergenerational transmission of the language is interrupted and a generational gap between the speakers of a language takes place. On the other hand, if language shift moves upward, that means that more people use the language at home that did not learn the language as their mother tongue.

The information presented demonstrates that all Aboriginal languages are suffering from languages loss to various degrees. Some of the Aboriginal Languages (Gwich’in and Cree, for example) can be described as severely endangered because they only have a small number of older, fluent speakers left. Even languages like Tłı̨chǫ and North Slavey that were considered strong and healthy, are showing severe language shift mostly because English is increasingly becoming the home language, particularly in households with young parents.

The 2006 census shows that 1,030 NWT residents indicated that French was their mother tongue. Of those, only 440 persons indicated that they use French as their home language. However, there is a unique upward trend for those identifying that they are
able to converse in French. In 2006, 9.1% of the NWT population or 3,720 persons indicated that they are able to converse in French.

The increased use of English as a home language and the fact that 99% of the NWT population that indicated in the 2006 census that they are able to carry on a conversation in English is another indicator that Aboriginal Languages are losing ground.

The assessment of the vitality and endangerment of languages is an important step towards planning language revitalization. A comprehensive long-term revitalization plan would need to include indicators to evaluate its implementation and success over time.

**Language vitality, protection and revitalization**

As a third analytical step, the Committee looked at established approaches to language revitalization. This might be helpful for the creation of a comprehensive Aboriginal languages revitalization regime in the Northwest Territories. We have used a framework that was developed by a UNESCO expert group to create decision tools for the development of language policy, identifying issues and safeguards as they relate to language revitalization.

When examining the factors identified in this framework in combination with the language trends and indicators discussed earlier, it quickly becomes evident that all Aboriginal languages in the NWT require some degree of revitalization. French as a minority language in the Northwest Territories requires maintenance measures in order to maintain it as the language of everyday use by the francophone community.

The Committee suggests that the following criteria need to be considered for successful Aboriginal languages revitalization in the NWT:

- The circumstances of each language community have to be examined to decide on an appropriate plan.
- Long-term multifaceted programs with a range of resources and much personal dedication of community members are essential.
- Government policies affecting language use in public and the connection that people make between language use and economic well-being for their family are determining factors.

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• This being said, the most important success factor is people wanting to speak their language.

• Outsiders can provide expertise, funding and moral support, but community members need to “construct the revitalization program which suits their ambitions, needs, and resources.”

• Before decisions are made each language must be assessed for its degree of vitality/endangerment. Those tools can also be applied over time to measure success of initiatives.

• Language domains expand due to modernization, globalization, and economic and technological developments. If a community language is not used in these new domains it is losing vitality. This is of grave concern for all our Aboriginal languages in the NWT. How much language is actually used in a particular domain plays an important role as well.

• Because education is a critical domain for language use, it is also a logical place to start. True revitalization however, can only happen when all subjects are taught in the endangered language. Education in our school system is strongly related to literacy, which leads to the point that education in all subject areas needs to include the availability of written materials.

• Language attitudes can make or break the success of revitalization programs, for example:
  o Government attitudes are influenced by the majority population and are reflected in language and education policies and funding allocation.
  o Canadian residential school policies, for example, led to forced assimilation and prohibition of Aboriginal languages, resulting in an interruption of intergenerational transmission. This history has lasting affects on the vitality of many Aboriginal languages and decreases the chances of successful revitalization.
  o Community attitudes are critical for the success of language revitalization.

The concerns brought forward to the Committee by the language communities, language advocates, stakeholders and witnesses are very serious. Language indicators show that the Aboriginal languages are in a state of emergency. The Government of the Northwest Territories has no implementation plan for the Official Languages Act or a coordinated approach to support the communities’ revitalization efforts.

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2 Saving Languages – An introduction to language revitalization, Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley, Cambridge University Press, 2006 page x
Conclusions

2009 marks the 25th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act*, which should be cause to celebrate the linguistic diversity of the Northwest Territories. The Committee findings, regretfully, give little cause to celebrate.

The administration and implementation of the Act have proven a challenge since the establishment of the *Official Languages Act*. The Committee found that little progress has been made in implementing the Act since it was last amended in 2003.

The consequences of having neither regulations, nor an implementation plan for the Act have led to a lack of standards for the provision of services in Official Languages and inconsistencies between government departments and institutions. It is difficult for the public to find out what services are offered, where they are provided and how to access them. The government has not coordinated a standardized approach on how its different departments and agencies offer language services to the public or communicate with the public.

The preamble was changed with the last amendments to the Act, in 2003. It expresses an ambitious vision and speaks to future achievements. However, stakeholders are becoming more critical towards the achievability of this vision.

The Committee heard many concerns from Aboriginal people about the inequality of Aboriginal language rights versus French language rights as manifested in the Act. Many Aboriginal language stakeholders perceived existing language rights as not reflective of the demographic realities of the NWT and the political reality of the NWT with its emerging Aboriginal self-governments. They also questioned whether Government institutions have the capacity to provide equal services.

More and more stakeholders asked if the rapid decline of the Aboriginal languages, in times when the use of French as a second language is “booming” can be seen as a consequence of this inequality in law. They perceived the Government’s commitment as “lip-service” and questioned if the recognition of Aboriginal languages was more a political “good-will” statement than a *de facto* granting of rights.

Official recognition of languages can also have a powerful, symbolic effect. However, if the language rights are intended to extend to communication and services, mere recognition is not enough. The Committee concluded that if the intent is to be “committed to the preservation, development and enhancement of the Aboriginal
languages”3 Government actions have to be recognized as supporting this commitment. If languages are addressed in policies and legislation, but their use is not required or there are insufficient financial resources, it is more difficult to promote language use.

The desire to “establish English and French as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories having equality of status and equal rights and privileges as Official Languages”, as stated in the preamble, has proved difficult to implement in the context of the Northwest Territories.

While the Act recognizes Aboriginal languages as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, the provisions that speak to how these rights can be exercised are weak and do not provide sufficient clarity for either the rights holder or the government institutions offering the services. This concerns sections 8 and 11 of the Official Languages Act in particular. The Act provides for the establishment of regulations that could then provide clarity and details on the provision of services and communication with the public in Aboriginal languages.

Since no regulations providing such clarification have been established, the Committee must conclude that the provisions of the Act have not been effective in providing for the use of Aboriginal languages.

The preamble also addresses the role of language communities in preserving and enhancing the Official Languages. The Committee’s consultation process indicates that there was little sense of ownership for this shared responsibility between language communities, the Legislative Assembly, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The establishment of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and the Official Languages Board was intended to create a link between government and the community languages groups. The intent was to give communities input in government policy and language planning, while recognizing them as key players involved in the continued use of languages and responsible for bringing forward their community language priorities. Regretfully, the provisions of the Act, which should have helped achieve these goals, have failed. There was agreement between all stakeholders and witnesses that these sections of the Act need revision.

The Minister responsible for Official Languages has the overall responsibility for the Act and is responsible for the general direction and coordination of government policies and

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3 Official Languages Act, paragraph 4 of the preamble
programs related to Official Languages. The Minister has not initiated long-term comprehensive planning for Official Languages services delivery or Aboriginal languages revitalization as recommended by SCROLA. This lack of policy direction has meant little advancement of the objectives stated in the preamble.

The Committee acknowledges that some progress has been made in the promotion of Official Languages education in schools and post-secondary institutions. Examples are the introduction of language nest programs, the implementation of Dene Kede, and the progress in teacher training and education. French Language education in schools has also seen positive developments with the opening of a second French school in Hay River and the expansion of French immersion programs in schools around the territories.

While the Committee was glad to see these positive developments in language education, the question remains as to whether these advancements are more to the credit of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment or the Minister responsible for Official Languages. The Committee found that the Minister responsible for Official Languages has no powers over other Departments and Government institutions to ensure compliance and implementation of the Act.

The latest amendments to the Act, in 2003, moved the promotional role for Official Languages from the Languages Commissioner to the Minister responsible for Official Languages. Apart from funding support for cultural activities of the French language community, none of the Government commitments to the SCROLA recommendation relating to the promotion of Official Languages have been addressed.

The Committee made the following conclusions regarding the roles and effectiveness of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board:

- Neither the Official Languages Board nor the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board has the capacity, power, funding and support to fulfill their mandates.
- The two-year term of the boards do not allow for continuity.
- Recruitment of board members should be improved by broadening the list of bodies that are able to nominate candidates.
- The mandates for both boards state that they may review and evaluate the provisions, operation and effectiveness of the Act. This caused many questions regarding the duplication of roles between the boards themselves, and with the Languages Commissioner.
- The board regulations did not include terms of reference for the Boards that could have clarified the broad mandates as described in the Act. This slowed down the operation of the boards.
• The operational support for the boards was provided by the Official Languages Division, the same division that supports the Minister in overall responsibility for the Act causing questions about the independence of the office. Can the same division that is responsible for leading the government-wide implementation of the Act also support the boards that are mandated to review and evaluate how the Act is working?

• In many Aboriginal communities the stakeholders did not know who their board representatives were. They felt uninformed about the boards’ activities and recommendations to the Minister and they did not understand the different mandates of the two boards. There was no consistent approach for communication between the board members, their language communities and nominating bodies.

• The Francophone community organization withdrew their participation on the Official Languages Board as they felt their community’s needs were not addressed in the mainly Aboriginal structure that was focused on issues surrounding the survival of their languages. English as the dominant language of the Northwest Territories does not need representation on the Official Languages Board.

Therefore, the Committee must conclude that under the circumstances described above the languages boards were not able to fulfill their respective mandates. The Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board did not contribute to the overall objective of revitalizing and maintaining Aboriginal languages. The Official Languages Board does not contribute to ensuring compliance with and implementation of the Act.

The Languages Commissioner’s mandate can be summarized as ensuring that the rights, status and privileges of all Official Languages are recognized, that the government institutions comply with the spirit and intent of the Act, to investigate complaints from the public that government is not following the Act, and to investigate language issues on his or her own initiative.

The Committee found during the review process, that in most communities the Languages Commissioner (the Commissioner) was not known. People reported that they did not know that the NWT currently has a Languages Commissioner, who the incumbent was, or anything about the activities of the Commissioner.

During the witness hearings the Languages Commissioner expressed concerns that recommendations issued in the Annual Reports of the Office of the Languages Commissioner were not acted upon. The Languages Commissioner asked that the scope of powers for the Commissioner be reconsidered.
The Committee findings show that section 22 of the Act dealing with processes following investigations has not been used by the Commissioner. The Committee therefore concludes that it would be premature to expand the scope of powers for the Commissioner. The investigative powers provided for under the existing Act may prove quite effective if used.

The Committee recognizes that the Languages Commissioner had difficulties in fulfilling her role as an Ombudsperson and in ensuring compliance with the Act. However, the Committee is not convinced that this is due to weakness of the Act or the lack of promotion of the Office of the Language Commissioner including a lack of outreach to the population and language communities of the Northwest Territories.

The Committee also looked at other Canadian jurisdictions to compare compliance with Official Languages regimes. New Brunswick (the only bilingual province of Canada), Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Canada itself have a Languages Commissioner. In the remaining jurisdictions, processes are established that make the Ministers or Official Languages Secretariats responsible for dealing with complaints and ensuring compliance with existing languages regimes.

The Committee recommendations are based on the findings and analysis described above.

**Recommendations**

The Terms of Reference allow the Committee to make recommendations for amendment to the Act that it considers desirable. Based on its findings and conclusions the Standing Committee on Government Operations makes the following recommendations to create

- a new “Official Languages Services Act” with a focus on service delivery, and
- a new Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime that focuses on protection and revitalization of Aboriginal languages.

The Committee is aware of the breadth of its recommendations and that their meaningful implementation will take some time. As a first step thorough strategic planning must take place, including an analysis of the fiscal requirements for the implementation of these plans.

The Committee did not see its task as developing strategic or implementation plans on behalf of the Government. Instead we have provided and a foundation for what must be addressed in those plans. We recognize that the Government also needs to address
challenges related to human and fiscal capacity and resources during this planning process. The Committee has left room in its recommendations allowing the Government to be diligent on this matter.

The Committee recognizes that interim measures will be necessary to address the most urgent needs of the Aboriginal language communities and the most obvious shortcomings of the existing *Official Languages Act*. A section, entitled “Transitional Provisions”, gives recommendations on what interim measures should be taken immediately.

**Provisions to be considered for an *Official Languages Services Act***

1. Rewrite the OLA to get away from the federal model of legislation that does not match the demographic, socio-geographic, and political realities of the NWT

2. Lobby the federal government to allow the GNWT to create its own and more appropriate Official Languages legislation/regime

3. Create a service orientated Official Languages regime for the GNWT and commit to a regime aimed at saving the Aboriginal languages of the NWT

4. Acknowledge the different situations and needs of the Aboriginal languages and French in terms of legal recognition and protection by Canada, speaker base and available resources (financial, human, linguistic and capacity)

5. Recognize Aboriginal languages and French as Official Languages of the NWT including rights granted in reference to legal proceedings and proceedings in the Legislative Assembly

6. Government retains the obligation to provide services and communication with the public in Official Languages with the following qualifiers:

   6.1. Determine service delivery priorities through consultations with the different language communities while recognizing the Government’s capacity and resource limitations

   6.2. Address Government capacity issues through comprehensive long-term planning (language service plans for each language) while acknowledging language community priorities
6.3. Create designated areas for Aboriginal languages in the communities where Aboriginal languages are indigenous (see Nunavut OLA, s.3 (3)) and add further provisions similar to the wording in the Active Offer Policy of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat in Manitoba, i.e.

* A region is recognized as a designated area for [name of the language] by the Government of the Northwest Territories due to the concentration of Aboriginal Language speakers or the validity of the region’s Aboriginal community, as demonstrated by the use of the Aboriginal Language in local schools, cultural organization, community groups, etc.

Apart from acknowledging regions where Aboriginal languages are indigenous this provides for recognizing facts and trends of our modern NWT society including mobility and urbanization.

6.4. Create designated areas for French, i.e., “A region is recognized ... by the Government ... due to the concentration of Francophones or the validity of the region’s Francophone community, as demonstrated by the use of French in local schools, cultural organization, community groups, etc.”

7. Establish an Official Languages Secretariat (OLS) and place it with the Department of the Executive as a central agency that has the authority to implement the Official Languages Services Act government wide. Such an organizational structure could improve accountability and oversight of the implementation of the “Official Languages Services Act” as well as increase focus on language community consultations and relationship building. The reporting relationship of the Official Languages Secretariat should be directly to the Deputy Minister.

8. The Government’s Official Languages Secretariat shall be sufficiently resourced, supported and empowered to fulfill the following mandate by:

8.1. Developing government services in the Aboriginal languages and French. Determine service delivery priorities through consultations with the different language communities while recognizing the Government’s capacity and resource limitations (see “Minister Responsible” for details regarding this plan and the reporting on the progress of the plan)

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4 Definition from the Active Offer Policy, Francophone Affairs Secretariat (Manitoba)
8.2. Addressing Government capacity issues through comprehensive long-term planning (language service plans for each language) while recognizing language community priorities

8.3. Addressing matters of Aboriginal languages services in general

8.4. Addressing matters of French language services in general

8.5. Addressing complaints from the public about Aboriginal and French language services

8.6. Facilitating, guiding and monitoring departments and agencies on their Aboriginal languages and French service activities

8.7. Liaising with Aboriginal language communities, organizations and their political bodies, and Francophone community organizations

8.8. Coordination of agreements and funding from Canada

8.9. Coordination of funding and other supports to the Francophone language communities

9. Acknowledge that in order to grant equal rights to the Aboriginal languages a comprehensive language protection regime addressing protection, revitalization and modernization of the Aboriginal languages has to be implemented first.

Provisions to be considered for an Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime

10. Acknowledge continuous Aboriginal Language loss, endangerment resulting in a need for protection and revitalization

11. Government commits to an Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime through:

11.1. Acknowledging the different situations and needs between the Aboriginal languages of the NWT in terms of speaker base/vitality, capacity, endangerment, need for protection, maintenance, revitalization and modernization

11.2. A realistic long-term strategic revitalization plan (10 to 20 year range) must be developed in consultation with each language community highlighting priorities to address needs and actions for protection, revitalization, maintenance and modernization for each Aboriginal language. This plan must include measures,
monitoring and evaluation criteria. Measures must distinguish between government and language communities responsibilities

11.3. **Annual action plans** for each language that relate to the long-term strategic plan outlining responsibilities and activities by the Government, its agencies and the language communities including timelines and measures for progress towards established goals and objectives

11.4. The establishment of an **Aboriginal Languages Authority (ALA)**\(^5\) in charge of the development and implementation of this plan, being the liaison to the language communities with sufficient resources and powers to fulfill this mandate and to provide ongoing support and capacity building to the Aboriginal languages communities and their organizations

12. Include statutory requirements to have a Committee of the Legislative Assembly review the Annual Report on Official Language Services and Aboriginal Language Protection and report back within 180 days

**Aboriginal Languages Authority and Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee**

13. The **Aboriginal Languages Authority** is responsible for the development and implementation of a long-term strategic revitalization plan, annual action plans, and being the liaison to the language communities with sufficient resources and powers to fulfill this mandate and to provide ongoing support and capacity building to the Aboriginal languages communities and their organizations

13.1. The **Aboriginal Languages Authority** is obligated to consult with the language communities (set minimum requirements for consultation)

13.2. The **Aboriginal Languages Authority** is responsible for stable and sustainable funding arrangements with language communities

13.3. The **Aboriginal Languages Authority** must have a close working relationship and take advice from the **Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee** (see below)

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\(^5\) Examples: the Inuit Language Authority established under the *Inuit Language Protection Act* of Nunavut or the Maori Language Commission established under the *Maori Language Act* of New Zealand
13.4. The Aboriginal Language Authority of the GNWT needs to liaise with the Aboriginal Language Centre (see below) to ensure a continuous work relationship is established.

14. The Aboriginal Languages Authority would work with an advisory committee represented by delegates of the Aboriginal Language communities. The establishment of this Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee in combination with prescribed consultation requirements would ensure concerns of the languages communities are being heard and their advice being taken under consideration.

14.1. The Aboriginal Language Advisory Committee would replace the existing Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.

14.2. Mandate, competencies, meeting and consultation requirements of this working group shall be clearly established in policy.

14.3. The obligations of the Aboriginal Language Authority towards this advisory body shall be clearly established in policy.

14.4. The Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee is composed by representatives of all Aboriginal languages.

14.5. The mandate of this advisory body shall be to participate in the development of the long-term strategic revitalization plan and the annual action plans concerning language revitalization.

14.6. This body shall be linking the community needs with the planning and policy activities of the Government in regards to Aboriginal languages revitalization.

Aboriginal Languages Centre

While the Aboriginal Languages Authority and the Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee would be concerned with strategic planning and policy development relating to the revitalization of Aboriginal languages, the Aboriginal Languages Centre would be tasked with language activities and program delivery aspects of a comprehensive revitalization regime.
15. Support and fund an **Aboriginal Language Centre (ALC)** outside of Government\(^6\) tasked with:

15.1. Providing central resources and supports necessary for language protection, revitalization, maintenance and modernization (for example linguists, community development/capacity building, collaboration with existing programs\(^7\) )

15.2. Functioning as a clearing house for resources developed by language groups and with funding from the GNWT

15.3. Developing an Aboriginal languages resource website

15.4. Accelerating the development of Unicode Dene fonts

15.5. Coordinating the development and offering of Interpreter/Translator training and standards (can be in collaboration with other agencies for example the existing pilot project through the Akaitcho Government)

15.6. Developing Adult language training and other initiatives to increase the day-to-day use of Aboriginal languages that can be adapted and used by the different language communities

15.7. Other activities as identified and supported by the Language Communities

15.8. Maintain an on-going working relationship with the language communities and the **Aboriginal Languages Authority**

15.9. Providing an annual report to the **Aboriginal Languages Authority**

*Note: There is nothing that shall prevent the installation of an Aboriginal Languages Centre within any existing language society. Language Community groups and organizations shall be consulted before the structure of the Aboriginal Languages Centre is decided on.*

**Mandate of the Languages Commissioner devolved**

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\(^6\) Examples: the Yukon Native Language Centre or the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (Victoria State, Australia)

\(^7\) Examples: The University of Alaska in Fairbanks in conjunction with the Yukon Native Language Centre has established a program leading to the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Native Language Education. Or: The Certificate Program in Aboriginal Language Revitalization of the University of Victoria (BC)
16. The implementation of our recommendations to create an Official Languages Secretariat and to strengthen Government’s commitment to service oriented legislation makes the position of the Languages Commissioner no longer necessary. Similar to the set-up of most other Canadian jurisdictions the Official Languages Secretariat, if provided with adequate powers, could address and resolve complaints regarding Government services, while the Aboriginal Language Authority could ensure the progress of the Aboriginal Language protection regime.

17. If the term of the Languages Commissioner appointed under the exiting Official Languages Act has not expired when the new Official Languages Services Regime comes into force, then the Languages Commissioner shall be repositioned in the Official Languages Secretariat to ensure continuity during the transitional period until the Commissioner’s term of office has expired.

Minister Responsible for Official Languages Services and the Protection of Aboriginal Languages

18. Designate a Minister Responsible for Official Languages Services and the Protection of Aboriginal languages and place the Official Languages Secretariat and the Aboriginal Languages Authority with the Department of the Executive to ensure accountability for the government wide implementation of the Official Languages Services Act and the Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime is in place.

19. Make the creation of a government-wide long-term strategic/implementation plan for Official Languages services and the strategic plan for Aboriginal Language protection a responsibility of the Minister and establish these responsibilities in legislation and policy.

20. Make the creation of departmental/institutional Official Languages services implementation plan with annual reporting on measures a responsibility of each Government institution.

21. Strategic and implementation plans must include financial needs assessments that would allow the Minister to bring budget requests forward during the established business planning cycle.

22. Make strategic and implementation plans for Official Languages Services and Aboriginal Languages Protection publicly available.

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8 The following Canadian jurisdictions have an Official Languages regime but no Languages Commissioner: PEI, NS, QUE, ON, SASK, MAN, AB, YK
23. Include annual updates on the implementation of these plans including activities of the Official Language Secretariat, the Aboriginal Languages Authority and government institutions part of the reporting requirements of the Minister’s Annual Report on Official Language Services and Aboriginal Language Protection

**Language Communities**

24. Affirm relevance of the languages communities for the use, maintenance, revitalization, protection and modernization of their respective languages

25. Confirm Government’s responsibility to support the language communities in using, maintaining, revitalizing, protecting and modernizing their respective languages

26. Confirm Aboriginal Language Communities responsibility to work with their people and political leadership at a community, regional and self-government level to increase daily usage, thus contributing to the recovery and maintenance of Aboriginal languages

27. The proposed Aboriginal Languages Centre would provide increased support, development and sharing opportunities avoiding duplication and increasing the capacity, programming and resource development for each language community group. Ideally this would lead to a close and on-going working relationship between community language organizations and the Centre

28. The proposed Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee would provide opportunities for the communities to provide input in setting Government policy direction

29. The role of the Language Communities would be strengthened through mandatory consultation requirements of the Aboriginal Languages Authority and the **Official Languages Secretariat**.
Implementation

30. Make negotiations with Canada on changes to the Northwest Territories Official Languages regime a priority

31. Bring a Legislative Proposal forward during the life of the 16th Legislative Assembly

32. Create an implementation plan for the introduction of the proposed Official Languages Services Act and Aboriginal languages protection regimes in the life of the 16th Legislative Assembly (including fiscal, human resources and capacity building needs)

33. Conduct government wide human resources planning for the service delivery model to address Official Languages services obligations of the GNWT

34. Use the Corporate Human Resources Strategic Plan currently under development by the Department of Human Resources to determine the GNWT’s capacity to deliver services in the Official Languages

35. Negotiate funding agreements for Official Languages services and Aboriginal languages protection with Canada

36. Provide Language Communities with adequate support and resources to implement their work plan/language plans on a continuous and developing basis

37. Conduct an education campaign for all GNWT staff on Official Language services and Aboriginal Language protection

38. Provide an Official Languages service delivery and communication manual for all staff setting out minimum standards including for an “active offer”

39. Extend the services offered at Single Window Service Centres (example: Manitoba)

40. Future NWT Community Surveys shall include information on mother tongue and home language to allow for improved tracking of language shift in particular for the Aboriginal languages of the NWT. The tracking of language shift every two to three years could be an important indicator to evaluate if the revitalization measures put in place are successful
41. Ensure that the NWT Bureau of Statistics works closely with Statistics Canada to include all Aboriginal Official Languages of the Northwest Territories when collecting and reporting language information during the Census

Transitional Provisions

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recognizes that a meaningful implementation of these recommendations will take some time. Therefore, the Committee recommends that in the meantime the following transitional measures be acted upon without delay.

42. Improve service delivery in Official Languages

43. Provide increased financial and capacity supports to community language groups including multi-year funding agreements

44. Improve communication and consultation with the community language groups and their organization

45. Conduct Aboriginal language community consultations to prepare for the establishment of the Aboriginal Language Centre in the fiscal year 2010/2011

46. In the interim make the following amendments to the existing Official Languages Act

46.1. Languages Commissioner

46.1.1. Include NWT residency as statutory requirement

46.1.2. Include minimum requirements for community outreach to promote Official Language rights and the Act itself

46.1.3. Review whether the existing Official Languages Act sections on investigations by the Commissioner’s on his/her own initiative, need to be clarified or strengthened

46.1.4. Review whether additional powers for the Languages Commissioner to audit government agencies for their implementation of OLA, would strengthen the ombudsperson function of the Statutory Officer

46.2. Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board
46.2.1. Amalgamate the two Languages Boards into one Aboriginal Languages Board (ALB) that will provide the link between the Aboriginal language communities and the Minister responsible for Official Languages

46.2.2. Change the appointment process by broadening the list of organizations who nominate representatives of their Language Communities. The intent is to involve a more diverse group of language stakeholders in the nomination process

46.2.3. Clarify the Aboriginal Languages Board’s mandate, powers and its relationship with the Minister in the Act

46.2.4. Include a description of the roles, responsibilities, competency requirements and compensation/per diem schedule in the Regulations establishing the Aboriginal Languages Board

46.2.5. Include requirement for board members to consult with their communities and stakeholders

47. The Minister responsible for Official Languages shall include a detailed progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Government Operations contained in its Final Report on the Review of the Official Languages Act 2008-2009 in his Annual Report on Official Languages

48. The GNWT shall communicate with the Committee on the progress of the development of the proposed Official Languages services regime and the Aboriginal languages protection regime
Flowchart to illustrate functions, relationships and setup of the proposed Official Languages Service and Aboriginal Language Protection regimes
1.2 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES LEGISLATION MILESTONES

This section lists the most significant milestones of the Official Languages Act.

1984  First NWT Official Languages Act (OLA)

1989  The 11th Legislative Assembly creates the Special Committee on Aboriginal Languages later tables a report with recommendations for changes to the Official Languages Act.

1990  Amendments are made to include further Aboriginal Official Languages, to create the Office of the Languages Commissioner and requiring a comprehensive review after 10 years.

2001  The 14th Legislative Assembly initiates the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act (SCROLA).

2003  SCROLA tables its comprehensive final report with 65 recommendations and suggests implementation and investment schedules for these recommendations.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) tables a response to this report.

Amendments to Official Languages Act were made during the last session of the 14th Legislative Assembly. These changes include the new Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, the new Official Languages Board and new roles for the Languages Commissioner and the Minister. The Act also has a legal requirement for a review after five years.

2008  The 16th Legislative Assembly adopts a motion referring the review of the Official Languages Act’s provisions and implementation to the Standing Committee on Government Operations.
1.3 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

This section summarizes the most important parts of the Official Languages Act:

- The Preamble describes several principles which the Act is based upon, including:
  - A commitment to the preservation, development and enhancement of the Aboriginal languages of the NWT
  - Legal recognition of NWT Aboriginal languages and provision for the use of those languages
  - Establishment of English and French as official languages in the NWT with equal status, rights and privileges
  - Preservation and enhancement of official languages is a shared responsibility between language communities, the Legislative Assembly, and the Government of the Northwest Territories

- Section 4 recognizes Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich’in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey and Tłı̨chǫ as Official Languages of the NWT.

- Sections 6 and 7 speak to the use of Official Languages in the proceedings and documents of the Legislative Assembly.

- Section 8 sets out requirements for public documents from the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories to be in English and French. Regulations can be made to require that these documents be published in other Official Languages as well.

- Sections 9 and 10 speak to the use of Official Languages when dealing with the courts

- Section 11 sets out the public’s rights to communicate with and get services from head or central government offices in English and French. The same rights exist for dealing with other offices (for example, regional offices) if there is “significant demand”, or it is reasonable to make services available in both languages given the “nature of the office”.

  Section 11 also sets out the public's right to communicate with and get services from regional, area or community offices of government in an official Aboriginal language if
there is “significant demand” for services in that language, or it is reasonable to make services available in that language given “the nature of the office”.

- **Sections 14 – 25** speak about the **Languages Commissioner**.

  The Languages Commissioner is appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly.

  The Languages Commissioner’s duties are:

  - To make sure that the rights, status and privileges of all Official Languages are recognized.
  - To make sure that the government institutions comply with the spirit and intent of the *Official Languages Act*.
  - To investigate complaints from the public that government is not following the Act.
  - To investigate language issues on her or his own initiative.

- **Sections 26 and 27** speak about the **Minister responsible for Official Languages**. The Minister has the overall responsibility for the *Official Languages Act*. The Minister is also responsible for the general direction and coordination of government policies and programs related to Official Languages.

  The Minister must:

  - Consider advice and recommendations from the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.
  - Oversee the development of policies and regulations.
  - Promote Official Languages education in schools, post-secondary, adult education and literacy training programs.
  - Promote the use of Official Languages in government institutions for program and service delivery and in administration.
  - Encourage the maintenance and revitalization of Aboriginal languages.
• **Sections 28 and 29** speak about the **Official Languages Board**. The members of this board represent all Official Languages (including English). The language community for each Official Language nominates a member. The Minister recommends members to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, who makes the appointments.

The mandate of the Official Languages Board is to:

- Review the rights and status of each Official Language.
- Review the use of Official Languages in the administration and delivery of government services.
- Evaluate how the *Official Languages Act* is working.
- Give advice and make recommendations to the Minister.

• **Section 30 and 31** speak about the **Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board**. The members of this board represent all Aboriginal languages that are recognized in the Act. The language community for each Aboriginal language nominates a member. The Minister recommends members to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, who makes the appointments.

The mandate of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board is to:

- Review community, government and other programs and initiatives to maintain, promote and revitalize Aboriginal languages.
- Evaluate how the *Official Languages Act* is working.
- Give advice and make recommendations to the Minister.

• **Section 34** lists a number of regulations that can be made.

- The **Official Languages Board Regulations** were made in 2004. They establish the Board and list which organizations nominate members to represent the language communities. Board members are appointed for two years.

- The **Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board Regulations** were also made in 2004. They establish the Board and list which organizations nominate members to represent the language communities. Board members are appointed for two years.
In 2006 the Government Institution Regulations were made. They say which government bodies the Official Languages Act applies to. Examples: agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, offices and departments.

- Regulations to explain “designated offices” and “active offer” have not been made, but could be.

• **Section 35** says there must be a review of the *Official Languages Act* every five years. It also says what must be checked:
  
  - The administration and implementation of the *Act*. (Whether government is following the law.)
  - The effectiveness of the provisions of the *Act*. (Whether the law is working.)
  - The achievement of the objectives stated in the preamble. (Whether the goals of the preamble are being met.)

The review can include recommendations for changes to the law.

The *Official Languages Act* does not apply to municipal governments, band councils, Aboriginal governments, and the private sector.

### 1.4 OTHER LEGISLATION – LINKS AND DEPENDENCIES

This section points to the most important links of the *Official Languages Act* to other legislation.

**Northwest Territories Act**

The *Official Languages Act* is entrenched in Part II.I (sections 43.1 to 43.4) of the *Northwest Territories Act*. Changes to the 1984 version of the *Official Languages Act* concerning languages rights for French must be concurred with by the Parliament of Canada unless they enhance those rights and services. The GNWT can increase Aboriginal and French language rights without seeking the Parliament of Canada’s approval.

**Education Act**

The *Education Act* provides for:
• The hiring of language and traditional knowledge instructors for Official Languages other than English or French by education bodies where no teachers are available (section 59)
• The use of any Official Languages as the language of instruction (section 70(1))
• The use of multiple Official Languages as the language of instruction (section 70(2))
• Requirements to be met when determining the language of instruction (section 71)
• “Students whose parents have a right under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to have their children receive instruction in French are entitled to receive that instruction in accordance with the regulations wherever in the Territories that right applies.” (section 72)
• French First Language Education Regulations
• English to be taught as part of the education program (section 73(2))
• Another Official Languages be part of the education program if English is the language of instruction (section 73(3))
• Culture based school programs as part of the education program (section 75)

**Human Rights Act**

Section 5 of the *Human Rights Act* lists prohibited grounds of discrimination as: race, colour, ancestry, nationality, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, family affiliation, political belief, political association, social condition and a conviction for which a pardon has been granted. Further, the *Human Rights Act* provides for a complaints process on these grounds of discrimination.

**1.5 FOCUS OF THE 2008-2009 REVIEW**

The review undertaken by the Standing Committee on Government Operations focused on the following:

• Examine whether progress has been made since the changes to the *Official Languages Act* in 2003.

• Examine whether the Government implements and administers the Act effectively and efficiently.

• Examine whether the objectives and goals of the preamble are being met.
• Examine whether the changed roles and responsibilities of the Minister Responsible for Official Languages improved the administration and implementation of the Act.
  
  o Has the promotion of the use of Official Languages improved?
  
  o Have the services of the Government in Official Languages improved?
  
  o Has Aboriginal language education and literacy training improved?
  
  o Is the maintenance and revitalization of Aboriginal languages encouraged?

• Examine whether the changed role of the Languages Commissioner as an ombudsperson improved implementation of the Act.
  
  o Has the Commissioner ensured that the rights, status and privileges of all Official Languages are recognized?
  
  o Has the Commissioner ensured that the Government follows the spirit and intent of the Act?

• Examine whether the new Official Languages Board has met its mandate to review the rights, status and use of Official Languages.

• Examine whether the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board has fulfilled its mandate to promote, maintain and revitalize Aboriginal languages.
1.6 STEPS OF THE 2008-2009 REVIEW PROCESS

The following section summarizes the review process that the Standing Committee on Government Operations undertook since 2008.

Document Review

Over the course of the year, the Standing Committee on Government Operations (the Committee) reviewed an extensive list of documents and literature related to the following topics:

- Language endangerment and protection (books, research papers, presentations, reports, resolutions and discussion papers)
- Language regimes of other Canadian and international jurisdictions
- Reports of the
  - Minister Responsible for Official Languages
  - Department of Education Culture and Employment
  - The Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
  - The Languages Commissioner of Canada
  - Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act
  - Royal Commission on Aboriginal
  - Language Communities
  - NWT Literacy Council
  - Various departments of the Government of Canada dealing with Official Languages

The Standing Committee on Government Operations took the findings from this document and literature review into consideration in its conclusions and recommendations. A comprehensive list is provided in the “Reference” section at the end of this report.

Consultation with Aboriginal languages frontline workers and professionals

Recognizing the importance that Aboriginal languages frontline workers and professionals play for Aboriginal language use and preservation, the Committee felt that it could gain valid insight from this group of specialists. Awasis Education Inc.\(^9\) was contracted to undertake surveys, interviews and focus groups targeting Aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers from across the NWT. This consultation took place during June, July and August 2008.

Of the 169 Aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers who were surveyed 69 or 41% of the participants responded. All nine Aboriginal Official Languages were

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\(^9\) Awasis Education Inc. is a NWT consulting firm located in Hay River: Sarah Wright, Director with support from Betty Harnum and Suza Tsetso
represented in the response. The Aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers were asked questions relating to:

- the *Official Languages Act*;
- the SCROLA\(^{10}\) recommendations;
- their awareness of the implementation of these recommendations;
- Government services and communication with the public;
- training for language specialists and frontline workers;
- their awareness of language revitalization activities from the Government and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board; and
- Community language activities.

The focus groups were intended to follow-up on the survey allowing participants to provide more detail on their issues and ideas about the NWT *Official Languages Act* and the challenges facing their language community.

Aboriginal Language Instructors, Interpreter/Translators, and other community based Aboriginal Language Specialists participated in eight regional focus groups. Focus Groups were held per language group in the following locations:

- Chipewyan: Ndilo, July 17
- Cree: Fort Smith, August 2
- Gwich’in: Fort McPherson, August 9
- Inuktitut & Inuinnaqtun: Yellowknife, August 2
- Inuvialuktun: Paulatuk, July 23
- North Slavey: Délı̨nę, August 12
- South Slavey: Hay River Reserve, July 3
- Tłı̨chǫ: Behchoko, August 15

These focus groups discussed matters related to language revitalization and obligations arising from the *Official Languages Act*.

The Committee appreciates the Ministers’ support for this undertaking, in particular for sharing information and for contacting the education and health authorities to ensure they are aware of this consultation by the Committee.

\(^{10}\) SCROLA: Special Committee on the Review of the *Official Languages Act* that tabled its comprehensive report and recommendations in 2003.
Consultation with the Public – Community meetings and hearings

The Committee conducted community visits and public hearings in September 2008. Committee held public hearings in Délı̨nę, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Inuvik, and Yellowknife. Committee also had meetings with community Aboriginal language groups in Behchokǫ, Dettah, Délı̨nę, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, K’atlodeeche (Hay River Reserve) and Inuvik. To ensure all Aboriginal language community groups had a chance to participate, they were invited to attend the meetings for their language group. Representatives from Fort Providence, Ulukhaktok, Fort Liard, Trout Lake, Kakisa, Fort Good Hope, and Tulita took part in meetings in on the Hay River Reserve, in Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Délı̨nę.

Most gatherings were well attended and the Standing Committee heard many engaged contributions addressing language issues and concerns. The vast majority of contributions during the public hearings were made by members of Aboriginal language groups. The Committee regretted that there were no contributions from the French speaking public.

Interim Report


The Interim Report included “Emerging Themes” that were brought to the Committee’s attention during the course of the review. However, as not all review steps were concluded the Committee did not draw conclusions or make recommendations at that time.

Witnesses before Committee

The Committee scheduled witnesses for hearings during public committee meetings in the week of December 8 to 12, 2008. The Minister Responsible for Official Languages, the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and the Official Languages Board, the NWT Bureau of Statistics, the Fédération Franco Ténoise and the NWT Literacy Council were invited as witnesses. A detailed summary of these hearings is provided later in the report.
Other Opportunities for Input

The Committee provided further opportunities for public input. The public was encouraged to complete a questionnaire that was posted on the Assembly’s website and available from the Legislative Assembly as a paper copy. This questionnaire was available from mid August until the end of November 2008. In addition, members of the public were welcomed to provide written submissions to the Committee. Submissions were accepted until mid November 2008.

A summary of the questionnaire responses and submissions is provided later in the report.
CHAPTER 2: WHAT COMMITTEE HEARD FROM THE PUBLIC, STAKEHOLDERS AND WITNESSES

The Committee undertook extensive consultations with community language groups, language stakeholders and the public in several communities of the Northwest Territories. In addition, the Committee invited witnesses to hearings, accepted written submissions and offered an on-line questionnaire.

The following chapter summarizes what the Committee heard during the review process.

It should be noted that there are many recurring themes underlining significant issues associated with the implementation of the *Official Languages Act,* particularly concerning Aboriginal languages rights and language revitalization.

2.1 COMMUNITY LANGUAGE GROUPS

The Committee met with Aboriginal community language groups in Behchoko, Dettah, Délı̨nę, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, K’atlodeeche (Hay River Reserve) and Inuvik. To ensure all Aboriginal language community groups had a chance to participate, the Committee provided funding to them to attend the meetings in their region. Representatives from Fort Providence, Ulukhaktok, Fort Liard, Trout Lake, Kakisa, Forth Good Hope, and Tulita took advantage of this opportunity and participated in meetings on the Hay River Reserve, in Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Délı̨nę.

2.1.1 WELEDEH MEETING IN DETTAH

Community Language Funding

The meeting was hosted by the Goyatkı Language Society and attended by 10 persons including four Elders, program participants, and language specialists that manage the society and offer its programming.

The participants expressed great concerns about the set-up of the community language funding. The language funding is provided to regional bodies representing Aboriginal groups. This set-up leaves Yellowknife unrepresented and puts the members of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation that live in Dettah, Ndilo and the city of Yellowknife in a
unique and somewhat precarious situation. They need to apply to and lobby both the Tłı̨chǫ and Akaitcho Governments in order to access their portions of regional language funding. Politically the Yellowknives Dene First Nation is part of the Akaitcho Government that also includes the Bands in Lutselk’e and Fort Resolution, but geographically they are close to Yellowknife and the Tłı̨chǫ and they have close relationships with the Tłı̨chǫ people.

The Goyatikǫ Language Society pleaded for language funding to be allocated by language and not by region or political entity. This would allow the society to look after its own funding agreements.

They support this argument by pointing out that due to their history and geographical location their group has developed its own dialect, “Weledeh” that evolved from both the Tłı̨chǫ and Chipewyan languages. They expressed the wish that Weledeh should be recognized as an Official Language of the Northwest Territories. This recognition would also strengthen their ability to qualify for language funding.

Participants also criticized the funding set-up with its proposal driven, year-to-year, activity-based allocations. This does not allow for on-going language activities, and the development of a systematic and coordinated revitalization plan. Communication and information about the different community language funding opportunities are not readily available, the different funding “pots” are not coordinated or connected and the Government sets all the rules for funding without asking for community input.

Participants also remarked on the administrative effort for proposal writing and reporting requirements for relatively small amounts money. Such arrangements make language specialists administrators while their time and expertise could be better spent for delivering courses or programs to increase the speaker base or improve the language skills of the existing speakers.

Government Commitment

The Society’s representatives questioned how serious the Government is in its commitment to support the revitalization and maintenance of Aboriginal languages. One argument brought to the Committee’s attention was that the Government has no plan for revitalization that would allow for the prioritizing of needs and activities. People are aware that there are limited resources and expressed the need that at the present stage of language loss, money should not be spent on the translation of Government documents in Aboriginal languages, but rather on activities to increase the speaker base and the daily use of the Aboriginal languages.

This argument relates to another unresolved issue: the need for Interpreter/Translator training. Some participants mentioned that the Government spends a lot of money for
translations while these are often questionable in quality because trained and certified Interpreter/Translators have become a rarity in the NWT.

A strong appeal was made that such training must be community based, as that is where the languages are still spoken and the expertise of the Elders can be used for the delivery of the training and the development of terminology to modernize the languages.

Similarly the training for Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor program should be accelerated.

The representatives of the Goyatkö Language Society also pointed to a trail of broken GNWT promises and cutbacks for Aboriginal language funding. They pointed to the unfulfilled commitment of the GNWT to assist with the development and maintenance of an Aboriginal languages website. Such a website is seen as an important communication and information sharing tool for all language groups who are involved in resource and terminology development. The website would facilitate sharing and learning within a language community and between language groups.

Activities to improve the use of the Weledeh dialect and ensure its survival in the future

During the meeting it became very clear that the Goyatkö Language Society is very active\(^1\) and that its members have a clear vision of what is needed to revitalize the use of the Weledeh dialect. Over the past years they have offered: community language courses and Interpreter/Translator training, terminology development, and literacy courses including reviving the use of syllabics.

The representatives stressed that in order to increase the speaker base and language use in the community there needs to be ongoing language courses for Adult learners including acquisition, fluency and literacy programs. This will also help to bridge the intergenerational gap. Simultaneously, the focus must shift to teaching children the Aboriginal language through immersion day care and improved language nest programming. To make these programs effective and successful staff needs to be trained so they can conduct immersion programs that are culturally appropriate.

\(^1\) Goyatkö Language Society, Ten Years of Language and Culture Activities of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation
2.1.2 SOUTH SLAVEY MEETING ON THE HAY RIVER RESERVE

A meeting with South Slavey language groups took place on the K’atlodeeche (Hay River Reserve) and was hosted by the Yamozha Kue (formerly Dene Cultural Institute). The meeting was attended by representatives from the Fort Providence, the Hay River South Slavey language community and the Yamozha Kue.

Community Language Funding

The representatives criticized the insufficiency of the Aboriginal community language funding that limited activities to a six months period. They also suggested that the distribution of the funding per speaker base does not truly address the needs of the language groups.

The Committee noted that there was confusion about funding opportunities, lack of information on what funding is available and how it can be accessed. There were questions about the Aboriginal language funding that is provided to the Divisional Education Councils (DECs) and how that relates back to community language activities and expectations from different schools or DECs towards the involvement of Elders and community language experts.

Participants also addressed the lack of communication with education councils, schools and other language groups on language activities. They saw that as missed opportunities for sharing resources between stakeholders.

Activities to improve the use of South Slavey and ensure its survival in the future

The language group representatives had a clear vision for what is needed to encourage the use of South Slavey and extend its use into the future. They strongly recommended the need for a clearinghouse including a complete resource catalogue online as well as a lending library. This service should, as a minimum, house all resources that were developed with Government funding. They criticized the current practice, where reporting requirements make all funding recipients submit the resources they developed to the Government only to find them disappear in the project’s contribution files. The sharing of resources would allow for mutual learning opportunities, faster development of similar resources in other languages or dialects and avoid duplication.

Those learning and teaching resources form an essential base for promoting the use of South Slavey outside of the school. People have a clear understanding that no matter how successful language teaching is at the schools the languages cannot survive without being reintroduced as a home language. Many players need to participate in order for this to be
successful. To address the intergenerational gap of speakers, it is crucial that adult language acquisition, fluency and literacy classes are offered within the community. While this need has been repeatedly brought to the Government’s attention, participants reported that funding for adult education classes has diminished over the years. They mentioned that the Aurora College Community Learning Centres no longer receive funds to offer Aboriginal languages courses.

The representatives also acknowledged that language revitalization cannot work without community support and the buy-in of the local leadership. They see the Elders as role models for Aboriginal language promotion to counteract the dominance of the English language and culture. They referred to the positive example of the Fort Providence Band who made language training for their employees mandatory.

Participants suggested that the Quebec example of promoting French by mandatory provisions in its language regime could provide some guidance for the revitalization of Aboriginal languages.

They also pointed to the important role that schools and day cares play in language acquisition and usage. There was general agreement that directives from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment about teaching Aboriginal languages are not followed consistently and not sufficiently monitored. In addition, more effort needs to be invested in developing curriculum and teaching materials that integrate Aboriginal language, culture and values into the education system. This cannot be achieved through language instruction of 30 minutes per day. People also pointed out that adequate teacher training must be put in place, allowing for an accelerated implementation of language revitalization activities.

Language group representatives also pointed to the incomplete implementation of the language nest programs. The year-to-year, proposal based funding for this early childhood development program creates lots of uncertainty and threatens continuity. Focus needs to include the training of language nest staff to become fluent in the Aboriginal language, to encourage parents to learn the language and participate along with the Elders.

“To make language strong again, you need a school on in South Slavey and parents need to learn and be willing to speak, too. Elders have to help our people, not dependent on money. People must have the wish to learn and speak the language”

Participants recognized that their recommendations went beyond the Official Languages Act and suggested that a review of the Education Act might be needed to address the cultural appropriateness of the NWT’s education system.

12 Rene Tambour, Hay River, September 3, 2008
Accessibility to Interpreters and Translators

Participants felt that despite the SCROLA recommendation and the amendments to the Official Languages Act in 2003 support for Aboriginal languages has not improved.

They were particularly concerned about language services in legal proceedings and pointed to the lack of an “active offer” including the services of Interpreter/Translators when individuals are issued with summons to court proceedings. Participants explained that the important role of a qualified legal interpreter is to not only to find equivalencies between two languages but also to relate the meaning and concepts of law. Therefore, ongoing training and terminology development is crucial to accurate interpretation. The lack of interpretation cannot be replaced by the translation of forms or manuals because many fluent South Slavey speakers are not literate in their language. The language group representatives recommended that when summons are delivered by the RCMP they need to bring an Interpreter to explain the situation, the proceedings and the paper work.

Participants also remarked that the hospital in Hay River has no South Slavey Interpreter available and the only means to receive any interpreting services is to call the “health line”.

Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board

Participants were not aware of any activities undertaken by any of the boards and questioned the role the Boards play overall.

2.1.3 CREE MEETING IN FORT SMITH

This meeting took place on September 4, 2008 in Fort Smith with the Coordinator, Vance Sanderson of the Cree Language Program of the NWT Métis Nation.

Community Language Funding

The Cree Language program Coordinator stressed the need for increased funding so that language programming at the community level can be offered year around and improved planning can address the many activities needed to revitalize the use of Cree in the NWT. Revitalization takes time and the language must be introduced in everyday activities. He suggested that Cree must become visible in the community and there is an urgent need to fund adult evening language classes.

Activities to improve the knowledge and use of Cree
The Cree Language Program has done extensive work in resources development. They produced and published several books and audio CDs that are being used in the schools’ language programs.

Besides adult language courses further activities to expose people to the language need to be offered on a continuous basis. There is also a need to develop terminology to keep up with the modernization of technology and society.

The Coordinator explains that it often assumed that first language speakers can take on roles as Interpreter/Translators or teachers just because they speak the language. However, first language speakers are often too shy or intimidated to act in these professional capacities. Instead targeted training should be offered to those interested in order to increase the number of available language specialists.

The use of modern technology is important for interesting youth in language learning. Language and culture needs to be visible on the web. The Cree Language Program has the goal to create a website that would provide open access to language materials and programs but also allow sharing resources between language groups and communities.

Education

In Fort Smith Cree language programs are offered at the elementary school level. There is some collaboration between the schools and the Cree Language Program. The Coordinator nevertheless lobbies for combining more community and school activities and the need for increased language activity funding in schools. He pointed out that the extension of language learning activities to higher grades or to the high schools depends on the availability of qualified teachers that speak Cree and the development of teaching resources along with appropriate curricula.

Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board

The Coordinator explained that he was the Cree Language representative on both Languages Boards when they were first initiated. He felt that there was confusion between the board members about their role and mandate. Elders did not understand why the Minister Responsible for Official Languages was the ‘lead’ of the boards.

To improve the boards’ performance the board members need to have a clear understanding of their roles and authority.

Minister

The Cree Language Coordinator expressed the view that the Minister was not responsive to the Languages Boards’ recommendations. He also felt that in order for the Minister to comply with his/her role in promoting the use of Aboriginal languages, there needs to be a stronger connection, exchange and communication between the Minister and the
language communities. The Minister would need to demonstrate the willingness to learn from the language speakers.

2.1.4 TŁı̨CHǫ MEETING IN BEHCHOKO

The meeting with the Tłı̨chǫ language groups was held on September 5, 2008 in the Language Centre of the Teaching and Learning Centre of Behchokǫ.

The Tłı̨chǫ Language Centre is co-located with the Teaching and Learning Centre. They provide services and supports to both the schools and the community at large. By collaborating in this way the Learning Centre was able to employ full time staff members who are recognized for their expertise as language specialists. The Centre also works closely with a Linguist from the University of Victoria’s Aboriginal Language Revitalization program to advance its activities in language preservation, terminology development and revitalization.

Language Funding

The representative for the centre, Philip Rabesca and the Regional Language and Cultural Coordinator, Rosa Mantla explained the centre is digitizing historic materials that were only available as paper records or on audio cassette tapes. This is an important step to preserve collections that document the culture and traditions of the Tłı̨chǫ people. The Centre also continues to expand its online Tłı̨chǫ dictionary and works on terminology development in an attempt to keep the Tłı̨chǫ language current.

The participants pointed out that all these activities must be ongoing and are crucial to protect the language and encourage its daily use. Project based funding is not appropriate for ongoing activities. To succeed in these endeavors, funding must increase and become stable, moving away from its proposal based year-to-year applications. Committee also heard that other projects are on hold due to a lack of funding.

The participants also believe that funding for the Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Instructor Program and the Teacher Education Program needs to increase. Younger people have fewer opportunities to experience traditional lifestyles and are more influenced by English as the language of modern society. More training is needed so they can become language and cultural instructors. In order to reverse the decline of the use of Tłı̨chǫ, particularly between young parents and their children this training needs to be accelerated, so that more Tłı̨chǫ teachers can be employed in the school system as soon as possible.
Education

While recognizing the importance of community buy-in for any language revitalization efforts, the education system and the schools also play a crucial role in teaching the language and cultural values to children. The Language Centre contributed to the implementation of the Dene Kede curriculum. Examples of their work include: the development of cultural resource kits with cultural items used by the schools; working with teachers on how Dene Kede can be used at the schools; and developing teaching materials for the different units of the curriculum (like the “puberty unit”). There is also a one-week on-the-land orientation program for new teachers to get a better understanding of the traditional life-style and cultural values of the Tłı̨chǫ people.

The Tłı̨chǫ representatives stressed that today schools play a bigger role in language acquisition and that 30 minutes daily language instruction during the elementary school years is not adequate. Furthermore, while Tłı̨chǫ language instruction is mandatory at the elementary school level, it becomes an optional subject in high school.

Language Revitalization and Community Engagement

The representatives of the Tłı̨chǫ language groups are also aware of the challenge to engage their communities in revitalization efforts. They know that all their efforts cannot save the language for the future if young people, parents, elders and their leaders do not use and promote the Tłı̨chǫ language.

Because many parents do not practice their language and culture at home anymore, expectations towards the school system’s responsibility for language acquisition have increased. Out of this come some of the major challenges for language activists.

To address those challenges the Tłı̨chǫ Language Centres offers parenting workshops to promote Tłı̨chǫ as the home language. Other promotional activities are needed at the community level to support the use of Tłı̨chǫ among the younger. The language community must address the fact that young parents who grew up with Tłı̨chǫ as their first language often do no pass on their mother tongue to their children. Those children’s language was described as broken. Tłı̨chǫ, as the strongest of the Aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories, is now facing a generation of speakers that speak neither English nor Tłı̨chǫ well. Language specialists are concerned about the impact this may have on language development and acquisition among Tłı̨chǫ children.

The Language Centre representatives stressed that youth and children are interested in their language, but they are not engaged in it. To involve this generation, promotional activities have to be developed that can tap into this interest and demonstrate that Tłı̨chǫ is adaptable to modern times.
The Tłı̨chǫ language activities have many ideas for reversing this generational language loss. They recognize that one of the most effective supports for language revitalization must come from the community government and the community leaders. The leaders need to recognize the crucial role they play in promoting the use of their language.

**Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board**

The representatives acknowledged that the Members of the Languages Board are not known in the communities and do not connect or report back to the communities about the activities of the Boards. For example “nobody knows what they recommend to the Minister.” To improve upon this, the Tłı̨chǫ made a recommendation to the support staff of Education Culture and Employment to hold some of the Board meetings in the regions and open them to the public.

**Languages Commissioner**

The participants expressed concern that the Language Commissioner has never visited or contacted the community. People do not know who the Commissioner is or what his/her role is.

“It is problematic, that a lot of people do not know what the Language Commissioner does, that we have one in place. There are no complaints because people do not know about the office, where it is, where to call.”

**Quality Issue with Translations**

The regional languages coordinator identified a number of issues related to translation. They include:

- Lack of coordinated approach to language standards, terminology development, accreditation and certification of Interpreters/Translators.
- No designated agency or department with responsibility for ensuring quality in translations services.

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**2.1.5 SOUTH SLAVEY MEETING IN FORT SIMPSON**

A meeting with South Slavey language groups took place in Fort Simpson on September 22, 2008. There were language group representatives from Fort Providence.

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13 Philip Rabesca in Behchoko, September 5, 2008
(Dehcho First Nation), Jean-Marie River, Fort Liard and Trout Lake attending the meeting.

Community Language Funding

There was agreement between all participants that

- the budget for community language funding is insufficient
- there is a lack of information on the different funding sources
- there is confusion about the application process
- funding should be multi-year and predictable for better planning and coordination of activities.

Education

There was also confusion about the language funding available to schools. People commented on the funding gap for English and French programming versus Aboriginal language and culture program.

Participants agreed on the link between culture and language. They supported the importance of cultural programs for language acquisition and that language learning should be interwoven with hands-on activities.

However, simply extending language instruction is not sufficient to make kids be proud of their culture and want to speak their ancestral language. Curriculum for all subject areas should be based on Aboriginal cultural, history and traditions. The current curriculum does not allow Aboriginal children to gain knowledge about their own history and culture.

In order to have a real impact on revitalization, the representative for the Dehcho First Nation made a strong plea for focusing on preschool and early childhood education in natural learning environments. He stressed that early exposure to language could make a real difference in the future. This approach would best be addressed through aboriginal institutions that use Aboriginal languages only.

Participants also maintained that language education must be made mandatory in order to save Aboriginal languages for future generations.

Community language representative also raised concerns that in some instances funding for Aboriginal languages programming was used for other purposes.

Community commitment and involvement

The community of Trout Lake was creative in promoting language acquisition with cultural activities. They combined funding from different sources like “Brighter Futures”, “Community Wellness”, community language funding and contributions from the Band
to organize cultural activities in South Slavey. The representative felt that speaking the language at home is the responsibility of the parents and cultural camps are the responsibility of the entire community.

Dennis Denneron spoke about Trout Lake’s team approach to teaching South Slavey and traditional skills and life styles. He acknowledged that, as a small and more remote community, they have advantages in comparison to a bigger community with different lifestyles and greater influence of information technology, media and English as the dominant language.

The representative from Jean-Marie River also gave some examples of promoting the use of South Slavey at the community level. Jean Marie Band Office and the Chief initiated a policy to encourage the use of Slavey in the Band Office and involved the Elders in these efforts. As a result of this policy, more staff members have started to speak language. The Band uses part of the community language funding as incentives for participating in language classes.

All agreed on the importance of encouraging people to use their language and to pass it on to younger generations, as otherwise it would be lost in a few years.

Resources

The representatives of the Dehcho language groups also spoke about the challenges in finding teaching and learning materials and resources for both kids and adults. Community groups are stretched to provide language activities and courses. They do not have the capacity to develop their own materials and are not aware of what resources from other communities or language groups exist and could be shared. All agreed that a clearinghouse for resources and materials could make frontline delivery of programs more efficient and focused while avoiding duplication of efforts.

Language Loss and Endangerment

In his presentation on behalf of the Dehcho First Nation Sam Gargan pointed to a dilemma that young Aboriginal people are facing today:

“The challenge facing our Dene people in small communities today is to learn how to succeed as a traditional First Nation person and how to succeed within a modern wage economy. ... Our youth are having to think like their grandparents did but (are) also expected to think like an accountant, lawyer or social worker.”

He called language revitalization, “a fatal issue”, as there is no incentive for First Nations to revitalize their language and nobody is prepared to invest program dollars. He also

14 Sam Gargan in Fort Simpson, September 22, 2008
described the programs in place as half-hearted attempts and stated “the notion of fitting in, assimilation so far is considered the solution.”

The participants also agreed that language loss is accelerating for South Slavey. They saw a clear trend in the decrease of intergenerational transmission among South Slavey speakers. They were also aware that the degree of language endangerment can relate to the size and remoteness of a community. In larger communities, because of a more diverse population and the greater influence of English the use and transmission of South Slavey is more endangered.

The language group representatives also felt that Aboriginal people are faced with racial attitudes when speaking their own language in the larger centres of the NWT, particularly in Yellowknife. Younger people are likely to react by choosing English over their Aboriginal language. It is difficult for Aboriginal people to maintain pride in using their language in an environment that is dominated by the use of English in every aspect of daily life like school, work and recreation.

Sam Gargan in his presentation also pointed to the role of media:

“Given the fragility of Aboriginal languages, the impact of media on Aboriginal people is of critical concern. Most research suggests that, for Aboriginal people, mainstream media has been a major agent in the loss of culture, identity and community. For First Nations those things that they hold dear, cherish and want to preserve is often ignored, disregarded and cast aside, too often its one of exclusion, stereotypical inclusion or appropriation.”

Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board

One participant commented that the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board provides another example of Government wasting money. The establishment of the Boards had no impact on the smaller communities and their attempts to keep the languages alive.

Participants agreed that there is no connection between the Boards and the community language groups and that little is known about their activities and mandate.

Interpreters/Translators

The representatives also mentioned that it is increasingly difficult to access Interpreters for court proceedings. They pointed to the importance of on-going training for interpreters to improve their understanding of the legal system.

15 Sam Gargan in Fort Simpson, September 22, 2008
2.1.6 NORTH SLAVEY MEETING IN DÉLÎNE

A meeting with the North Slavey Language Groups took place in Délîne on September 23, 2008. Participants from Fort Good Hope and Tulita participated in this meeting.

**Education**

The Sahtu community language representatives all agreed that language and culture instruction should go hand in hand, that children should be taken on the land and learn the language in the context of their culture and traditions. They also agreed that Aboriginal language instruction should be compulsory.

The Dene Kede curriculum should be better promoted by the Divisional Education Councils to the principals and teachers and teachers also need support in learning how to use this instructional tool.

The community representatives discussed some of the challenges in staffing language instructors. On the one hand, some language specialists hired by the school system are not fluent in the languages and there are no opportunities or resources to provide training. On the other hand, fluent speakers from the community are not used as experts by the schools because they have no teacher training and their expertise is not recognized.

Representatives stated that, the existing education system uses English as the primary language for teaching. English values culture and history are taught instead of basing instructions on Aboriginal values, traditions and culture.

Lucy Jackson from the Fort Good Hope Charter Community and Dene Council noted:

“... we need to work in partnership with our language groups in other communities. It is our right to speak our language, no further distraction from our right to use the language at school. Money should not infringe on our rights.”

**Community Language Funding**

Representatives agreed that existing community language funding is not enough to provide year round programming. Funding is often delayed and requires great administrative effort for relatively small amounts.

**Language Commissioner**

16 Lucy Jackson in Délîne, September 23, 2008
None of the participants knew who the Language Commissioner was or knew about the mandate, role or activities of the Commissioner.

Community Commitment and Collaboration between Language Stakeholders

Participants agreed that the schools cannot ensure North Slavey’s survival alone, that there must be community and parental involvement and that parents must be supported.

All participants shared the understanding that terminology development is crucial for keeping North Slavey alive as a spoken language and that the responsibility for terminology development lies primarily with the language community. However, language communities must be better supported to accomplish this huge undertaking. They also suggested that greater collaboration between different language groups would go a long way and that a better exchange between language specialists and the speakers would contribute to the complicated and lengthy process of terminology development.
Interpreters/Translators

Similar to other language community groups the participants spoke of the difficulties in obtaining Legal Interpreters in dealings with the justice system. This creates language barriers in addition to a lack of understanding of the concepts and proceedings in the legal system.

The participants talked about the need for community based Interpreter/Translator training but also refresher and development courses for existing Interpreters that have been trained a long time ago. There was a clear understanding that, as service delivery, concepts of law, or the interpretation of the law change, accurate Aboriginal terms have to be created.

Similar concerns were brought to the Committee’s attention in regards to the availability of Interpreters when dealing with Health and Social Services.

2.1.7 INUVIALUKTUN MEETING IN INUVIK

The Inuvialuktun Language Group meeting took place on September 24, 2008 and was hosted by the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre in Inuvik. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Inuvik Community Corporation, the Beaufort Education Council, the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, an Interpreter/Translator and the Ulukhaktok Community Language Officer.

Education

The participants were opposed to the disparity of funding between Aboriginal languages and French in the education system. They believe that funding for Aboriginal languages should be equal to French, particularly as many Aboriginal languages are faced with great language loss.

A typical Aboriginal language class consists of 30 – 35 pupils taught for 30 minutes a day. A former teacher explained that these circumstances are limiting the chances that students actually learn the language: the groups are too big and a lower student-teacher ratio would be needed. This is in stark contrast to French immersion programs where only 6 – 7 children are in one class. It was suggested that pressure from language groups and parents may help to reduce the class sizes for Aboriginal language acquisition.

A strong plea was made to allow elders to assist teachers in language and cultural classes. Learning from Elders is an important element in implementing the Gwich’in – Inuvialuktun Language Curriculum which will soon be introduced in the Beaufort Delta
Education District’s schools. Teachers will also require additional training to successfully implement this new curriculum. It was pointed out that such training becomes more important because many teachers are relatively new to the NWT, are not Aboriginal and/or do not speak an Aboriginal language. At the same time teachers also need language training.

The participants acknowledged that language revitalization must become a community effort, and cannot be left to the schools alone. To be successful language revitalization must be a collaborative process between the education system and the communities.

**Language Loss and Revitalization**

Cathy Cockney, the Director of the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre has a clear vision of the elements needed for sustained long term revitalization of Inuvialuktun:

- Regional commitment and program development,
- Pilot projects to see if programs works,
- Initiatives to teach adults the language and encourage its use,
- Teacher training to improve language instructions in schools,
- Update and modernization of the existing Inuvialuit teacher training program used in the eighties and deliver the program at the community level via community learning centres,
- Acknowledge the establishment of the new writing system for Inuvialuktun,
- Acknowledge that some Inuvialuktun first language speakers are not literate in their mother tongue and therefore require training in reading and writing, so they can use their expertise, as teachers or for adult language instruction,
- Create learning opportunities for the people that want to learn,
- Conduct terminology workshops to keep modernizing the language,
- Make the language visible in every day life and enhance promotional efforts,
- Collaborative efforts to re-establish Inuvialuktun as home language which would also contribute to an increased awareness of aboriginal identity,
- Increase funding to put these levels of programming in place.

“There is still hope in the NWT, because the languages are still heard.”

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17 Gail Strikes With A Gun in Inuvik, September 24, 2008
Official Languages Act

The participants were aware of the unique status of NWT Aboriginal languages within Canada through their legal recognition in the Official Languages Act. However, they felt that at the community level first language speakers are not aware of the rights under the Official Languages Act. There is a need to educate Aboriginal people about their language rights, particularly in the delivery of health, education, and justice services.

The Inuvialuktun representatives found that, overall, the situation for Aboriginal languages has worsened since the last review. They doubt that the GNWT is serious about the rights granted under the Act, otherwise there would be more commitment for its implementation.

The participants were also skeptical about the role of the Languages Commissioner, the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.

“We don’t hear much about the Commissioner. We have a member on the Boards. The languages boards are not of great benefit to us. The previous member questioned the purpose of the boards. Now the member is the Language Officer of Ulukhaktok and reports back to us.”

2.1.8 Gwich’in Meeting in Fort McPherson

The Gwich’in language group meeting took place in Fort McPherson on September 25, 2008. Both representatives from the Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI) and the public took part in the meeting.

Community Language Funding and Government Commitment to Revitalization

William Firth, the Gwich’in Language Plan/Language Centre Manager made a plea to the Committee that a stronger Government commitment is required in order for the Gwich’in language to survive:

"Money for revitalization is only a drop in the bucket. The amount does not reflect the stage of endangerment for the Gwich’in language."

The Government of the Northwest Territories does not take its responsibilities for revitalization under the Official Languages Act serious.

18 Cathy Cockney in Inuvik, September 24, 2008
19 William Firth in Fort McPherson, September 25, 2009
The Gwich’in language is the most endangered Dene language of the NWT. At the same time the Gwich’in have one of the strongest organizations in the NWT that dedicates a large part of its activities to the preservation and revitalization of the Gwich’in language. In its 15 year existence, the Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute (GSCI) completed over 50 projects and continues this work in accordance with its five-year strategic language plan. This plan includes many implementation ready ideas. However, the Gwich’in representatives explained that there is never sufficient funding to deliver and implement the programs. There is an urgent need to increase the funding to actually put the projects and programs in place in order to save the language. Too much time and resources are spent seeking out potential funding sources and applying for pockets of one-time project contributions from different agencies.

The GSCI is recognized for its expertise and other organizations and agencies seek its collaboration for developing programs and resources. The Language Centre Manager explained that, for example, the GSCI is asked by schools to help them find funding for their language and cultural activities while this support should come through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

GSCI is frustrated by unfulfilled GNWT commitments, such as the development of resources like the Unicode Dene Fonts. The availability of these fonts is crucial for the preservation of existing documents, dictionaries and language data banks using comport technology. As the GSCI could not wait any longer for the GNWT to move on the Dene Fonts issue, they are now contracting specialists themselves in order to continue their work.

Participants found that Aboriginal languages and French are not being treated equally or fairly by the GNWT. Aboriginal languages are in danger of becoming extinct while French is thriving. Many Aboriginal people see this as an infringement of their First Nation rights entrenched in the Charter.

William Firth not only criticized the lack of funding but also the complicated process in place to apply for and report back on relatively small contributions from different levels of Government or different Government departments. Too much time is spent on administration and proposal writing instead of program delivery. In addition, the release of approved year-to-year or one time funds is often delayed, leading to late program starts without provisions to extend the activities into the next fiscal year. For all those reasons the GSCI has asked in the past for a central source of language funding that would allow community language groups’ easier access especially in light of their limited administrative resources.

The GNWT’s community language funding arrangements are based on population instead of need, which is seen as a great disadvantage for the Gwich’in language. One of the big problems that was identified is the distribution of the community language funding.
Participants suggested that the funding should go directly to the communities from Heritage Canada and not get lost or delayed by the complicated administration procedures within the GNWT and the Dene Nation. It is perceived that only a small portion of the money that is committed by the Government of Canada for Aboriginal languages actually comes to the communities and that too much of the federal funding is used for administration by the different organizations involved. Recent budget cutback led to reductions and elimination of language programming. Language groups are concerned that all levels of Government pay lip service in supporting languages and aboriginal cultures while money is being cut back when more would be needed. This is becoming a growing worry as even the stronger Aboriginal languages of the NWT are in decline.

“We cannot afford cutbacks of the already limited resources. We can only save the language if we have the resources and funding to put the programs in place. Funding, budgeting and administrative process have to be seriously looked at if you take your task seriously. The funding has to come directly to the communities.”

William Firth highlighted the language community’s dilemma and frustration with an example. The GSCI came up with a targeted initiative for older workers that would not only provide employment but also address urgent needs of the language revitalization programs. The institute is attempting to access funding from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to integrate older workers in the workforce with the intention to train and use Elders who are first language Gwich’in speakers as Language Instructors or as experts for terminology development and dictionary work. While ECE approved the proposal in principle in spring of 2008 by September the application was still not processed and no money were received.

Many participants stressed that language and culture go together. For that reason money needs to be pooled together to allow for better coordination of different activities.

There was also agreement that the Government urgently needs to reintroduce Interpreter/Translator training. Trained Interpreter/Translator are now approaching retirement, there are fewer and fewer left that still work in their field and these few are suffering burn out. There is no new generation of Interpreter/Translators to replace them. This intergenerational gap within the profession was seen as a sign of many missed opportunities.

All participants acknowledged that some progress in language acquisition has been made in early childhood and elementary school education. They were also aware that in order to have a true impact on revitalization, these efforts must be paired with programming for adults. Language use cannot increase if adult literacy and language programming is

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20 William Firth in Fort McPherson, September 25, 2008
being reduced or eliminated. It was widely felt that the Government is not doing enough for the languages in crisis and more programming for adults is needed.

Education

The participants were all aware of the degree to which the Gwich’in language was endangered and that revitalization efforts are made more difficult because there is a gap between the few elders who are still speaking Gwich’in as their first language to the children of today. They also understand that the language can only survive if its day-to-day use can be reestablished through language promotion within the community and at home. Reintroducing the language at school is an important step and teaching the parents needs to keep pace.

“We also need language and literacy classes for adults that are offered through Aurora College. That way the adults can support the kids more. This is needed because the language is not spoken everyday in the community anymore.”

Because Gwich’in is being reintroduced as the second language to both the children and their parents, there is a tremendous need for qualified teachers and language instructors, which requires a multitude of training and development:

- Improve Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program delivery (acceleration of delivery at community level, supports for candidates and participants,
- Ongoing language training for teachers who are not fluent in the language they instruct,
- Literacy courses for Aboriginal language instructors,
- Improved supports and resources for curriculum implementation,
- Improved recognition of Aboriginal language and cultural instructors and specialists, including enumeration.

Time is of essence for the Gwich’in. The participants felt that they cannot wait for several years until a phased-in program is delivered and concluded while the language loss continues at a rapid speed. There must be a concerted effort to accelerate the delivery of training for teachers and instructors. Participants suggested that if the Government takes its commitment to language revitalization seriously, it must make teacher education and training a priority including the commitment of necessary funds.

Official Languages Board, Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board

Participants expressed harsh criticism about the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.

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21 Ruby Kue in Fort McPherson, September 25, 2008
“Both boards are a laugh. The information we give them is not going anywhere. Their advice is not going anywhere; the Minister does not take it serious.”

Another participant questioned if there are any terms of reference for the language boards so that their language communities could hold them accountable is some way.

While some participants did not know who the Gwich’in representative on the Boards was other knew about several previous board members that resigned because they felt that their contributions were not heard.

Languages Commissioner

Some participants did not know who the Language Commissioner was; others expressed their expectation about the role of the Commissioner and their disappointments with interactions with the Office:

- Commissioner should be visiting and asking what our issues are. “Tell that person to come see us and visit us and tell us what she is doing.”
- “That position is a doormat.”
- “Commissioner, office in YK? How much time does she spend there?”
- Calls to the Commissioner Office to receive Official Languages maps were not returned.
- “All she says to us, when we approach her is to bring this forward to the Committee.”

Some participants also expressed their desire that the Language Commissioner should be an aboriginal person and should speak an Aboriginal language. Others suggested that an Expression of Interest for the next Language Commissioner appointment should go to the tribal offices, so language communities are made aware of the competition.

Official Languages Act

The participants at the Gwich’in language group meeting expressed their doubts about the overall effectiveness of the Official Languages Act and their frustration with the Government’s and the Legislative Assembly’s intention to implement any change that will ensure the survival of the Aboriginal languages.

“What does the status as Official Language mean for Aboriginal languages if it is not taken serious, if the commitment is only expressed as lip-service and political statements without intentions.

How can the GNWT say that is their priority?

People are often not interested in coming to these meetings, because they lost the belief that the Government is doing anything about it. There are many areas where

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22 William Firth in Fort McPherson, September 25, 2008
money could be taken away and put into languages instead. Why cut back on language funding?

People do not want to come to meetings again, because we asked for things over and over, and nothing is being done. We want something done about our language centres, need funding for programming. We could cut your salaries and use it for language work instead. Do something for us and start giving us a little money back so we can implement all the ideas we have to get out languages back.

We will see now what you do for languages.”

The participants also questioned the intentions of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and reminded them that an interest in Aboriginal languages only every five years when another review of the Act is undertaken is not enough. The engagement has to be continuous.

“There is nobody that stands up for us on a regular basis in the House.

Just because we are talking about the importance of the Aboriginal languages is only words. The work of this Standing Committee is not serious; it is to appease the Aboriginal language groups. What is the use? What are we doing really to keep languages alive? No resources, no funding, so the languages are dwindling.

If you come back in 5 or 10 years for the next review, there will be nobody left who speaks the language.”

23 Voices of Bertha Francis, Jonny Kaye, Ruby Kue, Edward Wright, Shannon Snowshoe, Sarah Jerombe, and William Firth in Fort McPherson, September 25, 2008

24 Voices of Bertha Francis, Jonny Kaye, Ruby Kue, Edward Wright, Shannon Snowshoe, Sarah Jerombe and William Firth in Fort McPherson, September 25, 2008
2.2 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public meetings took place in Délı̨nę, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Inuvik, and Yellowknife during the month of September 2008. We regret that the Committee’s two attempts to hold public meetings in Behchokǫ failed due to a lack of participants.

Most gatherings were well attended and the Committee heard from many people engaged in addressing language issues and concerns. The vast majority of contributions during the public hearings were made by members of Aboriginal language groups. The Committee regrets that there were no contributions from the French speaking public.

This section of the report summarizes the public’s contribution by theme and provides quotes supporting those themes.

2.2.1 ACCELERATED LANGUAGE LOSS AND THE NEED FOR ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES PROTECTION

People are concerned about the dire situation of the Aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories. They worry about the survival of their languages and how they can be kept alive as languages of every day use. There is a great awareness of the connection between language and cultural identity and that language loss has non-reversible impacts on the culture and identity of the Aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories.

... we are losing our language in Délı̨nę. At one time in the ’80s our language in the community here was 95 per cent. Now it’s lower than 50 per cent, in that length of time. I know the elders are really concerned, and people who work with languages are concerned.25

The intergenerational gap of language and traditional knowledge is growing to an extent never seen before. Elders describe this gap as a total communication breakdown because

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25 Jane Modeste in Délı̨nę, September 23, 2008
their grandchildren no longer speak the same language. Many people reflected on the reasons for the loss of their traditional language.

“I want to keep my language that’s been kept over thousands of years. I don’t want to lose it. It’s something I own personally, and I don’t want anybody from the South to take it away from me. If I stand strong myself, I’ll do that. But we need support from each other in order to make that movement.

In other words, why are we losing our language? What caused that? That’s the thing we have to dig into, I guess. Like I said, all my kids went to university, and they still talk Slavey. That was five or ten years ago. But now young kids are out there in schools, and they start talking English. What caused that? The school system? I don’t know. We have to find an answer to that.”

“Everybody is involved in how change occurs. It’s just not the kids’ fault. It could be the parents; it could be the school; it could be the jobs. Because if I want to work and make money and live, most of the jobs require the English language. Everything we do involves the English language.”

2.2.2 GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

People are also disillusioned and frustrated with the lack of accountability for implementing Government commitments related to Official Languages.

“We do not have to have these reviews if there is not commitments and follow-up on the recommendations. If the Government takes this serious they must commit funds.”

In Fort Resolution participants criticized the lack of accountability, transparency, and reporting on the Government’s implementation of the recommendations that had already been made.

Generally the attendees found that the Government is not fulfilling its obligations for the Aboriginal languages under the Official Languages Act. There is no plan in place that supports central, regional or community Government offices and agencies to provide services in the Aboriginal languages. People also found that there is no accountability or

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26 Fred Kenny in Déljé, September 23, 2008
27 David Beyonnie in Déljé, September 23, 2008
28 Duane Smith in Inuvik, September 24, 2008
reporting mechanism in place that assesses how these levels of government provide services or where it is challenged to provide services.

Some participants felt moving the Official Languages Division from the Department of the Executive to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the 1990’s demonstrated that the Government does not see its obligations under the Official Languages Act as a priority.

In many communities, participants described the consequences of the closure of the GNWT Language Bureau and the loss of all capacity to train and employ Aboriginal Interpreters/Translators, and maintain and modernize the Aboriginal languages through terminology development and standardization. Presently the lack of orthographic standards leads to spelling variations, and the lack of Dene fonts compatible with today’s mainstream software, aggravates this problem.

Language workers are not always fluent or fully trained in the professions they occupy. This affects a variety of occupations like: Interpreters/Translators, language instructors, early childhood workers and teachers.

In all communities, the Committee heard that the lack of Government commitment is expressed as a lack of funding for Aboriginal language activities including government services and community-based language development activities.

Many Aboriginal people expressed that their languages are not treated equally with French and perceive this as a form of injustice towards First Nations. Other participants reminded the Members of the Committee that it was government policies of the past that contributed largely to the language loss experienced today. They believe that out of this past injustice comes a responsibility of today’s governments to fund and support the language communities to reverse this language shift.

Many participants were aware of the multitude of challenges the Government is facing. What they asked for was an honest commitment, a willingness to work collaboratively with community language stakeholders and sufficient resources to implement a comprehensive action plan. Several participants expressed their view that committing or not committing to such measures would determine if the Aboriginal languages have a chance to survive.
2.2.3 THE ISSUE OF INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

The Committee heard about the lack of Interpreter/Translators in the health and justice systems, the lack of adequate training for these interpreters and the need for on-going terminology development and standardization in every community.

Many participants remarked that the demand for Interpreter/Translators exceeds their availability. Using both untrained Interpreters and Translators and inconsistent standards and terminology is increasingly leading to mistakes and inaccuracies in interpretation and in the translation of government documents.

Most Aboriginal participants did not express the expectation that Government services and programs should be provided directly in their mother tongues. They are used to relying on Interpreters when dealing with public agencies. However, the Committee heard in every community that it is becoming very difficult and sometimes impossible to access an Interpreter. Many speakers expressed their concerns about the consequences of not providing qualified Interpreters especially when dealing with the health, social services and justice systems.

There is an expectation that it is the Government’s role to reinstate Interpreter/Translator training and certification.

“One of the questions I’d like ask is if you guys are really, really serious about aboriginal language in the North. How far are you willing to go for training, like for interpreters and language teachers and different things like that?”

29 Eileen Beaver in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008

2.2.4 EDUCATION

Participants also identified short-comings within the education and school system, for example:

- Aboriginal languages curriculum development and implementation is slow and under-resourced
- Providing 30 minutes of language instruction per day is insufficient, particularly when all other subjects are taught in English only
- Language instruction often does not extend beyond elementary school grades;

29 Eileen Beaver in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008
There is a lack of accountability to ensure language funding for schools is used for language activities and
There is
  o Insufficient support, resources and training for Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructors
  o Lack of resources (like lesson plans) and supporting materials to implement the Dene Kede

This being said, people also acknowledged that some progress has been made, for example in the development of Aboriginal Language curricula and with the start of some language nest programs. At the same time participants repeatedly expressed that if Government is serious about Aboriginal language revitalization, it must accelerate its implementation in order to counteract the language decline particularly among children and younger adults.

Participants suggested:

  • Language education has to start as early as possible in childhood
  • Improving implementation of language nest programming to include training for educators and language instructors in early childhood education and language fluency
  • Accelerating implementation of immersion programs for all subject areas,
  • Accelerating Aboriginal teacher education and Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor \(^\text{30}\) training programs and improve their delivery methods in collaboration with language workers and stakeholders

  “Some 231 people have begun the course in the ALCI Program, and we’ve had about 53 graduates to date. This ALCI Program started in about 1982, and we only have about 53 graduates. It takes a long time for a person to graduate from 11 courses …”\(^\text{31}\)

  • Providing incentives for successful candidates of TEP and ALCIP such as employment security and higher pay after successful certification
  • Creating some form of a clearing house and catalogue for existing Aboriginal language resources

\(^{30}\) Teacher Education Program (TEP) and Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Instructor Programs (ALCIP)  
\(^{31}\) Steve Lafferty in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008
“We know there is an urgency today. How do we do that revitalization? Language workers are trying to preserve their language and the Government is mandated to preserve the languages. Many resources are just sitting there at different locations, there is no coordination, they are not catalogued and consequently not used and not shared.”32

- Reviewing values and instruction methods of the education system to better incorporate culturally appropriate ways of learning that respect the traditions of Aboriginal people
- Accelerating the full implementation of Dene Kede

2.2.5 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BOARD AND THE ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES REVITALIZATION BOARD

While some people had heard of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, most did not understand their roles and mandates or why two languages boards exist. Participants also did not know who their language community’s board representatives were. They were critical about the boards’ capacity to develop on-going relationships and communications with the community language groups, frontline workers and advocates. In addition, the appointment process for the Boards, their dependent relationship with the Minister’s office, the lack of powers and resources were questioned frequently. Participants also found the absence of any reporting mechanism or any publicly available information related to the activities of the Boards inconsistent with their mandate and intended purpose. Others suggested that the boards’ meetings and deliberations should be open to the public allowing for more transparency on their activities and recommendations.

The Committee also found that there was overwhelming agreement that there is no need for two boards.

“The Committee needs to recommend that the Boards are combined. Their function needs to be reviewed including community involvement and how the Boards are held accountable. Communities need to be able to find out, if the mandate of the Boards is being met.”33

32 Jim Antoine in Fort Simpson, September 22, 2008
33 Annie Boucher in Fort Resolution, September 3, 2008
There was also strong agreement that the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Language Revitalization Board have no affect on the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* or on the revitalization of the Aboriginal languages.

### 2.2.6 LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

There was a general concern about the role and function of the Languages Commissioner: Some people were not aware that the Northwest Territories currently has a Languages Commissioner while others did not know who the incumbent was or what the Commissioner does. There was little awareness of the changed role and responsibilities of the Languages Commissioner.

> “I know the Languages Commissioner, who never came to Délįne – never – has been established in Yellowknife. I don’t think anybody in the community ever phoned there and said this is the problem we have. Sometimes they’re even asking why we have a Languages Commissioner.”

Participants stated repeatedly that they had not seen the Commissioner in their communities nor did they know whether Annual Reports were published. The Committee also heard in several communities that complaints were not followed up and phone calls not returned.

> “I would like to make a recommendation that all that money that they’re using to introduce the languages act should be forwarded to the community. Let the community get a really strong program by themselves, the Dene way, not the government legislative way. If we do it the government way, nothing will be done. If we do it our own way, our way of doing things, then something will be done, and then the younger generation will realize that there’s something there for us. Then they’ll find out they are Dene. ... That’s why I want to make it very strong; that your act should emphasize that it should be a community-driven thing, not the territorial government or the Legislative Assembly. Get rid of the commissioner. Make the communities their own commissioner. Give the job to the communities to

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34 Jane Modeste in Délįne, September 23, 2008
commission their language, not somebody else in Yellowknife just sitting there and collecting a pay cheque with no results. Mahsi cho.”35

2.2.7 MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Several participants doubted that the Minister, who is also responsible for the government-wide implementation of the Act, could effectively promote Aboriginal languages. They asked questions about how much money is really spent on promoting the Aboriginal languages; the specific promotional activities that the GNWT or the Minister undertook; and the effects they had on the use of the languages and the need to protect them.

Speakers also felt that the Minister did not connect with communities and is not seen to provide support for the language communities to achieve their goals for language preservation and revitalization.

Several participants commented positively on the current Minister’s use of his mother tongue. They spoke to the importance of role models in promoting the use of Aboriginal languages and felt the Minister set a good example when using Tłı̨chǫ during the proceedings of the House.

2.2.8 THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Many participants in the public hearings expressed their disappointment and distrust in the effectiveness of the Official Languages Act.

“When I think back to 1984 and look at the intent of including Aboriginal languages in the Act and look at it today, in what state the Aboriginal Languages are in I must admit that the Official Languages Act has been meaningless. Look at it and ask why is has been put in place. The goal was to preserve the culture and language of the Aboriginal people. And how has the Government done that, how do they carry it out?”36

35 Dolphus Tutcho in Délı̨nę, September 23, 2008
36 Jim Antoine in Fort Simpson, September 22, 2008
“Right now all we’re doing is circling the same situation. The Act here is not really strong.”37

Several speakers at the public hearings were aware of the recently introduced Inuit language protection regime in Nunavut and suggested that the Government of the Northwest Territories should look at a similar model to protect the Aboriginal languages.

Some participants believed that, since the last review and the amendments to the Act in 2003, the situation for Aboriginal languages worsened; that the status of Aboriginal languages as Official Languages of the NWT has become more and more meaningless. People have also lost faith in the review process.

“...This is the third review I’ve been to in the how many years that I’ve been living in the Territories. Each time we keep saying the same thing over and over and over again. We know the language is important; we know our languages are dying.”38

Many participants expressed their disagreement with the status of French being equal to English in the official languages legislation of the NWT. It is perceived by many who participated in the review process that because Aboriginal languages have less protection and rights, this has led to inequalities and unfair treatment. The main concern was that this translates directly into less funding for programs, services, and support for the communities. Several participants suggested that the official status for Aboriginal languages should be no less than that for French.

Other speakers at the public hearings expressed the view that the protection of Aboriginal languages through the Canadian Constitution should be granted as part of their affirmed indigenous rights. The Committee was requested to ensure that the Government of the Northwest Territories lobbies Canada to protect Aboriginal languages in federal legislation.

2.2.9 THE ROLE OF REGULAR MEMBERS TO HOLD GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

In several communities the Committee was also reminded of its role to hold government accountable for its commitments to language activities and its responsibilities under the Act. Those participants who were aware of the 2003 SCROLA recommendations remarked on the lack of progress on commitments and lack of transparency in government activities. People asked the Members of the Committee to play a more active

37 Gary Vital in Délįne, September 23, 2008

38 Eileen Beaver in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008
oversight and accountability role, such as insisting on detailed implementation and progress reports.

“You as elected officials are accountable for not having done anything about enforcing. You should come back in five years and report on the progress of your recommendations.”

“Nobody, especially the government, is trying really, really hard to do the best job to provide that service for themselves and for the communities and for the aboriginal people. They’re doing nothing. The only reason why we have this hearing is because it says in your own Act that you have to review this every five years. If they didn’t set that, you guys would not be here. I don’t think the territorial government or the Assembly will spend that much money to send six or seven committee members to hear language concerns. You had to do it because it’s in the Act.”

2.2.10 COMMUNITY LANGUAGE FUNDING

The messages the Committee received with regards to community language funding were unified, loud and clear:

- The major problem with the community language funding is that the amount available does not match the need for essential resources and programs that could contribute to the survival of the Aboriginal languages.
- There is no consistency in funding.
- There are too many disruptions in programming due to lack of funding.
- Insufficient funding also prevents program expansion in areas such as adult language and literacy and preschool programs. Such programs are crucial for the revitalization of the Aboriginal languages.
- The allocation by region and language does not consider the degree of endangerment or language loss and the degree necessary for revitalization.
- The allocation of the community language funding through regional political aboriginal bodies does not meet the needs of the language groups and ignores the fact that in some regions more than one language groups exists.
- Existing community language funding does not allow for year-round programming. The proposal based year-to-year funding forces staff and

39 Duane Smith in Inuvik, September 24, 2008
40 Dolphus Tutcho in Dél’înè, September 23, 2008
community volunteers to spend their time on proposal writing and in search of funding sources instead of on program delivery.

- Many participants observed that in recent years the already limited language funding for communities has been cut back. More money is needed for programming that could truly have an effect on language revitalization.
- It is difficult to find information about funding sources, criteria, and the application process.

Participants stressed that these concerns about funding are very serious, particularly given the essential role communities are assigned in language revitalization efforts under the Act.

“I don’t think your committee can do it or the territorial government. I think all that money that you’ve spent on the commissioner and the administration to keep the Aboriginal languages alive in the Territories.... All that funding should be done at the community level.”

“If what we say, that language is important, is really, truly important, then we have to come up with the funds that will make some successful programs work and make them work well. ... I know there’s an awful lot that needs to be done. There are many, many different pieces to the puzzle, and you, as a committee, probably know that more than anyone. But when you’re looking at the infrastructure, you’re looking at personnel, the people that can teach the language, you’re looking at the resources, you’re looking at parental support for having their children enrolled in an immersion program, all these variables have to be addressed, and in some ways they have to be addressed in a total package. Not just, “Here, we are working on resources,” or “Here, we are working on helping develop good language teachers” and that sort of thing. Really, it all has to be coordinated together in a very, very effective way. ...”

2.2.11 ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES REVITALIZATION

People demonstrated a great degree of awareness of the seemingly overwhelming task to save their languages. They understand that language revitalization cannot happen without an increase in community commitment. They have hope, that with increased

41 Dolphus Tutcho in Délı̨nę, September 23, 2008
42 Brent Kolbeck in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008
supports, better sharing and communication, and long-term planning their languages can be saved.

Language specialists and community language workers are aware that they have to find ways to get better support and buy-in from their leadership, parents and the community members at large. They know that time is running out, that the involvement of the remaining first language speakers is crucial for bringing back the daily use of their languages. They also know that they have to bridge generational gaps in order to engage younger adults and children.

“He’s saying that in these last several years as an elder, they really know there are very fast and great changes in our young people when it comes to language. He is also saying that in addressing our concern as a community member to you, we’re asking for help. We want something to happen. We want to get our language back and re-teach it back to our children or make these kinds of programs or services more noticeable and more helpful to our community.”43

Participants also expressed many ideas for programming and measures necessary to influence language use and revitalization.

People understand that the influence and dominance of English in their daily lives has increased over the last decade due to improved access to media and modern technology. They pointed to the importance of using modern technologies for creating tools and learning activities (websites, video games etc.) to interest children and youth in their traditional language.

“When a young kid sees a really good movie in our language, it will instill a lot of pride to speak their language first. ... Other areas like drop-in centres they should have. They have a drop-in centre for kids here, but I think everything in that drop-in centre revolves around the English language. So I think those are some of the ideas that could work really well.”44

In several communities speakers suggested that after-school programming for children, drop-in centres and youth centres could become more involved by supporting language use as part of their activities.

Several people spoke to the fact that many language activities take place in isolation. Instead resources should be exchanged, shared and distributed between the different language communities and made available to the public. Resources for Aboriginal language program delivery are developed and produced by individual language workers, language communities, or within the school system often funded by the GNWT. However there is no central catalogue or depository for these resources. Consequently there is no

43 Alfred Taniton through an Interpreter in Délînę, September 23, 2008
44 David Beyonnie in Délînę, September 23, 2008
sharing of these resources between the different stakeholder and nobody has any means to know what exactly is being produced.

In many communities presenters made an urgent plea for the need of a central language resource centre. This centre should be the depository for all resource materials produced. This would allow for the sharing and adaptation of learning materials between different languages and dialects and save in production costs. Such a centre would distribute and promote the resources on a website and/or as a lending library. It could also play a role in terminology and standards development.

It was also suggested that an annual language conference would allow for the exchange of ideas, issues, best practices and resources and support the community language groups in their revitalization activities. Language workers and service providers could exchange emerging themes like the need for terminology in the counseling field for suicide prevention and for dealing with the residential school experience.

There is growing awareness that the entire approach to language revitalization in the NWT needs to change:

“Another area, and a number of people ... have talked to it. It is a need for community involvement. I think we have a catch-22 whereby we fund EC&E and give them the mandate to work on language programming and that, but we know from history that 90 hours a year just isn’t going to do it. We really have to support the whole idea of community language growth and community language revitalization. We have to get the community leadership and the parents together on the same page in terms of saying, «Look, language is very, very important. We’re not really going to revitalize the language unless we are bringing this language into our homes and inviting this language into our homes. » So any kind of programs to be able to support that...”

Several speakers were aware of existing programs in other Canadian jurisdictions that could be easily accessed for capacity building at the community level.

“Perhaps looking at some things like CILLDI and looking at the University of Victoria program and aboriginal language revitalization might be valuable tools. CILLDI is the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute. It’s really focused on creating community linguists. The University of Victoria has an aboriginal language revitalization program. Those aren’t necessarily focused on school-based solutions for language revitalization; they’re focused on community-based solutions for language revitalization. I think that’s maybe something that we need a little bit more.”

45 Brent Kolbeck in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008
46 Unidentified speaker during the Fort Smith meeting on September 4, 2008
“One of our challenges is we’re talking about managing to revitalize, or save, nine languages, which I think really multiplies the challenge by nine, if not more. That becomes very difficult to fiscally manage and to just envision how you do something like that. I think, realistically, the only way you can conceive of doing that is if you move it to the ground level and empower the language groups to save their languages themselves. You can’t do it top-down. You can’t mandate it. You can’t manage it from above. You have to provide the resources to those language groups and allow them to do the work by providing guidance, direction and support as much as you can. ... I think you’ll probably find that with that support, they will rise to the task themselves.”47

2.3 WITNESSES

The Committee held witness hearings during the week of December 8 to 12, 2008. All meetings were open to the public and the media. This section will summarize the deliberations in order of the appearance of the witnesses.

47 John O’Keefe in Fort Smith, September 4, 2008
2.3.1 NWT BUREAU OF STATISTICS

The NWT Bureau of Statistics was represented by the Chief Statistician, Angelo Cocco who made a presentation to the Committee followed by questions from the members.

The Chief Statistician explained that there are two main information sources for language data for the Northwest Territories.

The Census by Statistics Canada

One source is the Census conducted by Statistics Canada across all provinces and territories every five years. The Census collects information on Mother Tongue, Home Language and Ability to Converse. The latest Census was conducted in 2006 with data release starting in December 2007. The next Census will take place in 2011.

The Census defines mother tongue as the language first learned in childhood and still understood. This information has been collected since 1901 and only became available for the NWT in 1971.

Home language is defined as the language spoken most often or on a regular basis at home. This information was first collected in 1981. In the 2001 Census the question prompt for this information was modified to ask about: first, which language is most often spoken at home and second, which language is used on a regular basis at home.

Questions about a person’s conversational ability have been asked since the 1991 Census. This information reflects a person’s self-reported ability to speak a language.

The Census also collects data in relation to Official Languages using the federal understanding of Official Languages, which are English and French. While some questions in the Census ask about Aboriginal languages, there is no consistent approach to the Aboriginal Official Languages of the NWT. For example the names for the languages are not consistent with the official names. The reporting on language indicators by language fluctuates. For example, in 1996 North and South Slavey were incorrectly reported together. Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun are reported together with Inuktitut.

Furthermore, there are significant concerns about the reliability of the 2001 Census information.
“Results from this census should be used with caution, in particular in making comparisons to other census years.”

The NWT Community Survey by the NWT Bureau of Statistics

The second source of language information comes from the NWT Community Survey conducted in the Northwest Territories by the NWT Bureau of Statistics every five years, offsetting the Census years in an attempt to provide data continuity with smaller time gaps. The NWT Community Survey only collects language information on Ability to Converse. The latest survey took place in 2004. The next Community Survey will be undertaken early in 2009 with the release of results expected for September 2009.

Information about conversation ability was collected every five years since 1984 first as part of the NWT Labour Force Survey and later as part of the NWT Community Survey. Questions about the ability to converse are asked for each of the Official Languages of the NWT. However between 1984 and 1999 information about conversational ability was only gathered for persons aged 15 years and older. Only since 2004 are survey results on “ability to converse” available for all ages.

The comparison of information on mother tongue or first language and home language is an important measurement for language shift. A high ratio of people that learned a language as their mother tongue but use a different language at home can indicate that the first language is no longer transmitted to children. This is called a gap in the intergenerational transmission of a language. It can also indicate that the language used as home language became dominantly used in society. These are both factors that affect the Aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories, and can both be indicators for the degree of endangerment of a language and the type of revitalization or preservation measures needed to protect an individual language.

Due to inconsistencies and changes in the information collection by Statistics Canada and the NWT Bureau of Statistics it remains difficult to have reliable, comparable data that can show development of the language indicators commonly used for the development and evaluation of language revitalization efforts.

The analytical focus of both Statistics Canada and the NWT Bureau of Statistics is on absolute number of speakers, the proportion of speakers in the total population, the age distribution of speakers and comparisons between the number of mother tongue and home language speakers.

The Committee has used the available data in its chapter on the state of the Official Languages in the NWT found in this report and wishes to thank the NWT Bureau of

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48 Angelo Coco, Chief Statistician during his appearance as a witness before the Standing Committee on Government Operations on December 9, 2008
Statistics and its staff for its assistance to make data available that allowed this evaluation.

2.3.2 FÉDÉRATION FRANCO-TÉNOISE

On December 9, 2008 the Fédération Franco-Ténoise represented by their President, Fernand Denault and their Executive Director, Leo-Paul Provencher appeared as witnesses before the Committee. The Fédération’s President made a presentation that was structured in eight chapters called “observations”.

Several of these observations related to ongoing court proceedings launched by the Fédération Franco-Ténoise and other plaintiffs alleging a failure of the GNWT and the Legislative Assembly to comply with the Official Languages Act, judgments rendered in these court proceedings, and evidence presented in the court proceedings.

The Committee Chair made the witnesses aware of the sub judice rule for Members of the Legislative Assembly, which provides that as a matter of general principle, Members should not comment on proceedings before the courts in order to protect the independence of the judicial and legislative arms government.

The Fédération Franco-Ténoise provided additional documents as appendices to their submission. These included a decision made by the Alberta provincial court in the “Caron Case”, documents of a forum on linguistic rights in Manitoba held on October 18, 2008 at the Collège St-Boniface (Winnipeg, Manitoba), and an article by Edmund A. Aunger from the Campus Saint-Jean of the University of Alberta.

The Fédération Franco-Ténoise stressed that “A careful reading of the Act quickly reveals that only French and English have equality of status and equal rights and privileges.”

The Fédération Franco-Ténoise representatives also commented on the Office of the Language Commissioner.

“The Office of the Language Commissioner is not performing its role of providing information, initiating investigations, and protecting rights. It did not look into whether the government is implementing the Act. Its annual report said nothing about that responsibility and was itself evidence of a problem in the absence of any

49 Translation provided by the Translation Bureau of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Submission to the Standing Committee on Government Operations with regard to the review of the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, La Fédération Franco-Ténoise, December 9, 2008
desire to intervene. This office has done a poor job of assuming its new Ombudsman-type role. ...

Nevertheless, we maintain that this office has an essential role to play, to help quickly end cases of non-compliance with the Act, to give the public a voice with respect to the communication and services they receive or do not receive, and, in particular, to investigate for itself any absence and/or deficiency of service.”50

The witnesses also spoke to the effectiveness of the Official Languages Board.

“... the Minister responsible for Official Languages has the duty to take steps to meet our needs by means of a board tailored to our reality and distinct from the one that deals with the Aboriginal languages, which have altogether different rights and requirements. ...

After faithful participation in meetings of the Official Languages Board, our representative was forced to acknowledge that there were problems with irregular participation by some board members, that cooperation by government departments was inadequate to meet the board’s needs, and that the representatives of the various communities had very different realities and objectives.”51 (Text bolded in original)

The Fédération Franco-Ténoise representatives explained that they withdrew from the Official Languages Board as they deemed it ineffective for dealing with the needs and realities of the francophone community. In August of 2006, the organization made a request to the Minister asking for the establishment of a “cooperation committee” to “deal directly and exclusively with issues relating to the francophone community”.

During the discussion that followed their presentations the Fédération Franco-Ténoise further elaborated that:

- There are not enough services in place, that bilingual employees exist within Government but they are not identified or available to the public.

They also commented that the GNWT refused to put more services in place following the Fédération Franco-Ténoise’s priorities that were identified many years ago.

- The single window service centre (Service TNO) does not offer the full range of services and is hindered by limited availability of forms, information and documents in French. Its success beyond the pilot year will depend on the GNWT’s willingness to consult with the francophone community on their needs.
- Canada has the obligation to pay for 100% of the cost for French services occurred by the GNWT.
- Lack of willingness and planning by the GNWT to develop an implementation plan for the Act that would also guarantee funding commitments by Canada.

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
• The NWT Official Languages Act is a good law that lacks implementation.

2.3.3 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BOARD

Sabet Biscaye, as the Chair of the Official Languages Board, appeared as a witness before the Committee on December 10, 2008. She led into her presentation by quoting one of the Committee’s review objectives, to examine whether the Official Languages Board has met its’ mandate to review the rights, status and use of Official Languages?

Several factors were pointed out that affected the Board’s ability to fulfill this mandate:

• There was a lack of commitment by some Board members that made some meetings or decisions impossible as there was no quorum
• The commitment of the appointed board members relates to appointment process. Community leadership who recommend language representatives to the Minister does not take the mandate and expectations towards the Official Language Board seriously. They should consider the abilities and knowledge of their nominees, request accountability back to the language community and express their expectations towards achieving their language goals.
• Presently there is little awareness of the two languages boards. The people who know about them are confused about their roles and how they differ from each other
• There are many issues related to the administrative support to both Languages Boards: lack of communication and flow of information, lack of activity and budget planning, no dedicated support for the Boards. The same staff that is assigned to provide administrative support to the Boards is also supporting the Minister and his department in all matters relating to Official Languages.
• The Board did not receive requested information (for example on service demand and delivery or on bilingual bonus position criteria, qualifications and usage) and often did not receive an acknowledgment of the correspondence.
• Given the role as an advisory board to the Minister, there is not enough exchange with the Minister. The Chair also expressed the expectation on behalf of the Board that the Minister should attend the Board meetings from time to time. In addition not all requests and recommendations brought to the Minister’s attention were followed up with.

The Chair concluded that under these circumstances the Official Languages Board cannot follow through with its mandate.

Other issues
• Insufficient support and commitment by the GNWT for advancing
  o Interpreter/Translator training
  o Dene font development
  o A planned approach to terminology development. Instead pockets of projects
    are being funded that make the activities sporadic and uncoordinated
• Repeated demands by language stakeholder and communities for an annual
  language conference remain unanswered. This request was also brought forward to
  the Minister but there was no response.
• No action after the evaluation of the two languages boards was concluded. The
  Chair was satisfied with the opportunities for Board members to participate in the
  languages board evaluation commissioned by the Department of Education,
  Culture and Employment. The Evaluation included recommendations and options
  for changing the current board structure and reporting relationship. Some of these
  recommendations would have required changes to the Official Languages Act. The
  Chair felt that the Government had to be pushed to respond to this report. A
  response to the two chairs of the languages boards was issued more than a year
  after the evaluation report. While the report was accepted by the Department of
  Education, Culture and Employment few changes were implemented. Any
  potential changes to the Act were referred to the current review of the Official
  Languages Act.
• There are limited efforts to promote the use of Aboriginal languages by the
  Minister responsible for Official Languages. There is no planned, coordinated and
  continuous approach to language promotion that would allow to measure any
  results from promotional activities.
• Concerns about the Languages Commissioner position were expressed to the
  Speaker

Recommendations

• In accordance with the original SCROLA recommendations there should be only
  one Board instead of two. This board should have independent, separate and
  designated administrative support.
• The list of community organizations that are delegated to nominate language
  community representatives should be broadened and not limited to political
  organizations. Overall there needs to be more lobbying and promotion when
  candidates are sought for the board positions in order to find the best candidates.
• The board members should be appointed for a three to four year term, recognizing
  that there is a learning curve at the beginning of the appointment. Minimum
  requirements for board members qualifications and experience should be
  developed in writing. The accountability requirements for the board members
  towards their language communities should also be documented.
• Combined, these measures would raise the profile of the board and its members requiring higher degree of commitment to the fulfilling the mandate.
• The Government should allow for a different consultation process with the francophone community that would respond to their needs.
• The Chair also questioned the reporting structure of the Board to the Minister Responsible for Official Languages and asked if a reporting relationship with the Languages Commissioner’s Office would be more efficient and appropriate. Recommendations from the Board may move faster if coming through the Office of the Languages Commissioner.
• The role and mandate described in the Act needs to be clarified. For example include a better description of the Board’s roles and responsibilities, what the weight is of and the process for recommendation in light of the board’s advisory function.
• The Official Languages Board had recommended to the Minister to conduct random interviews with GNWT employees to examine their knowledge of Official Languages related policies and guidelines. The Chair of the Official Languages Board suggested to the Committee that instead of policies and guidelines the GNWT should develop regulations on how the Official Languages Act is to be implemented as regulations are perceived as less voluntary and stronger.
• The Official Languages Board suggests that the Languages Commissioner position should be a full-time position allowing for higher profile of the position and enhancing the chances to recruit a qualified aboriginal candidate.
• The promotional mandate currently lies with the Minister Responsible for Official Languages and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. The Chair of the Official Languages Board suggested this mandate would be better placed as part of the role of the Languages Commissioner.
• The Board Chair made a range of practical suggestions that would lead to improved service provisions by the GNWT as well as to an increased awareness of language rights:
  o Regional and territorial data should be collected by each Government department and agency on the number of request for language services, the number of language services provided with details on how services were provided (through direct delivery, by a designated bilingual position or by interpretation/translation)
  o Information about bilingual bonus positions that would include the numbers and titles of these positions, information of fluency assessment and competency testing for awarding bilingual bonuses, percentage of language services provided by incumbents of bilingual bonus positions and in general what requirements are expected of an employee to provide language services. It was also suggested that the GNWT review the bilingual bonus amount and consider an increase for qualified bilingual employees.
• The Chair commented that the Minister responsible for Official Languages should not also carry the responsibilities as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Separating these portfolios would strengthen the distinguished mandates.
• The Chair in concluding her submissions reminded the Committee that saving the Aboriginal languages and committing to the implementation of the Official Languages Act is a collective responsibility. She also suggested that the Legislative Assembly has a role to play in the promotion of the use of the Official Languages and needs to be more proactive in responding to the Languages Commissioner’s recommendations and ensuring the Government reacts to those recommendations.

2.3.4 ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES REVITALIZATION BOARD

The Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board (ALRB) appeared on December 10, 2008 as a witness before the Committee. The board chair, Liz Hansen and several other board members were available to provide comments and answer questions of the Committee Members.

The ALRB clearly favored the amalgamation of the two existing languages boards. They believe this would strengthen the role and mandate of the Board. The responsibilities of the Board are not clearly laid out in the Act, and the term of the appointments should be lengthened. The board nomination process should be reviewed to allow for a broader, fairer representation of the different language groups. The expectations from the nominating community organizations towards the Board members are not clear. Administrative support is perceived to be lacking, with no acknowledgement of requests or recommendations, no process in place to check in and follow-up. There is a lack of process and protocol on how the Boards communicates and interacts with the Minister.

The following recommendations were made by members of the Aboriginal Revitalization Board during the hearing with the Committee.

Need for increased administrative support that would include:

• Dedicated support staff,
• Improved activity planning including community consultation for each language representative with their respective language groups,
• Budget planning.

Issues with Board member commitment and Board performance
Lack of understanding of mandate and role and the difference between the two boards: The Board members felt their orientation at beginning of the term was insufficient to provide them with comprehensive information on their roles, responsibilities, powers, reporting and supporting relationships.

No knowledge about what resources (for example budget) are available for fulfill this mandate.

Remuneration not seen as an incentive by all.

Community agencies that work on languages should be involved in the nomination process allowing for more adequate community representation and the selection of candidates that are knowledgeable in the subject area and are able to provide a continuous exchange with community language groups.

Term for board nominations should be five years in order to develop a strategic plan, work plan and partnership development.

Lack of strategic plan and work plan contributed to the lack of administrative support and funds. The Chair expressed the expectation that "a facilitator who understood language issues and challenges in the Northwest Territories" could have helped the Board to plan its goals and activities.

Aboriginal languages protection and revitalization

Need to revive Interpreter/Translator program and ongoing training for existing I/Ts at community level.

Linking the recognition of Aboriginal languages to indigenous rights granted in Section 35 of the Constitution.

Role of Education, Culture and Employment in curriculum development and implementation from K – 12.

Budget and planning for promotional activities.

Impact of the closure of the Language Bureau is still being felt. For example the lack of terminology development has a direct impact on the acceleration of language loss.

If the GNWT wants to give more responsibilities for language revitalization to the regions and communities, that needs to come with increased funding. It would increase the sense of ownership within the communities.

The Committee was surprised to find out during the witness hearing that none of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board members was aware or had seen the SCROLA recommendations issued in 2003.

52 Liz Hansen, Yellowknife, December 10, 2008
The NWT Literacy Council was represented by a Board Director, Amanda Mallon and their Research Coordinator, Helen Balanoff during its appearance as a witness before the Committee. The representatives made a presentation and were available for questions from the Members.

The NWT Literacy Council is recognized Canada wide as a leader in family literacy development because of its community development approach. They also focus on research into language and literacy issues specific to the NWT and contribute to journals and books about their work. The Council usually works in partnership with language organization, academic institutions and community groups to seek out opportunities to support Aboriginal language and literacy development.

The NWT Literacy Council also participated in the review of the Official Languages Act conducted by the Special Committee. At that time the Council supported the protection of Aboriginal language rights under the Act and recommended “that the government needed to take a more comprehensive approach to language retention and revitalization and ... the government needed to provide local capacity building and training, as well as appropriate resources and supports, to truly impact the work on language revitalization.”

The NWT Literacy Council acknowledged progress made to date particularly the recognition of additional languages in the Act, the establishment of the boards to give language communities a greater role in direction setting and planning, the development of Aboriginal language nests, and the progress in the implementation of the Aboriginal language curriculum, and the progress of some Government departments in providing information in all Official Languages on their website.

The Board Director spoke to the “....pressing need for a more comprehensive approach to language preservation and revitalization...” that needs to start with strong support for capacity building at the community level as the language groups have the primary responsibility for language planning, delivery and use. Such a community development

“approach is both slow and costly. In the end, though, this approach is longer lasting and more effective than a top down approach. Community capacity building, however, requires ongoing support from government. This support must include ongoing training at the local level to plan, manage, evaluate and sustain language development work. Other supports should include promotion, fundraising, publishing, research and the effective use of technology...”

53 NWT Literacy Council presentation to Standing Committee, December 11, 2008
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
Aboriginal language groups have identified the following key government activities as necessary supports for language revitalization: the development of Unicode Dene fonts, an Aboriginal language website, standardization of Dene orthography, the need for an annual aboriginal language conference and an Aboriginal language resource centre.

The NWT Literacy Council also stated that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to teaching. Individuals and groups that are active in these areas must work in partnerships and not in isolation for their efforts to have an effect on language learning and hence the revitalization of the Aboriginal languages.

- The Council acknowledges that the introduction of the Aboriginal language nests program in 2003 was a critical component for language revitalization and was embraced by 20 language communities. Despite being seen as one of the most effective strategic investments for language revitalization the funding has been decreasing and is allocated on a year-to-year basis. The Literacy Council suggests that, “The GNWT needs to afford higher priority to language nests and ensure they have adequate, sustainable, and multi-year funding.”56

- Another suggestion brought to the Committee’s attention is the inadequacy of Aboriginal language programming in schools. While some schools have made progress in immersion programs, for many students language instruction is reduced to 30 minutes or less per day. “The NWT can learn from examining best practice in language teaching from the considerable research that other jurisdictions have conducted, and adapt it as necessary and apply it in this context.”57

- The NWT Literacy Council also pointed out that “Language development in early childhood programs and schools (as well as the college) often occurs in isolation from other language initiatives in the community, and vice-versa.” And suggests that, “... Aboriginal language communities must be granted a meaningful role in community based language activities including educational institution.” This however will depend on the Government’s willingness to support such a “life-long learning approach” with policies and procedures that would foster such partnerships.

- The Research Coordinator of the Council explained that language groups, Teaching and Learning Centers, language nest workers, Aboriginal Language, Cultural Instructors, as well as the Literacy Council itself all do some research and develop resources to deliver their programs. However there is no coordination between these different groups and agencies. The effective sharing of these resources would require a clearing house.

Like other language groups and members of the public that the Committee heard from, the Council made a strong case for the urgency of language survival work and that this

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
requires strong commitment on the part of government including adequate financial resources.

“... available funding levels do not correspond to the work necessary to ensure survival of the languages. Funding levels have not increased since government devolved responsibility for language programming to language groups in 1999. ... Language groups need to be able to sustain language work on an ongoing basis. .... the government must find ways to move away from proposal-based, year-to-year funding towards more foundational, multi-year funding that will ensure continuity and stability.”

The NWT Literacy Council found that, since the shift of the promotional role to the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board since the last amendments to the Act in 2003 the actual promotion of the languages became more limited. The Council points out that in order to enable the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board to fulfill this mandate the government needs to lend more support in particular in the area of communications.

The Board Director also spoke to the need that language rights have to be better promoted and that “active offers” from Government institutions need to become more visible and consistent. She pointed out that “A review of the website of the Department of Education, Culture & Employment- the department responsible for overseeing Official Languages – reveals no visible “active offer”. Promotion of language rights is essential to a more complete understanding of these rights by the people who need these services.”

The NWT Literacy Council submitted the following recommendations:

- “Include a provision in the Official Languages Act that results in enhanced capacity of language groups to support language revitalization work in communities
- Include support for language development needs through the establishment of resource centres, improved training, research, resource development and advocacy, as part of the implementation of the finding from this review. Review funding levels and funding allocation as part of this support.
- Create stronger partnerships between Aboriginal language communities and the education system by actively promoting joint decision-making and resource sharing among early childhood programs, District Education Authorities, the college and language communities.
- In collaboration with the Aboriginal language communities and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, promote the value and use of Aboriginal languages in the NWT to make them as visible and as valued as English.

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
• Carry out an active public awareness campaign to inform the public of its rights under the Act, of the services guaranteed by the GNWT under the Act and the activities it support through public funds. In particular, explore ways in which “active offer” can be enhanced.

• Improve monitoring and support for the implementation of the recommendations resulting from this review of the Official Languages Act. We are pleased that this committee considers the findings for the previous review as still ‘valid and usable’, but, like other people, we are concerned with the lack of accountability around government commitments to language.

2.3.6 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

The Languages Commissioner, Shannon Gullberg, appeared as a witness before the Committee on December 11, 2009. In her presentation the Commissioner explained why she believes that the “Act has not served its purposes.” ... and that “the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories have yet to determine the purpose in having enacted this piece of legislation. Further, there does not appear to be a vision of what Official Languages should look like in the Northwest Territories.”

Furthermore, the Commissioner submitted that the Official Languages Act is weak and not clear, is not comprehensive, its enforcement impossible and does not take the real needs of the language communities into account.

In her presentation to the Committee the Languages Commissioner stated the following short-comings:

• No significant advancement on the development of regulations, policies and procedures to administer and implement the Act
• There are no regulation that stipulate when and where the language rights apply
• Spending related to languages has a low priority for government departments
• No cohesive procedures for the provision of language services throughout government
• No centralized resource for the provision of Aboriginal language services
• Using the federal Official Languages Act as a model does not work well for the NWT and makes the Act reactive instead of proactive. The qualifiers “significant demand” and “nature of the office” are nowhere defined in the NWT languages framework

60 Languages Commissioner’s presentation to Standing Committee, December 11, 2008
• Issue whether the preamble of the Act reflects the objectives of the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories properly
• No comprehensive strategy to make the Aboriginal languages part of everyday life, even though some progress has been made in the education and literacy areas
• “... the Government has not been fully committed to the preservation, development and enhancement of Official Languages...”\(^{61}\), which may contribute to the death of many Aboriginal languages
• No plan to provide appropriate translation/interpretation service and no plan for training and certification of Interpreter/Translators
• The Minister responsible for Official Languages has not developed a cohesive approach to the preservation, promotion and enhancement of Official Languages including the delivery of language services throughout the GNWT
• The approach of the Government towards Aboriginal languages could be characterized as incomprehensive and band-aid style.
• "There is no indication that the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board or the Official Languages Board have been effective in their roles."\(^{62}\)
• The Languages Commissioner has not been effective since the inception of the Office because there was no direct reporting back from the Legislative Assembly to the Commissioner, recommendations of the Commissioner have not been acted upon, and the Languages Commissioner lacks the power to enforce change. The Commissioner had difficulties setting up meetings with Government departments and the languages boards
• The Government shows a lack of commitment and funding towards the language communities
• There should be only one languages board with a clearly defined role and equipped with better supports

The Government needs to look at revising the Official Languages Act and look if it is truly willing or able to deliver services granted as rights in the legislation. Furthermore, the Languages Commissioner recommended the following changes to the Official Languages Act:

• Review the appropriateness of the Preamble particularly in light of “language of work”, equality of English and French and the rights granted for Aboriginal Official Languages
• Review the Government Institution Regulations to ensure completeness of institutions that are subject to the Official Languages Act
• Extend the application of the Official Languages Act to contractors providing services on behalf of the GNWT

\(^{61}\) Ibid.
\(^{62}\) Ibid.
• Review which languages should be protected as Official Languages under the Act
• Add a clause to the Act that gives each Member of the Legislative Assembly the right to translation of the debates and proceedings in another Official Language
• Amend section 11 of the Act by granting that “some basic service should be available in any and all Official Languages, regardless of geographical area. This should include health services, mandatory registration, licensing, safety, and other services that the legislators consider essential.” while other services are made available according to designated language areas.
• Reconsider the scope of power of the Language Commissioner
• “... review the effectiveness of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board in the promotion and protection of languages.”
2.3.7 MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Minister Responsible for Official Languages appeared as witness before the Committee on December 12, 2008. After short opening comments the Minister and his staff were available for questions from the Members of the Committee.

In his opening remarks the Minister:

- Noted that the implementation of some of the SCROLA recommendations from 2003 would take time and significant investment and that the Government of the Northwest Territories has followed through with implementing many but not all of the recommendations.
- Remarked that the territorial government relies on substantial investments by the federal government to support the priorities of the language communities. However the government was only able to negotiate extensions of previous agreements with Canada that included modest increases in French language funding.
- Mentioned a study underway to improve services to the Francophone community. The government intends to decide on the options presented while considering “legislative, judicial and executive framework”(s) implemented in other Canadian jurisdictions.
- Expressed concerns about the health of Aboriginal languages faced with a continued decline.
  “Reversing that trend will take considerable work and increased investment not only by our government but also by our partners including other governments, language communities, families and individuals themselves.”

Most questions addressed to the Minister related directly to his role and mandate as provided for in the Act and the commitments the Government of the Northwest Territories made in response to the SCROLA recommendations. Members had also taken notice of the Minister’s Annual Reports on Official Languages and discussed some of their concerns arising from the information provided in those reports.

The Minister was asked if the Official Languages Act is achieving its spirit and intent or if another vehicle would be more suitable. He responded that the Act was put in place for a purpose, and that the Government does what it can to make it work and that it takes all parties to participate. Overall the Act works. There are $10 million dollars in contributions to schools for language programming. The Minister also commented that the Department

63 Minister Introductory Comments to Standing Committee on Government Operations, December 12, 2008
of Education, Culture and Employment works with the language groups and considers enhancing the Official Languages Division to address some of the challenges at the community level concerning the language groups.

The Minister insisted that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment keeps reflecting on what can be done to stop the decline of Aboriginal languages and is committed to consultations with language communities. The Minister committed to a renewal and expedited implementation of the Aboriginal Languages Strategy and is aware that community funding processes and guidelines need to be addressed.

Many activities that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment would like to develop and implement are hindered by the federal government’s reluctance to increase language funding for the Northwest Territories.

Members asked several questions regarding the mandate and functions of the Official Languages Division. As a response to SCROLA’s recommendation to create an Official Languages Secretariat, the Division is now reporting directly to the Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It is charged with government wide management and policy functions relating to Official Languages and the Official Languages Act, including support for the development of Official Languages policies, guidelines and regulations and monitoring government adherence to existing policies and guidelines. The Division also provides administrative support to the Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.

Members pointed out that little progress has been made in developing or reviewing any policies or regulations that would help to clarify the implementation of the Act and questioned if this division has the capacity and resources to fulfill the functions that were assigned by the Minister responsible for Official Languages. The Minister further explained that no external review of the division was undertaken, and that the Department needs to work within its limited resources. He believes that the Department has the capacity to fulfill its obligations and he looks forward to receiving the Committee's recommendations for improvement.

The Minister responded that there is always room for improvement, that his goal to review and update the Language Strategy might encompass potentially restructuring the Official Languages Division.

When asked if Education, Culture and Employment plans to develop an evaluation framework for the implementation of the Act, the Minister responded that there needs to
be more work and consultation with the language communities to identify what works and what does not.

Members also discussed the effectiveness of the two languages boards. The Minister acknowledged that much needs to be done to strengthen communications and working relationships with the Boards and he is committed to resolving the issues that emerged since their establishment. He explained that the Official Languages Division holds a budget of $150,000 dollars for the Boards, but that they might not be aware of this funding. Department staff explained that board planning and development workshops were held in 2007 but it remains the discretion of the Board members to determine how to use this information in order to fulfill their broad mandate.

The Minister admitted that it was a challenge for his staff to support the Boards. While the staff felt they provided all necessary information and documentation, and lent their support to plan and conduct board meetings, the Board did not meet regularly, and did not provide direction to the Minister. He is aware of the level of frustration experienced by board members and understands there is a need for continuous dialogue, communication and meetings. The Minister stated that he is fully committed to resolve the issue. He also stressed the responsibility of the communities to nominate qualified and competent representative to serve on the boards, while the Department of Education, Culture and Employment needs to support the operation of the boards. He as the Minister relies on the Boards’ advice and having ineffective languages boards ultimately has a big impact on the language communities.

The Minister also recognized that it might be advisable to reconsider the creation of two languages board as the present structure does not meet the needs of the communities. As the Boards are created through the Official Languages Act, the Minister looks forward to the conclusion of the present review by the Committee and will consider the recommendations that may come out as a result of the review.

The status of the implementation of SCROLA recommendations was discussed as well. The Minister explained that the Department in preparation for the current review has for the first time created a document that systematically looks at the status of each recommendation and that he is committed to follow through with all of them.

Another discussion topic was whether the Department of Education, Culture and Employment or the Official Languages Division have undertaken any work to develop training for GNWT staff to improve their understanding of the Official Languages Act and
the obligations arising for government institutions out of the Act. Members pointed out that such an initiative would also contribute to better cross-cultural understanding and should be part of employee orientation and should be coordinated with the Department of Human Resources. The Minister explained that some progress has been made with teacher orientation and that in particular the Tł̨ı̨chǫ model for teacher orientation has been very successful, but there is no government wide initiative under way. He appreciated the comments and suggested that this issue should also be addressed in the renewal of the Language Strategy and that he intends to work with the Department of Human Resources in the future.

The Minister was also asked if the Government of the Northwest Territories has set any targets for service and program delivery in Official Languages. The Minister responded that progress has been made in certain areas like the delivery and expansion of the Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Instructor Program, improved delivery of the community based teacher program, the implementation of language nests and Aboriginal language curricula, the establishment of the French single window service centre as a pilot project and that the GNWT continues to work with the federal government to negotiate a multi-year language funding agreement with increased contributions.

Members questioned the Minister about the urgency to reinstate Interpreter/Translator training and why little progress has been made on the SCROLA recommendations in that regard. The Minister and his staff confirmed that Interpreter/Translator training is still a priority for the Department and that it is a long-term project to continue to develop a pool of Interpreter/Translators. They are hopeful that the pilot training program in partnership with the Yëmëk Kue Society and the Akaitcho Territory Governments will lead to the establishment of a community based program.

The Minister and his staff acknowledged the many challenges around terminology development and the disposition and exchange of existing resources. They are aware of the stakeholders’ interest in an Aboriginal Languages Services Centre that could also serve as a central depository. They suggest that this idea must be further discussed between the Department and the language communities.

When Members insisted that without systematic planning frameworks for the implementation of the Act, the evaluation of existing services, programs and initiatives is impossible and successes cannot be measured, the Minister responded that these suggestions will be considered during the renewal of the Languages Strategy that is planned for the near future.
2.4 LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS & FRONTLINE WORKERS

The Standing Committee on Government Operations contracted Awasis Education Inc. to undertake surveys, interviews and focus groups targeting Aboriginal language specialists and frontline workers from across the NWT. This consultation took place in during June, July and August 2008.

The findings of both the surveys and focus groups identified common themes. These themes are structured in relation to community, education, resources, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Languages Commissioner and concerns that were specific to individual language groups. 64

Community

1. **Culture and language cannot be separated.** This is a fundamental issue in language maintenance and revitalization. Language and culture define identity. We need to bring traditions into the present. For example, living off the land is not, in itself, a tradition that must be maintained; rather, it’s the values and beliefs surrounding living off the land that we need to keep. One Elder said: We can’t go back in time and live as we used to, but it doesn’t mean that people aren’t Dene anymore. This is a key issue in identity politics today and it embodies an approach that has a significant impact on language revitalization.

2. **The language should be taught at home.** Children should be encouraged to use their language. Parents need resources and support to use, remember and learn their language.

3. **Our languages suffer from residential school impacts.** We need to learn the value of learning language. Parents need to learn the value of learning language even if they don’t speak it. Some people have a hard time speaking their Aboriginal language because they were punished at residential school for speaking it; we need to do a lot of healing.

4. **It takes a special effort to use the language.** There is some difficulty for Elders to always speak in the Aboriginal language while everyone else is speaking English. This is a key issue for language revitalization. It takes a special effort to use the

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language and it is often easier to speak in English because that is the dominant language.

5. **Language is something that will come back if taught to babies and children.** Our brains are programmed to learn language during infancy. Babies exposed to language prior to being verbal have exact pronunciation.

6. **Community leaders must be involved in language initiatives.** They can provide support to language workers and their community by speaking out, identifying funding sources, and acting as role models by speaking their Aboriginal language. Young people need to see that the Aboriginal languages are important and have a place in today’s society.

7. **We need to strengthen holistic communication that includes territorial government, community governments and community organizations.** There are many great initiatives and efforts from each area, yet often language specialists feel they are working in isolation. Each party does not seem aware of what the other is doing. Schools, Teaching and Learning Centres, First Nations governments, GNWT departments and others involved in language programs and services should be communicating.

**Education**

8. **We need K-6 Immersion schools.** There is an overwhelming request for immersion programs whereby all school subjects are based on Dene, Inuvialuit, Inuit and Métis approaches to education. If we truly want to maintain the Aboriginal languages, children must receive a strong foundation in their Aboriginal language before entering English school. There is a need for more trained teachers with language fluency and greater involvement of Elders in the classroom. Community members need to take the initiative to develop language skills. Decision makers should be made aware that Dene Kede and Inuqatigiit curriculum guides are not reflective of all the Aboriginal language and culture groups. For example, many respondents said that Dene Kede seems to be North Slavey. In addition, these guides are not being used as intended in the schools. They are supposed to be incorporated into all subjects at all grades.

9. **There is desperate need for language training.** Language specialists need ongoing training in order to teach and use their languages properly. They also need to be able to take the available training in a more efficient manner. For example, the Aurora College ALCIP program is offered on a part-time basis so it takes years to
complete one year of training. Now that the ALCIP has become a two-year diploma it will take much longer to complete if this mode of delivery continues. There are many language teachers who are nearing retirement age so younger people must be trained quickly to take their place. There is a middle generation that understands their language but does not speak it. They need support so that they can become fluent speakers and perhaps language teachers and resource persons. People want full-time language learning programs and resources they can use at home. They also want much more literacy training.

10. **Young people need encouragement to use whatever Aboriginal language skills they have.** Some schools are offering Aboriginal language classes to elementary grades while high school grades are not receiving Aboriginal language teaching at school. Many Elders expressed concerns that young people are between two worlds without the skills and abilities to function in either one. There is a relationship between this loss of identity and substance abuse, family violence, crime and other social issues.

11. **On the land programs should be language learning opportunities.** On the land programs should be at least one month long, immersion programs with Elders involved to teach men’s and women’s traditional roles and skills. There is concern that the funding goes to schools and is not available for other skilled resource people to offer on the land programs. Often the language money is used for culture camps but the camps include little or no Aboriginal language.

12. **Elders’ pensions are affected by honoraria that they receive so they hesitate to work on language and culture projects.** Perhaps the leadership could approach the federal government to point out that wage employment in the north is relatively new. Therefore, many Elders did not have wage employment from which they could get CPP benefits. For this reason, and because the cost of living is so much higher in the north, they could perhaps be compensated by allowing them to earn more money before deductions are made to their Old Age pension.

**Resources**

13. **We need to digitize and further develop our Aboriginal languages collections.** There are a tremendous number of recordings (cassettes, films, etc.) from the 70s & 80s in all nine Official Aboriginal languages that cannot be accessed in their current format. In addition, all language groups need more materials development, especially in a multi-media format that appeals to younger learners.
14. **We need a resource website for each language.** Some language groups have a webpage but lack time, money, or skills to finish or update it. GNWT made a commitment to develop a website but has not completed this to date.

15. **We need to share resources between language groups.** The GNWT should assist language communities in this initiative by setting up a central repository and distributing an up-to-date listing of all Aboriginal language materials available. Sharing resources reduces costs. Language groups could be reminded of the importance of working together and understanding that each language community is facing many of the same issues. This involves being open to the idea that not every language resource will be produced in the home community.

16. **We need to recognize dialect differences in such a way that it does not impede sharing resources.** Aboriginal languages were primarily oral languages. The shift to written language presents many challenges and opportunities. Several issues arise in writing due to dialect differences. Dialect is part of identity and therefore, it can be an infringement on identity to suggest using another community’s dialect. The question is how to recognize and honour dialectical differences while agreeing upon writing materials and spelling systems.

17. **The GNWT can assist all language specialists and frontline workers to meet together on a regular basis.** Currently, small groups of language specialists get together. However they would greatly benefit from meeting and sharing resources with everyone working on Aboriginal languages in every field. This could be a “language fair” where language workers and specialists bring samples of all their resources to exchange.

18. **We need to document place names and the related stories.** When people become aware of the importance of special places, they feel more connected to the land and their identity. Our place names were our maps before we had written resources. The stories surrounding place names were told in such a way that a person could remember and recognize a certain place and find their way on the land. These place names also embody our history, our traditions, our beliefs and they identify our traditional land use areas.

Government of the Northwest Territories

19. **The Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board should be one board.** They need to be more proactive. They have a duty to communicate more with the people they represent. There is concern that
community language issues are not being brought to these boards and boards are not reporting back to the communities. Chairpersons are responsible for making sure all the language groups have input and get adequate feedback. The Boards need a communication tool.

20. **Signs should be in all Official languages.** At the least, signs should include the Aboriginal languages of that community. This includes street signs, and signs on buildings and commercial centres. Some respondents suggested the signs in grocery store aisles should include Aboriginal languages. The GNWT has an Official Languages Guidelines document that outlines these requirements; it seems that many employees, including those responsible for Aboriginal language programs, are not aware of this document.

21. **We need more information about the Official Languages Act, the language boards and language revitalization activities.** People should be more aware of these matters. This information is hard to find so a more proactive approach must be adopted. People have a right to know about how their languages are protected, who is responsible for programs and services and how to contact these people. Employees responsible for Aboriginal languages need to initiate the contact with communities as often as possible.

22. **The GNWT and its institutions need to follow the “active offer” policy** whereby government offices take the initiative to offer the public services and programs in their language. Most signs, where they do exist in government offices, only indicate that services are available in English and French. Voicemail messages are often in English only and, even at the ECE Language Services Division, the message is only in English and French.

23. **People do want interpreter/translator training.** Aurora College used to offer a two-year diploma in this field. Several respondents gave positive feedback about this program. Interpreter/translators need on-going upgrading and terminology workshops in order to stay abreast of current issues and professional practices. They also need government to assist in setting up terminology banks that can be accessed by anyone who needs them.

24. **People are entitled to the services of a qualified interpreter/translator (I/T).** Many people have friends and family interpret for them. Using untrained volunteer interpreters can cause serious problems, including liability for errors or omissions. The GNWT can update and expand its list of interpreter/translators on a regular basis and share these lists with other departments and government institutions. A
list of employees who receive the language bonus could also be circulated. Departments and agencies also need assistance with the process of hiring I/T’s and testing language skills to ensure fluency.

25. **We need more communication on funding opportunities.** Many people working with languages are not aware of the funding opportunities that exist or the activities of other language groups. The GNWT should ensure that people know about language funding sources by contacting each community directly. The GNWT could employ someone who can assist individuals and communities with identifying additional funding sources.

26. **People who are responsible for Aboriginal language programs and services in government need to work together and communicate.** More information on funding, programs and services needs to be shared with language communities. There is only one Aboriginal Languages Coordinator in ECE and this position has sometimes been left vacant for long periods of time. The GNWT needs to engage more staff to work on the languages. The Languages Services Division should be more active.

27. **There is concern that too much language money is spent on administration and little is getting to the communities.** According to participant feedback, each body that processes the Aboriginal language money takes a share for administration. This means that the funding that actually gets to the language programs in the communities is greatly reduced. For example, respondents in Délı̨nę and Fort McPherson expressed concerns about recent cuts to successful language programs. Other respondents expressed concerns regarding the process and funding distribution of Language Plans. For example, some respondents involved in managing community language plans and programs are not aware of their Aboriginal governments’ plans and processes or visa-versa.

**Languages Commissioner**

28. **The Languages Commissioner needs to be a model of language activism.** S/he needs to ensure that information is accurate, available and widely distributed. There needs to be more presence in the communities and communication with language specialists and frontline workers. Some respondents have had difficulty contacting this office and have not been satisfied with the response to their inquiry or complaint.
29. The Languages Commissioner should inform News North newspaper that Inuinnaqtun is also an Official language in the NWT. Inuinnaqtun is not listed with all the other Official languages in Word Quest, a weekly language contest.

Specific Language Group Concerns

30. Chipewyan language speakers and learners need a dictionary. All the other Aboriginal groups have a dictionary that they continue to build on.

31. Chipewyan language speakers and learners in Dettah, Ndilo and Yellowknife should receive part of the ECE community language funding. This money is given to Akaitcho Territory Government based on a formula that includes all Chipewyan language speakers in Dettah, Ndilo and Yellowknife, but they have not been able to access these funds.

32. The Cree community extends to both sides of the 60th parallel. Traditional hunting lands are on both sides of the Alberta-NWT border. Many issues arise from debate over which government, Alberta or NWT will manage various programs and services.

33. Gwich’in speakers would like more support from the territorial government. Language needs are not being communicated effectively through the Boards. There was disappointment that the Minister of Education did not attend the Gwich’in Annual Assembly in August 2008.

34. Inuvialuktun is composed of several different dialects and people feel the dialects are becoming mixed because of lack of resources. Recognizing dialect differences, awareness that there are two different writing systems and working with this information is important to language preservation efforts.

35. Inuinnaqtun speakers find it difficult to get proper language services in Yellowknife. Many Inuinnaqtun come to Yellowknife for medical reasons, school, business and holidays. This language group has limited resources.

36. Inuit who speak Inuktitut in the NWT live mostly in Yellowknife where they find a lack of services and programs in their language.

37. Successful North Slavey programs and services have been cut. The early immersion (K-1) program in Délı̨nę has been cut and the Teaching and Learning Centre has been moved to another community. Both of these language programs were successful. There is great concern about young people being lost between two worlds.
38. **The South Slavey language group is spread over more communities than any other NWT Aboriginal language.** When funding is divided on a community basis, each community receives very little. Since there are a number of South Slavey dialects, each community needs adequate funds to document and teach its own dialect.

39. **Tłı̨chǫ is also a Yellowknives Dene language.** The new Tłı̨chǫ Government encompasses the four communities of Behchokǫ, Whati, Gameti and Wekweéti. However, Tłı̨chǫ is also a Yellowknives Dene language known as the Weledeh dialect, primarily spoken by the people of Ndilo and Dettah. The community language funding goes to the Tłı̨chǫ Government but it is allocated by a formula that includes all Tłı̨chǫ people in Yellowknife, Dettah and Ndilo. Yellowknives Dene have had problems in accessing this funding.

40. **All Aboriginal language groups in Yellowknife need resources and a central place to carry out programs and offer services.** The French have recently established a “one window” service centre for French services and programs. Aboriginal groups would benefit from this type of central agency. A 1-800 telephone line for each language would ensure that everyone can reach the government in their Aboriginal language.
2.5 OTHER INPUT

2.5.1 WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

The Committee has received three written submission commenting on the review of the Official Languages Act. Two come from members of the public in the Northwest Territories and one from the Commissioner of Official Languages (Canada).

One submission from a former Senior Interpreter/Translator of the GNWT’s Language Bureau expressed grave concerns about the consequences of not having Interpreter/Translator training and certification in place. He questioned the GNWT willingness and motivation for reviewing the certification process when no new Interpreters/Translators are being trained and no professional development opportunities exist for the professionals already working in the field.

However, there is still a demand for Aboriginal Language Interpreters and Translators, particularly from Government itself. At the same time no register of certified professionals is maintained by the GNWT. The demand for service is higher than the number of certified and trained Interpreter/Translators available. There is no institution responsible for the documentation, maintenance and development of standardized Dene language writing systems. Overall, the quality of translation and interpretation is deteriorating.

It was also pointed out that the Languages Commissioner “has been virtually impossible to contact in order to bring any complaints to her attention.” The writer also questioned the ability of the NWT Languages Commissioner to comply with her role and mandate while residing in another province.

Of further concern were the inequality between the Indigenous Official Languages and English and French within the Official Languages Act. The funding contributions towards Aboriginal languages were perceived as unfair and completely insufficient.

Another point of critique was the insufficient support and commitment from the Official Languages Division of the GNWT. For example the writer explained that this divisions and its predecessor have been planning the development of an Aboriginal languages website for more than ten years and that the website is still not available.

65 Jim Hope, Yellowknife, April 29, 2008
Another written submission from a concerned citizen made the following recommendations:

- The need for terminology development in Aboriginal languages to keep pace with the evolution of English
- “The GNWT should take responsibility to ensure that interpreter/translator training is available on a regular basis, at least once annually.”
- “The GNWT should develop and make accessible user-friendly Dene fonts to facilitate the writing in Dene Languages and accurate NWT place names.”
- In order to facilitate the sharing of information the following activities should be supported and funded by the GNWT: an annual language gathering; a well promoted Aboriginal languages website providing a central location for resources and materials produced, information on Government initiatives and reports on Official Languages
- The Office of the Language Commissioner should have a higher profile including more interaction with languages communities and a mandate for promotion. “The diminished role of the Languages Commissioner under the current Official Languages Act does a disservice to the Aboriginal languages and their speakers. ... The controversy surrounding the residency of the current Commissioner has hurt this office.”
- The role, mandate and funding for the two languages boards should be reconsidered. If they would be maintained they would require more visibility and funding to deliver activities related to their mandate
- The GNWT should ensure that language learning opportunities are provided to government employees and the general public, that credits for Aboriginal language proficiency can be earned in high schools and secondary education institutions, that Aboriginal language curriculum is developed in collaboration with language communities and delivered by community groups
- That languages funding should be made available according to the 2004 evaluation of the Official Languages agreement including: minimum community base funding; clear guidelines for administrative portions of the funding allocation and reports, administrative capacity development at the community level, multi-year funding for community based projects and language communities, supports for developing and updating community language plans

This submission also points out that most of these recommendations have been brought to the Government’s attention numerous times. “It’s time to see some action that makes a real difference.”

66 Aggie Brockman, Yellowknife, October 14, 2008
The third submission was received from the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada suggesting improvements for the administration, implementation and effectiveness of the Official Languages Act.

The Commissioner reminds Committee that the Act provides equal rights to English and French services from head and central offices or where there is “significant demand” or the “nature of the office” requires doing so.

“...the expressions “significant demand” and “nature of the office” have not yet been defined in regulations, despite the mechanism set out in the Act for this purpose.... It is important that the territorial government strengthen these rights by adopting regulations that define these expressions. Such regulations would provide guidance to the territorial institutions that must comply with the Act, and would allow beneficiaries to better understand how their language rights may be exercised. .... would help eliminate the danger of conflicting interpretations, which could result in the dilution and erosion of these rights.”67

Furthermore, the Commissioner commented on the belief expressed in the preamble of the Official Languages Act stating that “the legal protection of languages will assist in preserving the culture of the people as expressed through their language.” He

“...recommend(s) that the Act include a specific provision articulating the commitment of the territorial government to support and assist the development of the Francophone community and other official language minority communities in the Northwest Territories.” in order to “demonstrate the territorial government’s commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Northwest Territories.”68

He notes that the preamble of the Act also expresses the desire to establish Aboriginal languages, English and French as official languages with equal status and continues:

“However, in order to strengthen recognition of this desire, and of other objectives of the Act, I suggest including them as a separate clause within the text of the Act itself. Including such a purpose clause would provide clarity and certainty, and allow the Act to be interpreted and applied in light of the stated purpose.”69

The Commissioner further commented on the Languages Commissioner’s role as an ombudsperson to ensure compliance with the Act;

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67 Submission for the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, Ottawa, February 3, 2009
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
“...the commissioner’s effectiveness in carrying out this mandate can be strengthened by increasing such person’s powers and visibility and by ensuring that the public is informed of his or her role and functions.”

The Commissioner of Official Languages also points to the roles and responsibilities of the Minister responsible for Official Languages to maintain a consistent application of the Act while ensuring a coordinated approach by government.

“The minister’s function can be strengthened by ensuring that his or her mandate or responsibilities are clearly described in the Act, and by increasing public awareness of the role and responsibilities associated with this position.”

2.5.2 ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of the review process a questionnaire on the Official Languages Act was posted on the Legislative Assembly’s website from August to November 2008. The questionnaire was available in all Official Languages with the exception of Cree and could also be requested as a paper copy. In addition, the Committee also made copies available during its community visits.

This questionnaire was intended to provide an additional venue for public input during the review. The tool was not intended to be a representative survey of the NWT population. At the end 31 NWT residents completed the questionnaire. The following section summarizes the answers received.

Of the 31 respondents 19 lived in Yellowknife and 12 lived in nine other communities throughout the NWT. More than half of the respondents were between 41 and 55 years of age. 90% spoke English at home while only 65% had English as their mother tongue. Three respondents had North Slavey as their mother tongue. Chipewyan, South Slavey and French were claimed by two respondents each as the first language learned and one claimed Inuvialuktun.

When asked if the if the Minister responsible for Official Languages has made a difference in how the GNWT provides services and programs in Official Languages 52% responded with no, 32% with somewhat. Only one said yes.

When asked if the Languages Commissioner has made a difference in how the GNWT provides services and programs in Official Languages 50% responded with no, 30% with somewhat and two respondents said yes.
The same question was asked with regards to the Official Languages Board. 55% responded the Board did not make a difference and 26% said somewhat.

Other questions were asked about language promotion and Aboriginal languages revitalization.

48% felt their communities do not do enough to encourage language learning and use. 45% responded that the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board has not made a difference for promoting Aboriginal languages and their use.

When asked if having a Minister responsible for Official Languages has made a difference for promoting Aboriginal languages and encouraging their use 45% said no while 29% responded with somewhat and yes.

The same question was posed in relation to the promotion of French. Only 29% responded with no, while 45% said somewhat or yes.

The respondents were also given the opportunity to provide further comments. Here are some samples:

_This survey was difficult. For example, I do not think the current Language Commissioner in the current role has had any positive impact on protection, promotion or preservation of Aboriginal languages. However, there was a time when that was an important role that made a difference. It is partly due to the narrowing of mandates and partly due to the person in the job._

_The GNWT has been very negligent in upholding its obligations: to providing interpreter/translator training; develop and make accessible user-friendly Dene fonts; provide a central website repository for resources and information; provide opportunities for people from the various language communities to share information; and, provide capacity support to the language communities and community-based projects. Shame!_

_Aboriginal languages cannot move forward without determined and strong action by the government to make all government and para-governmental services (e.g. healthcare/education) use Dene fonts in all written communications in the official Dene languages._

_It is a parents’ responsibility to ‘pass on’ their language to their children – and to ask for help doing this. The leaders of the community should be leading the revival of the language – it doesn’t take money – just the will and commitment to make it happen._

_Support for Aboriginal languages is all about supporting community – and home-based efforts to promote official languages. This needs to be strengthened and target youth. I am not convinced that spending more money to prepare GNWT reports in_
Aboriginal languages is an effective use of resources – focus these funds on enhancing community-based efforts.

I would like to first thank GNWT for doing another survey/report on languages and I am hoping that this report is acted upon, rather that sit on the shelf. I love my language and would like my language to be strong for my future generation of grandchildren and in order to do that we as parents need to take that responsibility and help in preserving and maintaining our languages. Secondly, the government needs to put more funding into community language development. We have so many middle aged fluent speakers in our communities, but in order to train them to work in the language fields we need training dollars and money for material development. The other problem we have is that Aurora College decided way back then to dismantle the Interpreting and Translating program, they said people did not want I/T training, but in fact people wanted I/T training to be located in the communities, where they would be closer to their language group, because any time you work with languages you need to be close to your resource people, such as the most essential resources are the Elders, they are our professors, they are more important than Doctoral degree people. Regarding the Official Languages Board, I believe they cannot succeed because they do not have authority. They do need some degree of authority to direct staff to promote our languages and no offence to the present board members, but we need to be more selective in appointing members to these boards. We should be using people that are experienced as I/T. We have capable people that are in the regions and also in YK to sit on these boards. ... We need to encourage other language workers to apply to these boards. Mahsi cho and please don’t let this one sit on the shelf to collect dust. You could choke on heavy dust, the same way our languages will if you do not seriously promote our languages.
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS & RESEARCH

3.1 CHECKING IN ON THE SCROLA RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE GNWT RESPONSE

“Over the next 25 years, all our citizens embrace the multilingual, multicultural fabric of our territories and commit themselves – personally, professionally, and collectively – to maintaining and nurturing our diverse and dynamic characteristics as a northern society. We recognize the inherent right of Aboriginal peoples to maintain and promote their languages and cultures within their own homelands. English and French speakers maintain their current constitutional protection throughout the territories and also have the opportunity and support to learn the language and culture of our indigenous peoples.

Through the interchange of information, knowledge, beliefs, and practices, we collectively broaden and deepen our understanding of the human condition. We are able to identify, develop, and implement a range of creative and culturally-rich approaches to address social, political, and economic issues, while nurturing tolerant, supportive, and respectful relationships among all of our diverse language groups."

This is the vision established by the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act (SCROLA) established in its 2003 final report. SCROLA had great hopes that its 65 recommendations would improve the implementation of the Act, the delivery of Government services in Official Languages, and revitalization efforts for Aboriginal languages. One of the recommendations was to include a statutory requirement to review the Act in five years to check in on the effectiveness of the changes and make corrections as needed.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (the Committee) was tasked with this review by the Legislative Assembly. This section will highlight our findings on the implementation of the 65 SCROLA recommendations.

One of SCROLA’s intentions was to develop a Northwest Territories’ language revitalization framework. With this in mind, SCOLA’s recommendations were structured to support such a framework. The recommendations address legislation and policy, management, financing, service delivery, human resource development, language research and development, education, promotion, and media and technology. The

70 Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act, Summary of the Final Report, Yellowknife 2003, pg.22
Government of the Northwest Territories tabled its response at the dawn of the 14th Legislative Assembly in 2003. As a consequence of the review the Official Languages Act was amended in 2003.

The Minister responsible for Official Languages tables an Annual Report on Official Languages as required by the amended Official Languages Act. While some elements of these Annual Reports relate back to the SCROLA recommendations and the Government’s commitments, no reporting was undertaken that would have allowed measuring of progress on the implementation of the recommendations.

The Committee questioned the Minister during its witness hearings on the implementation of the SCROLA recommendations and the implementation of the Act itself. Appendix 1 includes a table with the original text of all SCROLA recommendations and the GNWT’s response to them. The Committee added a column to comment on its findings on the implementation of each recommendation.

The following section provides an overview of the recommendations, and highlights the Committee’s findings on the progress of their implementation.

**Strengthening Legislation & Policy (section A of the recommendations)**

- The Official Languages Act was amended following the SCROLA recommendations. Amendments included the recognition of collective Aboriginal language rights in the preamble, the important role of language communities in preserving and developing their own languages, and changed roles of the Minister and Languages Commissioner.
- Government Institution Regulations were established to clarify, which government boards, agencies, corporations and so forth are bound by the provisions of the Official Languages Act.
- No new regulations and/or policies were established to address service delivery in Official Languages.
- A Minister responsible for Official Languages was designated under the Act. However, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment remained responsible for the Official Languages portfolio.
- Contrary to the SCROLA recommendation to establish one Aboriginal Languages Board, the GNWT introduced the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board (the languages boards). Further, the SCROLA recommendation had stated that “The terms of reference for this Board – along with its structure, appointment process, consultation functions, and other necessary matters – be established through regulation.”
- The GNWT established regulations to create the two languages boards. These regulations only address the appointment process and the terms of the appointments and not the terms of reference or consultation functions of the boards.

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71 SCROLA recommendation A9, 2003
Improvement of Management and Accountability (section B of the recommendations)

- SCROLA had hoped that an empowered Official Languages Secretariat directly reporting to the Minister would create and monitor a government-wide implementation plan and evaluation framework. The Secretariat was to support the development of Official Languages regulations and policies, to provide operational support for the languages boards. In addition to its managerial and administrative functions related to various contribution agreements, and intergovernmental relations concerning languages.
- The GNWT restructured the Official Languages Division within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, creating a direct reporting relationship to the Deputy Minister. The Government did not add any resources to the division to address its expanded mandate.
- To date, no implementation plan for the Act, no evaluation framework, and no regulations or new policies addressing language services have been developed.
- The languages boards have reported their dissatisfaction with limited support received from the Official Languages Division.
- The Committee has doubts that the staffing and resources of this division are adequate for its broad mandate and responsibilities.
- Of further concern for the Committee is that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was only able to negotiate short time extensions of its language funding agreements with Canada. A multi-year agreement has not existed since 2004.

Effective and Adequate Financing (section C of the recommendations)

- SCROLA recommended that the GNWT ensure all language funding to schools is actually used for language activities, that funding for the language initiatives identified in the recommendations be put in place, and that maximized federal participation through the NWT-Canada contribution agreement be negotiated.
- Very little progress has been made in this area. While some areas have seen funding increases, no comprehensive funding approach that would match the suggested initiatives has been created. This may be linked to the non-existence of an implementation plan.
- Community language initiatives and even departmental Official Languages funding continues to be provided on a year-to-year basis, increasing the difficulty for these organizations and institutions to make long-term plans and allowing continuity of their activities.
- The GNWT sees multi-year community funding arrangements as dependent on successful negotiations of funding agreements with Canada.
Enhance Service Delivery (section D of the recommendations)

- Little has been done to address these SCROLA recommendations or the GNWT’s commitments in its response to those recommendations. There are no regulations or policies addressing “active offer”; nor are there any government-wide procedures and measures for tracking demand and service delivery in Official Languages.
- Some progress has been made on addressing improvements for French service delivery: a Single-Window Service Centre pilot project for French opened in Yellowknife in June 2008; and Education, Culture and Employment is working on a plan to improve French language services generally.
- The GNWT has preliminary plans to phase in the establishment of a Single-Window Service Centre for Aboriginal languages.
- There is still no public registry of Interpreters/Translators. Instead, the Official Languages Division continues to compile a contact list for Interpreters/Translators that is shared with government departments and institutions.

Build Human Resources Capacity (section E of the recommendations)

- There is still no certification process for Aboriginal Interpreters/Translators. The GNWT actually put this renewal initiative on hold when it was discovered that there was a lack of qualified Aboriginal evaluators. The GNWT hopes that it can revisit this initiative when more Interpreters and Translators have been trained.
- Progress on the reinstallation of Interpreter/Translator training is very slow. The Akaitcho language groups are presently offering a regional community-based training program. The GNWT supports this initiative through a pilot project that it hopes will be adaptable for other language groups.
- Progress has been made on the Aboriginal Culture and Languages Instructor Program (ACLIP): the part-time one-year certificate program delivered has been expanded to a two-year diploma program delivered fulltime. This new diploma program currently delivered for the first time in the Tłı̨chǫ region.
- There is a high demand for community-based adult language training that is presently not addressed in any coordinated fashion.
- The Yamazha Kue Society made progress in developing a curriculum for Dene as a second language. The GNWT indicated that the implementation of this curriculum depends on the availability of funding.
- The GNWT has not addressed the comprehensive approach that was suggested by SCROLA to bring all stakeholders together to improve cost-effectiveness and overall success rate.
- The Committee found that the GNWT does not lend sufficient support to build the human resources capacity for professions related to Official Languages. This is a
concern, as the success of revitalization efforts will also depend on the availability of qualified language professionals like teachers, instructors and interpreter/translators.

**Support Research and Development for Official Languages** (section F of the recommendations)

- The Committee is particular concerned that the GNWT has not addressed the SCROLA’s recommendations relating to terminology development. The urgent need for terminology development was identified by all stakeholders in all regions and languages. These needs along with proposed actions and solutions have repeatedly been brought to the Government’s attention. Its inaction has contributed to the frustration expressed by language stakeholders to the Committee during the consultation process.
- Furthermore, the importance of terminology development for language survival and revitalization has been well documented other than in the SCROLA final report. Consequently it must be understood that the failure to support and advance terminology development has devastating consequences for languages already under threat.
- It should be noted that in its response to the SCROLA recommendations, the GNWT suggested that much of this work should be conducted by the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. The Committee questions whether the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board is sufficiently resourced and adequately supported for this undertaking.
- Similarly, the GNWT did not address a recommendation to establish a coordinated cataloguing and distribution process for Aboriginal language resource materials.
- Again, this inaction by the GNWT is of great concern to the Committee. The sharing of resources, access to existing resources, proper cataloguing of those resources, the need for a clearinghouse and/or an Aboriginal Languages Centre to distribute the resources have been highlighted as priority needs by all stakeholders.

**Increase & Improve Aboriginal Languages Education** (section G of the recommendations)

- The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment issued a directive to the Divisional Education Councils and the Divisional Education Authorities in 2004, setting minimal standards for Aboriginal language instruction (30 minutes per day and 90 hours per school year) outlining funding and reporting requirements. While this has led to some improvements of Aboriginal language programming in the school system, there are still concerns that the funding is not always used for language activities, and that 30 minutes of language instruction is insufficient to impact language revitalization in any meaningful way.
• The Committee was glad to find that support for language nest programs improved. Presently the GNWT provides funding to 18 registered early childhood facilities for language nest programs. However, the Committee was concerned that in recent years this funding has been reduced. An independent evaluation of the language nest program of the NWT was undertaken in 2006. While the review team acknowledged the challenges of the NWT in establishing this program in nine Aboriginal languages, it also recognized its strengths. These include the establishment of the program in a relatively short time period, benefits for children’s learning, and increased community and intergenerational awareness. The challenges and recommendations that were identified have much in common with the needs identified by community language representatives. Here are some examples of the recommendations:
  o Multi-year funding to provide for improved planning and stability in staffing,
  o The need for a full-time language nest coordinator to improve supports and mentoring to the individual language nest programs and their staff,
  o Start-up funding for communities without existing pre-school programs,
  o Need for staff development programs for language nest staff to develop their language skills (i.e. fluency and literacy),
  o Systematic approach to developing and cataloguing teaching resources.
• The Committee also saw the improvements to the regional delivery of the Teacher Education Program and the Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program as steps in the right direction.
• The Committee noted that many recommendations directed toward supporting better coordination between the different parties involved in education have not been followed. For example, Education, Culture and Employment has not addressed the demand for an increased role and increased capacity for the Teaching and Learning Centres that would allow for better collaboration and partnerships with the language communities.
• There is no overall strategic Aboriginal languages education plan that would link the different activities and allow for the measurement of successes and overall progress.

Promote Official Languages (section H of the recommendations)
• The GNWT did not issue a progress report on the implementation of its commitments for action to the SCROLA recommendations.
• The GNWT provides ongoing support to the French language community for their cultural activities supporting French.
• The Government and the Minister responsible for Official Languages have not addressed any of the recommendations concerning the promotion of Aboriginal languages
• The Committee question whether this inaction means that the responsibilities for language promotion were not a good fit with the Minister's role and mandate.

Increase of Use of Official Languages in Media and Technology (section I of the recommendations)

• The GNWT has not addressed the commitments it made in its response to the SCROLA recommendations.
• The Official Languages Division is working on finding solutions for the development of Unicode Dene fonts. Despite an increased urgency to have Dene fonts available that are compatible with today’s computer programs, no timelines have been set for when the issue would be resolved.

Ensure SCROLA Recommendations are Advanced (section J of the recommendations)

• The major commitment that was met was the amending the Act.
• The GNWT never presented a progress report on its response to the SCROLA final report.

3.2 REALITY CHECK: THE STATE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

This section examines the state of the Official Languages in the Northwest Territories by presenting statistical data, language indicators and trends.

3.2.1 LANGUAGE INDICATORS BY LANGUAGE

The availability of language data is important for the assessment of the health of a language. Measuring the number of speakers over time indicates if a language is losing or gaining vitality.

The following data on language speakers is typically collected to provide information on language trends:

• “Mother tongue” refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual
• “Home language” refers to the language spoken most often at home
• “Ability to speak” means that a person is able to carry out a conversation in that language.

Language data is collected by Statistics Canada during a Census and the Aboriginal People Survey (APS) following each Census. The following section of this report will give an overview of language indicators of the Northwest Territories and show ten-year-trends for the past three decades from 1986 to 1996 and 2006. The numbers are presented in absolute numbers of speakers and percentage of speakers compared to the NWT population. Official Languages are listed in the following categories: Cree, Chipewyan, Tłı̨chó, North & South Slavey, Gwich’in, Inuktitut, English and French. Due to the method of data collection North and South Slavey cannot be shown separately. Statistics Canada rolls census data for Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun in with Inuktitut.

Graphs visualize the data and trends per language.

“Language Shift” is an important tool for assessing the vitality of a language. Language shift measures the number of speakers a language gains or loses over time. It measures the ratio of home language to mother tongue speakers.

If the language shift shows 100% that means that all people who use the language at home also learned it as their mother tongue. A language shift percentage below 100% indicates that more people use a language other than their mother tongue every day at home. A percentage that is higher than 100% demonstrates that more people use the language for everyday use than actually learned it as their first language.

If language shift shows a declining trend over time, it is fair to say that language loss is occurring and the language will become endangered. In a situation of declining language shift, more and more children will no longer learn the language of their parents as their first language. This means that the intergenerational transmission of the language is interrupted and a generational gap between the speakers of a language takes place. On the other hand, if language shift moves upward, that means that more people use the language at home that did not learn the language as their mother tongue.

English is an example where there has been a positive language shift. According to the 2006 census 31,910 people grew up with English as their first language but 36,795 people now speak English at home. This means that 4,885 people or about 12% of the NWT population had learned another language as their mother tongue but now use English as their every day language. This expresses a positive language shift of 115%.

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### Language Indicators

**Northwest Territories, 1986 - 2006 Ten-Year-Trends**

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<th>%</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
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Trends for Cree:

In 2006, 205 people or 0.5% of the NWT population indicated that Cree was their mother tongue, 20 indicated that Cree was their home language, and 315 (or 0.8%) indicated that they are able to carry on a conversation in Cree. Consequently the language shift for the NWT is extreme with an indicator of 9.8 for 2006. At the same time, Cree is the most commonly spoken First Nation language in Canada.

Trends for Chipewyan:
• In 2006, 410 persons (1% of the population) indicated that Chipewyan was their mother tongue, 115 or 0.3% said that they use Chipewyan as their home language while 575 or 1.4% indicated they are able to converse in the language.
• The language shift for Chipewyan indicates accelerated language loss over the last ten years with the indicator shifting from 57.3 in 1986 to 41.2 in 1996 and 28 in 2006.

Trends for Tlicho:
Tłı̨chǫ is the healthiest Aboriginal Language of the NWT with 5% of the population or 2,040 persons calling Tłı̨chǫ their mother tongue. There are 2.7% or 1,095 persons who use this language as their home language, and 6.3% or 2,545 persons are able to carry on a conversation in 2006. However the language shift from 79.9 in 1986, to 67.8 in 1996 and 53.7 in 2006 is a clear indication of the decline of the Tłı̨chǫ language.

**Tłı̨chǫ - Language Indicators**

![Tłı̨chǫ - Language Indicators](image)

**Tłı̨chǫ Language Shift**

in percentage of mother tongue speakers

![Tłı̨chǫ Language Shift](image)

**Trends for North & South Slavey:**

- **Note:** The 1996 census did not collect data for North and South Slavey separately. In order to show 10 year trends, both languages are shown together.
The two Slavey languages combined accounted for 5.3% of the population or 2,170 people with Slavey as their mother tongue. In 2006, 2.4% or 975 persons used North or South Slavey as their home language and 6.9% or 2,840 people had the ability to converse.

The language shift indicator for 2006 of 44.9 clearly demonstrates the decline of the languages.

### Trends for Gwich’in:

- For 2006, 200 persons or 0.5% of the population indicated that Gwich’in was their mother tongue, 20 spoke Gwich’in at home and 275 or 0.7% of the population are able to carry on a conversation in Gwich’in.
• The language shift indicator for Gwich’in is 10, demonstrating the endangerment of the language.

Trends for Inuktitut:

• Note: Statistics Canada treats Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun as dialects of Inuktitut and its census data collected on these three NWT Official Languages fall under the label of Inuktitut.
• In 2006, 800 persons or 1.9% of the population indicated that Inuktitut is their mother tongue, 145 or 0.4% speak Inuktitut at home and 950 or 2.3% are able to carry on a conversation in one of the Inuktitut dialects.
• The language shift indicator for 2006 is 18.1 indicating accelerated language losses.

![Inuktitut - Language Indicators](image1)

![Inuktitut Language Shift](image2)

**Trends for English:**

• The number of speakers, indicating that English is their mother tongue is increasing. In 2006, 77.7% of the NWT population or 31,910 persons declared that English is their mother tongue.
- The use of English as a home language is increasing. In 2006, nearly 90% of the NWT population or 36,795 persons use English as their home language.
- In 2006, over 99% of the NWT population or 40,675 persons indicated they could converse in English. These numbers show that 380 persons were not able to converse in English.
- The upward trend in the use of English continues and represents a positive Language Shift.
Trends for French:

- The percentage of the NWT population identifying French as their mother tongue has slightly decreased since 1986. 2.5% of the NWT population or 1,030 persons indicated French as their mother tongue in the 2006 census.
- The percentage of the NWT population with French as their home language has slightly increased (440 persons or 1.1% of the NWT population in 2006).
- The Language shift for French shows that less than half of those who identified French as their mother tongue use French as their home language, however, the language shift for French has slowed down and is on a slow upward trend compared to 1986.
- There is an upward trend for those identifying an ability to converse in French. In 2006 9.1% of the NWT population or 3,720 persons indicated that they are able to converse in French.
3.2.2 LANGUAGE TRENDS BY REGION

Population 15 & Older by Ability to Converse, 1989 -2004

The tables on the following pages provide information on the number of people able to speak an Official language in each region. The information is shown in absolute numbers and percentage of the NWT population and does not distinguish between first language and second language speakers. The tables are organized by regions within the NWT.

The tables were provided by the NWT Bureau of Statistics, which collected the data as part of the NWT Labour Force and Community Surveys for the years 1989, 1994 and 2004. Until 2004 this information was only collected for persons that were 15 years or older. Since 2004 the information is collected for the population of all ages. For reasons of comparability the numbers are only shown for the population 15 years and older. The release of the 2009 community survey will allow first indicators to measure the success of language revitalization efforts in the schools.

Ability to converse can be used as a measurement for success of revitalization efforts, particularly for languages that have suffered from an interruption of transmission between generations. An increased number of speakers who can carry on a conversation, while the language is neither their mother tongue nor used as home language, is a positive sign that a language gaining ground.

Reaching this increase of speakers is an important step in successful language revitalization. A revitalization strategy may need to first increase the speaker base and use, with the goal of making it the home language again in the future.

It should be noted that the increase in the population that is able to carry on a conversation in English, is also a sign of language loss for the Aboriginal languages.

A comprehensive long-term revitalization plan would need to include indicators to evaluate its implementation and success over time. Presently, data collected in five year intervals through the Census and the NWT Community survey does not provide for the same language indicators. This could be changed and the NWT community survey could also collect information on “mother tongue” and “home language” in addition to “ability to converse”. The monitoring of progress for language revitalization could then take place.

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73 Each table also includes the numbers of people that are able to converse in a language other than the Official Languages of the NWT, which gives an indication of the number of immigrants in each region.
in shorter intervals (every 2-3 years). Emerging trends could be observed more closely allowing for adjustments depending on the results and outcomes.

Beaufort Delta

The table summarizes data for the following communities: Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok.

- **Gwich’in**
  - In 2004, 4.9% of the Beaufort Delta population over 15 were able to converse in Gwich’in (0.8% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 6% in 1989 to 5.5% in 1994

- **Inuktitut**
  - In 2004, 1.7% of the Beaufort Delta population over 15 were able to converse in Inuktitut (0.8% in the NWT)
  - There is a slight increase from 1989 (+0.3%) and a slight decrease from 1994 (-0.5%)

- **Inuvialuktun**
  - In 2004, 8.6% of the Beaufort Delta population over 15 were able to converse in Inuvialuktun (1.5% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 11.3% in 1989 to 9.5% in 1994

- **Inuinnaqtun**
  - In 2004, 3.1% of the Beaufort Delta population over 15 were able to converse in Inuinnaqtun (0.6% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 4.4% in 1989

- **French**
  - In 2004, 5.3% of the Beaufort Delta population over 15 were able to converse in French (9.7% in the NWT)
  - There is an increasing trend from 4.1% in 1989 and 5% in 1994

- **English**
  - In 2004 98.5% were able to carry out a conversation in English
## Population 15 & Older by Ability to Converse
### Beaufort-Delta and Northwest Territories, 1989 - 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NWT (%)</td>
<td>Beaufort-Delta (%)</td>
<td>NWT (%)</td>
<td>Beaufort-Delta (%)</td>
<td>NWT (%)</td>
<td>Beaufort-Delta (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population 15 &amp; Older</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>4,316</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>28,072</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>99.1</td>
<td>27,167</td>
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<td>179</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuktitut</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>475</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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<td>1,511</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,818</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creek</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>386</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>664</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Slavey</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Slavey</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,192</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwichin</td>
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<td>258</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Lang</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Please note:**
1. The total of all languages may exceed the population 15 & older as some persons may speak multiple languages.
Dehcho

The table summarizes data for the following communities: Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Hay River Reserve, Jean Marie River, Kakisa, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake, and Wrigley.

- **South Slavey**
  - In 2004, 44.2% of the Dehcho population over 15 were able to converse in South Slavey (4.3% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 57.6% in 1989 to 44.6% in 1994

- **North Slavey**
  - In 2004, 4% of the Dehcho population over 15 were able to converse in North Slavey (3.3% in the NWT)
  - There is a big fluctuation between the survey years from 3.4% in 1989 to 10.4% in 1994

- **French**
  - In 2004, 5.3% of the Dehcho population over 15 were able to converse in French (9.7% in the NWT)
  - There is an increasing trend from 4.7% in 1994 but a decrease of 0.7% compared to 1989

- **English**
  - There is a clear trend for an increasing percentage of the population able to converse in English
  - In 2004 98.6% were able to carry out a conversation in English
### Population 15 & Older by Ability to Converse
Dehcho and Northwest Territories, 1989 - 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1989 NWT (%</th>
<th>Dehcho (%)</th>
<th>1994 NWT (%</th>
<th>Dehcho (%)</th>
<th>2004 NWT (%</th>
<th>Dehcho (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 15 &amp; Older</td>
<td>22,904 100.0</td>
<td>1,860 100.0</td>
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<td>2,361 100.0</td>
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<td>30,674 97.9</td>
<td>2,492 96.6</td>
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<td>1,964 8.6</td>
<td>111 6.0</td>
<td>2,384 8.5</td>
<td>112 4.7</td>
<td>3,045 9.7</td>
<td>138 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuktitut</td>
<td>180 0.8</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>294 1.0</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>265 0.8</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuktun</td>
<td>511 2.2</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>475 1.7</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>456 1.5</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innuinaqtun</td>
<td>208 0.9</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>94 0.3</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>200 0.6</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogrib</td>
<td>1,511 6.6</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>1,818 6.5</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>2,167 6.9</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cree</td>
<td>314 1.4</td>
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<td>386 1.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
<td>688 3.0</td>
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<td>28 1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Slavey</td>
<td>1,054 4.6</td>
<td>63 3.4</td>
<td>1,202 4.3</td>
<td>246 10.4</td>
<td>1,031 3.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,259 5.5</td>
<td>1,072 57.6</td>
<td>1,192 4.2</td>
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<td>1,363 4.3</td>
<td>1,141 44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwichin</td>
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<td>.. ..</td>
<td>264 0.8</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Lang</td>
<td>1,370 6.0</td>
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<td>85 3.6</td>
<td>2,436 7.8</td>
<td>65 2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tłı̨chǫ

The table summarizes data for the following communities: Behchokò, Gamètì, Wekweètì, and Whatì.

- **Tłı̨chǫ**
  - In 2004, 85.4% of the Tłı̨chǫ population over 15 were able to converse in Tłı̨chǫ (6.9% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 86.6% in 1989 and 86.2% in 1994
- **North Slavey**
  - In 2004, 3.2% of the Tłı̨chǫ population over 15 were able to converse in North Slavey (3.3% in the NWT)
  - This shows increases from 1989 (2.6%) and 1994 (2.4%)
- **French**
  - In 2004, 1.9% of the Tłı̨chǫ population over 15 were able to converse in French (9.7% in the NWT)
  - This compares to 3% in 1994 and none in 1989
- **English**
  - There is a clear trend for an increasing percentage of the population able to converse in English
  - In 2004 89.8% were able to carry on a conversation in English. This is up from 78.2% in 1989 and 81.1% in 1994
## Population 15 & Older by Ability to Converse

**Tłı̨chǫ** and Northwest Territories, 1989 - 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1989 NWT</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Tłı̨chǫ (%)</th>
<th>1994 NWT</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Tłı̨chǫ (%)</th>
<th>2004 NWT</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Tłı̨chǫ (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 15 &amp; Older</td>
<td>22,904</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,387</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>28,072</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22,237</td>
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<td>1,085</td>
<td>78.2</td>
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<td>30,674</td>
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<td>French</td>
<td>1,964</td>
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<td>..</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3,045</td>
</tr>
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<td>Inuktitut</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuktun</td>
<td>511</td>
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<td>..</td>
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<td>475</td>
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<td>Innuinaqtun</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>..</td>
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<td>200</td>
</tr>
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<td>86.2</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>385</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>..</td>
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<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1,202</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>1,800</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>2,436</td>
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</table>

*Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force & Community Surveys*
South Slave Region

The table summarizes data for the following communities: Enterprise, Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Resolution, and Łutselk’e.

- **Chipewyan**
  - In 2004, 9.9% of the South Slave region’s population over 15 were able to converse in Chipewyan (2.3% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 11% in 1989 to 9.1% in 1994

- **Cree**
  - In 2004, 4.5% of the South Slave region’s population over 15 were able to converse in Cree (1.2% in the NWT)
  - There is a decreasing trend from 4.9% in 1989 to 5.9% in 1994

- **South Slavey**
  - In 2004, 3% of the South Slave region’s population over 15 were able to converse in South Slavey (4.3% in the NWT)
  - This shows increases from 1989 (1.3%) and 1994 (1.6%)

- **North Slavey**
  - In 2004, 0.7% of the South Slave region’s population over 15 were able to converse in North Slavey (3.3% in the NWT)

- **Inuktitut**
  - In 2004, 0.6% of the South Slave region’s population over 15 were able to converse in Inuktitut (0.8% in the NWT)

- **French**
  - In 2004 5.7% of the South Slave region’s population over 15 were able to converse in French (9.7% in the NWT)
  - There is a fairly strong decreasing trend: 9.6% in 1989 and 8% in 1994

- **English**
  - Almost 100% of the region’s population are able to converse in English
  - In 2004 99.6% were able to carry on a conversation in English. This is up from 98.9% in 1989 and 98.5% in 1994
### Population 15 & Older by Ability to Converse
**South Slave and Northwest Territories, 1989 - 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NWT (%</td>
<td>South Slave (%</td>
<td>NWT (%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 15 &amp; Older</td>
<td>22,904 100.0</td>
<td>4,617 100.0</td>
<td>28,072 100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22,237 97.1</td>
<td>4,567 98.9</td>
<td>27,167 96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1,964 8.6</td>
<td>441 9.6</td>
<td>2,384 8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuktitut</td>
<td>180 0.8</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>294 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuvialuktun</td>
<td>511 2.2</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>475 1.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>Inuinnaqtun</td>
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<td>.. ..</td>
<td>94 0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogrib</td>
<td>1,511 6.6</td>
<td>39 0.8</td>
<td>1,818 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cree</td>
<td>314 1.4</td>
<td>225 4.9</td>
<td>386 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
<td>688 3.0</td>
<td>510 11.0</td>
<td>664 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Slavey</td>
<td>1,054 4.6</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>1,202 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Slavey</td>
<td>1,259 5.5</td>
<td>60 1.3</td>
<td>1,192 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwichin</td>
<td>264 1.2</td>
<td>.. ..</td>
<td>268 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Lang</td>
<td>1,370 6.0</td>
<td>264 5.7</td>
<td>1,800 6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force & Community Surveys*
Yellowknife Area

- **Chipewyan**
  o In 2004, 1.1% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in Chipewyan (2.3% in the NWT)
  o There is a decreasing trend from 1.6% in 1989 to 1.3% in 1994

- **Tłı̨chǫ**
  o In 2004, 3.2% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in Tłı̨chǫ (6.9% in the NWT)
  o There is an increasing trend from 2.7% in 1989 to 2.5% in 1994

- **Cree**
  o In 2004, 0.8% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in Cree (1.2% in the NWT)
  o There is an increasing trend from 0.7% in 1989 to 0.2% in 1994

- **South Slavey**
  o In 2004, 0.2% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in South Slavey (4.3% in the NWT)
  o This shows decreases from 1989 (1.1%) and 1994 (0.3%)

- **North Slavey**
  o In 2004, 0.8% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in North Slavey (3.3% in the NWT)
  o This percentage is consistent throughout the survey years

- **Inuinnaqtun**
  o In 2004, 0.3% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in Inuinnaqtun (0.6% in the NWT)

- **Inuktitut**
  o In 2004, 0.8% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in Inuktitut (0.8% of the NWT)
  o This percentage is decreasing compared to previous survey years: 1% in 1989 and 1.2% in 1994

- **French**
  o In 2004 15.3% of the Yellowknife area population over 15 were able to converse in French (9.7% in the NWT)
  o There is a fairly strong increasing trend: 12.4% in 1989 and 12% in 1994

- **English**
  o In 2004 98.5% of the Yellowknife area population was able to carry on a conversation in English.
  o This percentage is down from 99.8% in 1989 and 99.1% in 1994
## Population 15 & Older by Ability to Converse

**Yellowknife Area & Northwest Territories, 1989 - 2004**

Includes Dettah and Ndilo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NWT (%)</td>
<td>Yellowknife Area (%)</td>
<td>NWT (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 15 &amp; Older</td>
<td>22,904 100.0</td>
<td>9,295 100.0</td>
<td>28,072 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22,237 97.1</td>
<td>9,276 99.8</td>
<td>27,167 96.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1,964 8.6</td>
<td>9,150 12.4</td>
<td>2,384 8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inuktitut</td>
<td>180 0.8</td>
<td>92 1.0</td>
<td>294 1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inuvialuktun</td>
<td>511 2.2</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innuinaqtun</td>
<td>208 0.9</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dogrib</td>
<td>1,511 6.6</td>
<td>250 2.7</td>
<td>1,818 6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cree</td>
<td>314 1.4</td>
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<td>386 1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chipewyan</td>
<td>688 3.0</td>
<td>145 1.6</td>
<td>664 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Slavey</td>
<td>1,054 4.6</td>
<td>78 0.8</td>
<td>1,202 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Slavey</td>
<td>1,259 5.5</td>
<td>103 1.1</td>
<td>1,192 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwichin</td>
<td>264 1.2</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>268 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Lang</td>
<td>1,370 6.0</td>
<td>892 9.6</td>
<td>1,800 6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NWT Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force & Community Surveys*
3.2.3 LANGUAGE TRENDS FOR THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION

The following table provides information on the extent to which the Aboriginal population has lost the ability to speak an indigenous language.

The data is shown by community. Each line shows the percentage of the Aboriginal population over 15 years of age able to speak an Aboriginal Language. The information was retrieved by the NWT Bureau of Statistics through NWT labour force and community surveys and is shown in five year intervals from 1984 to 2004 and then for 2006.

Overall there is a declining trend for the entire Northwest Territories of 16%. It is important to keep in mind that this captures only the Aboriginal population 15 years and older. Current data will not capture more recent language loss in children and youth, which many community members spoke about during the public hearings. Since 2004 this information has been gathered for the entire population, so with the release of the 2009 NWT Community Survey results, the first comparisons will become possible. In the meantime, it is important to look at the whole picture and see the “ability to speak an aboriginal language” in the context of other language indicators available. However, it is also fair to observe certain trends based on the existing information.

It can be observed that in small communities with already low percentages of Aboriginal language speakers the loss continued, but at a slower pace. Examples of this trend would be Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Paulatuk and Tuktoyaktuk where the intergenerational gap has widened over several generations. The interruption of language transmission between parents and children took place several generations ago and relates to the residential school experience.

Other small communities that had a relatively high percentage of Aboriginal language speakers in 1984 show a trend towards rapid language loss in the time period to 2006. This trend can be observed in: Colville Lake, Dettah, Fort Resolution, Jean Marie River, Łutselk’e, Trout Lake, Tsiigehtchic and Tulita.

In regional centres and the capital city, there is a sharp decline in the ability of the Aboriginal population to speak an indigenous language. This can be observed to various degrees in Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Yellowknife.

Language data and indicators confirm what the Committee heard from language communities and language advocates: that the survival of all Aboriginal languages is in question.
### Percentage of Aboriginal Population 15 Years of Age and Older, by Ability to Speak an Aboriginal Language - Northwest Territories, 1984 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Northwest Territories</strong></td>
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<td>44.0</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>55.6</td>
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<td>18.7</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>23.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Behechokó (Rae Edzo)</strong></td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>95.0</td>
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<td>78.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Délı̨nę</strong></td>
<td>94.2</td>
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<td>93.4</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>97.1</td>
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<td>88.9</td>
<td>94.0</td>
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<td>41.1</td>
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<td>53.8</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>69.1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Liard</strong></td>
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<td>88.3</td>
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<td><strong>Fort McPherson</strong></td>
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<td>30.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fort Providence</strong></td>
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<td>61.1</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Fort Resolution</strong></td>
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<td>40.9</td>
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<td><strong>Fort Simpson</strong></td>
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<td>60.9</td>
<td>71.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gamètì (Rae Lakes)</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>98.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hay River Reserve</strong></td>
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<td>..</td>
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<td><strong>Jean Marie River</strong></td>
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<td>90.7</td>
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<td><strong>Nahanni Butte</strong></td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norman Wells</strong></td>
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<td>32.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
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<td>38.0</td>
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<td>90.7</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tsiigehtchic</strong></td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuktoyaktuk</strong></td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tulita</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ulukhaktok (Holman)</strong></td>
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<td>58.2</td>
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<td>98.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td><strong>Yellowknife</strong></td>
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<td>21.9</td>
<td>33.5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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.. suppressed for data quality reasons
3.3 LANGUAGE VITALITY, LANGUAGE PROTECTION AND REVITALIZATION

This section of the report speaks to language vitality and approaches to language revitalization that might be helpful for the creation of a comprehensive Aboriginal languages revitalization regime in the Northwest Territories.

The Committee examined internationally recognized research and methodology currently used to develop comprehensive revitalization initiatives for endangered (or minority) languages. This chapter summarizes some of the tools used to measure language vitality and models for language revitalization.

The Committee decided to include this brief overview with the intent to show the complexity of approaches required to develop comprehensive revitalization strategies for each Aboriginal Language. We see it as the Government’s responsibility to support and enable the language communities to develop such strategies according to their needs and willingness.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has developed a framework to assess language vitality and endangerment. UNESCO asked an international group of linguists in 2003 to develop this framework to help create decision tools for the development of language policy, identifying issues and safeguards as they relate to language revitalization.

The experts found that the first step in creating a revitalization regime appropriate to the situation of a language is to determine its degree of vitality and endangerment. They identified nine factors or criteria that form this assessment tool.

Further, it is to be determined whether a language actually requires revitalization or maintenance. Here are the definitions used to distinguish between both:

- **Language revitalization** is described as reversing language shift by increasing the number of language speakers and the domains where the language is used. It involves changing community attitudes toward the language.
- **Language maintenance** supports a language that is alive and serves to protect current levels and domains of use. It seeks to protect from outside attitudes influencing the use of a local language.

Looking at these definitions in combination with the language trends and indicators discussed earlier, it quickly becomes evident that all Aboriginal languages in the NWT require some degree of revitalization. French as a minority language in the Northwest
Territories rather requires maintenance measures in order to maintain it as the language of everyday use by the Francophone community.

The 9-Factor Framework: A methodology for assessing language vitality and endangerment from UNESCO: 74

The framework consists of the nine criteria or factors illustrated in this graph developed by UNESCO expert group:

![9-Factor Framework Diagram]

The framework recognizes that multiple factors play a role when assessing the state of a community’s language. None of these factors can be used in isolation to decide on revitalization approaches. In combination, they can help to determine the vitality of a language, its function in society and the type of measures required for its maintenance or revitalization. Each factor provides scales or grades, which are used to measure language vitality and identify its degree of endangerment.

Factor 1: Intergenerational Language Transmission

This factor gives six grades from 0 to 5, according to the number of speakers, the age range of the speakers, and the domains where a language is used. It then rates the degree of endangerment as extinct, critically endangered, severely endangered, definitively endangered, unsafe or safe.

The Aboriginal Official Languages of the NWT would range between critically endangered and unsafe.

Factor 2: Absolute Number of Speakers

This factor measures the number of speakers in relation to other languages spoken in a given region. It needs to be seen in the context of each language. Small language groups are at higher risk of losing their language.

In some regions of the NWT several Official languages are spoken, creating more challenges for each of the language communities to ensure the survival of their language.

Factor 3: Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population

This factor looks at a region or “reference population” and rates the percentage of this population who speak the language and use this to rate the degree of endangerment. This may range from extinct (no one speaks the language) to safe (all speak the language).

The NWT Aboriginal Official Languages would likely rate between critically endangered and definitively endangered.

Factor 4: Trends in Existing Language Domains

The term “language domain” refers to where, with whom, and the range of topics for which a language is used. Examples of language domains include work, school, home, business, church, TV, books, magazines etc. This factor greatly influences intergenerational transmission. Domains and functions of language use are rated in 6 grades, which range from extinct, highly limited, limited or formal, dwindling, multilingual parity or universal use to indicate the degree of endangerment.

While the Aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories come from oral traditions based on traditional life styles, our education system, business and government are highly literate based on the use of English. In order for Aboriginal languages to be able to function comparably in these areas, literacy in these languages has to be further promoted and developed.
Factor 5: Response to New Domains and Media

As living conditions change (for example, through economic and technological changes) new areas for language use appear. It is a big challenge for Aboriginal language communities to adapt and modernize their languages to these changes and developments. Often the dominant language (English) gains further ground by replacing community languages in these domains of “modern” use.

This factor measures the degree to which an endangered language is used in new domains and media, and rates the degree of endangerment as inactive, minimal, coping, receptive, robust/active, or dynamic.

The lack of terminology development, orthographic standards and the unavailability of Unicode Dene fonts for the Aboriginal languages all contribute to their degree of endangerment. The NWT Aboriginal languages would likely rate between minimal and receptive for this factor.

Factor 6: Materials for Language Education and Literacy

In our society literacy is directly linked with social and economic development. Languages with different literacies face greater challenges in coping and adjusting to social and economic change. At the same time, these literacies have a diminished role and recognition in today’s society. Grades for this factor are determined by the accessibility of written materials ranging from “no orthography available to the community” to established orthography with literacy tradition including grammars, dictionaries, literature, media and so forth.

This factor has a huge impact on the Aboriginal languages of the NWT, as they have limited written literacies as compared to English. Strong oral traditions connected to living on the land exist and provide for different literacies that are posing challenges for education and integration in the wage economy of our modern society.

Factor 7: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use

This factor is measuring official attitudes toward language, ranging from prohibition, forced assimilation, active assimilation, passive assimilation, differentiated support and
equal support. The experts of the UNESCO panel also pointed out that equal legal status alone does not guarantee language maintenance and long-term vitality of a language.

**Factor 8: Community Member’s Attitudes toward Their Own Language**

“When members’ attitudes towards their language are very positive, the language may be seen as a key symbol of group identity.” In contrast: “If members view their language as hindrance to economic mobility and integration into mainstream society, they may develop negative attitudes toward their language.”

This factor also speaks to unequal power relationships between languages. For languages to be vital, speakers must have positive attitudes towards their language and must know where the language is used (language domains).

**Factor 9: Amount and Quality of Documentation**

This factor measures the amount, domains and quality of language documentation and rates these findings as: undocumented (no material exists), inadequate, fragmentary, fair, good, or superlative.

Language endangerment is a world-wide phenomenon. The UNESCO expert group writes in its report:

“... at least 50% of the world’s more than six thousand languages are losing speakers. We estimate that, in most world regions, about 90% of the languages may be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the 21st century.”

Similar to the Aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories many language groups have attempted to preserve their languages, stop further loss and increase the number of speakers through revitalization programs and initiatives. The Committee felt it was important to get some understanding of the research and experiences of other groups in relation to language revitalization.

**Here is a summary of our findings as they relate to the situation of Aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories:**

---

75 Language Vitality and Endangerment, page 14
The circumstances of each language community have to be examined to decide on the most appropriate revitalization plan.

For revitalization to be successful long-term multifaceted programs with a range of resources and much personal dedication of community members is essential.

Government policies affecting language use in public and the connection that people make between language use and economic well-being for their family are determining factors for the success of revitalization.

This being said, the most important success factor is people wanting to speak their language.

Outsiders can provide expertise, funding and moral support, but community members need to “construct the revitalization program which suits their ambitions, needs, and resources.”

Before decisions on language revitalization programs are made each language must be assessed for its degree of vitality/endangerment. Those tools can also be applied over time to measure success of revitalization initiatives.

Language domains expand due to modernization, globalization, and economic and technological developments. If a community language is not used in these new domains it is losing vitality. This is of grave concern for all our Aboriginal languages in the NWT. How much language is actually used in a particular domain plays an important role as well.

“... thirty-minute weekly radio broadcasts, a website, or a page in a newspaper which is otherwise written in the national language may have powerful symbolic value, but they do not translate into signs of high vitality.”

Because education is a critical domain for language use, it is also a logical place for language revitalization. True revitalization however, can only happen when all subjects are taught in the endangered language. Education in our school system is strongly related to literacy, which leads to the point that education in all subject areas needs to include the availability of written materials.

Language attitudes can make or break the success of revitalization programs, for example:

- Government attitudes are influenced by the majority population and are reflected in language and education policies and funding allocation.

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77 Saving Languages – An introduction to language revitalization, Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley, Cambridge University Press, 2006, page x

78 Grenoble & Lindsay, 2006, page 10
o Canadian residential school policies, for example, led to forced assimilation and prohibition of Aboriginal languages, resulting in an interruption of intergenerational transmission. This history has lasting affects on the vitality of many Aboriginal languages and decreases the chances of successful revitalization.

o Community attitudes are critical for the success of language revitalization.

Grenoble and Lindsay point to some challenges that community language groups face from within their own society. They explain that it is no surprise that members of a community show a multitude of attitudes. It is not unusual to find a tension between a “modernist” faction and a “traditionalist” faction. Modernists see the local language as personally limiting because they worry that the imperfect command of English will limit opportunities for jobs and education. They may show this attitude despite a high esteem for the local language. “In contrast, the traditionalists worry that a loss of local language will deplete their sense of identity and erode community ties. They see the local language as a source of cultural liberation.”

For language revitalization to be successful it cannot be imposed on community members. Compromises must be found. The Mohawk revitalization program in Kahnawà:ke gives an example on how this has been done. The authors also point out that “Speakers are the most valuable resource for a language” and that

“Revitalization is a slow process requiring years of continuous work. ... It cannot be overemphasized that this effort needs to come from within the community itself.”

The following section highlights some of the existing models for revitalization.

- **Total-immersion programs** have the highest chance of successfully revitalizing a language. However, they require a certain speaker base in the community and that all school instruction be conducted in the endangered language

- **Language Nests (Te Kōhanga Reo)**

  Language nests were first developed as a revitalization model for the Māori language in the late 70s, early 80s. The program was later adopted for Hawaiian revitalization and the Mohawk program in Canada. In the Northwest Territories the language nests initiative was started in 2003; today there are language nests in 20 of the 33 NWT communities.

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79 Grenoble & Lindsay, 2006, page 40
80 Grenoble & Lindsay, 2006, page 41
Language nests are remarkable because they address the gap of intergenerational language transmission that occurs when parents do not speak the language themselves, but the community still has elders who are fluent. Māori elders were brought to the preschools to teach the young children to speak and live Māori. At the same time parents were encouraged to learn and use the language. The successes of the preschool program lead to the establishment of primary and secondary schools. Grenoble and Lindsay explain:

“One basic component of all these initiatives is to start educating the youngest children in a total-immersion setting, and build a progressive system by following the lead class, developing the program as they move through it.”

- Partial-immersion or bilingual programs
  This is the most frequently implemented model, where only the language learning classes are instructed in the local language while all or most other subject are taught in the dominant language. This means that the local language is taught as a second language.

  “Such programs are appropriate if the community is unable or not truly willing to commit to the time, effort, and cost necessary to make the local language a primary language of communication. If the goal is for children to have at least some limited knowledge of the local language, then partial immersion can provide that.”

- Local language as a second “foreign” language
  This model is mostly used when a language is endangered to the extent that it no longer has a vital speaker base in the community. The introduction of such a language in a school or teaching setting is like introducing a “foreign” language. There are two approaches for this revitalization model: one starts reintroducing the language as adult language courses, the other to create a new speaking generation with the youngest in preschool programs.

- Community-based programs can accommodate informal or natural learning styles. Their main focus is on a domain of language use (like the on-the-land-program) and not on language instruction per se. Learning the language is part of participating in and learning an activity (fishing, sewing etc.).

81 Grenoble & Lindsay, 2006, page 54
82 Grenoble & Lindsay, 2006, page 55
Master-apprentice programs were developed in California in the early 90s for extremely endangered languages that had only a handful of speakers left. These fluent “Master” speakers were paired up with apprentices over a period of three years. The use of English was not permitted, learning occurred in real-life situations and language was spoken only (not written). The premise was that comprehension would come through the activity. This model basically creates an immersion setting that imitates the “natural” language learning of a child, with the goal that the apprentice becomes fluent enough to teach the language to others on a one-to-one basis. It is recognized that they will not achieve the same level of fluency as the Master speakers.

It is important to know that the master-apprentice model does not aim to recreate a language community of speakers. Instead it transmits the language to a small group of speakers and prevents the language from being extinct.

The concerns brought forward to the Committee by the language communities, language advocates, stakeholders and witnesses are very serious. Language indicators show that our Aboriginal languages are in a state of emergency. The Government of the Northwest Territories has no implementation plan for the Official Languages Act or a coordinated approach to support the communities’ revitalization efforts. With these observations in mind the Committee will outline its conclusions on the review of the Act in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

The 16th Legislative Assembly established, by motion, the terms of reference governing the review of the *Official Languages Act*. The Committee was directed to examine the administration and implementation of the *Act*, the achievement of the objectives stated in the preamble of the *Act*, the effectiveness of the provisions of the *Act*, in particular the extent to which they are contributing to the objectives stated in the preamble, and the roles and responsibilities of the Minister, the Official Languages Board, the Aboriginal Languages Board, and the Languages Commissioner and the extent to which those roles and responsibilities have been fulfilled and are contributing to the objectives in the preamble.

This year, 2009 marks the 25th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act*, which should be cause to celebrate the linguistic diversity of the Northwest Territories. The Committee findings, regretfully, give little cause to celebrate. This chapter outlines the Committees conclusions.

4.1 ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

The administration and implementation of the *Act* have proven a challenge since the establishment of the *Official Languages Act*. The Committee found that little progress has been made in implementing the *Act* since it was last amended in 2003.

Many participants in this review have commented that the *Act* does not work and is not achieving its objectives. In particular, Aboriginal people were disillusioned and had doubts about the commitment to Aboriginal language rights granted under the *Act*. They have seen their languages erode and the quantity and quality of government services in Aboriginal languages diminish. The Fédération Franco-Ténöise, whose representatives found nothing wrong with the *Act* itself, nonetheless, perceived its implementation as a complete failure. They did not feel that French language rights are being respected and that government services and communications in French are provided in accordance with the provisions of the *Act*. This led to court proceedings against the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Legislative Assembly that are still ongoing.

The Committee found two major short-comings relating to the administration and implementation of the *Act*. The GNWT has never developed an implementation plan for the Act or established regulations that would provide guidance for the application and
implementation of the Act. The Official Languages Guidelines Manual was prepared in 1997 to assist in the provision of services to the public by setting minimum standards for service delivery and communication in the Official Languages. This manual has not been updated since its original distribution to Government Departments and does not reflect any amendments that were made to the Official Languages Act.

There is no clarity on the interpretation of the terms “significant demand” and “nature of the office”, which play a major role in setting out the public’s rights to communicate with and get services from government offices (section 11 of the Act). The Official Languages Act of Canada, which served as a model for the NWT legislations, uses those terms and provides details for their interpretation and application in regulations and policy. In her annual reports, the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories has expressed concerns that those qualifying concepts do not work for the NWT with its 11 Official Languages and should be revised.83

The Commissioner of Official Languages (Canada) in its submission to the Committee remarked on the importance of defining these terms:

“Such regulations would provide guidance to the territorial institutions that must comply with the Act, and would allow beneficiaries to better understand how their language rights may be exercised. …. would help eliminate the danger of conflicting interpretations, which could result in the dilution and erosion of these rights.”84

The consequences of having neither regulations, nor an implementation plan for the Act have led to a lack of standards for the provision of services in Official Languages and inconsistencies between government departments and institutions. It is difficult for the public to find out what services are offered, where they are provided and how to access them. The government has not coordinated a standardized approach on how its different departments and agencies offer language services to the public or communicate with the public.

For example, the individual websites of the GNWT departments have no coordinated or uniform approach to Official Languages. The Languages Commissioner recommended

“That the Legislative Assembly and GNWT adopt a uniform policy in regard to the development of web sites, including the languages in which web site materials are available.”85

83 The Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner, Annual Report 2005-2006, page 19
84 Submission for the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, Ottawa, February 3, 2009
85 The Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner, Annual Report 2006-2007, page 13
The Committee after reviewing the Languages Commissioner Annual Report recommended that,

“... the GNWT conduct a review on its website policies and report back on whether the website policy is in compliance with official languages policies, guidelines and legislation.”

In its response the Government indicated that,

“Individual department are generally responsible for planning and conducting communications activities in support of the development, management and delivery of departmental programs and services. Departments are responsible for complying with relevant legislation and policies in carrying out their communication activities....”

This example is indicative of the short-comings in the administration and implementation of the Act. The GNWT needs to demonstrate willingness and commitment and to provide leadership, direction, clarity and standards to the Departments on how the provisions of the Act relate to their activities.

The sections of the Act that relate to proceedings in courts (section 9) and to decisions, orders and judgments (section 10) seem to set an example for how specific requirements relating to administration and implementation can be set out in the Act itself. However, the lack of certified and trained legal Interpreters/Translators is increasingly challenging the ability of the GNWT to deliver these services adequately.

These challenges point to a conundrum that needs urgent attention. The lack of training, professional development and certification of Interpreter/Translators has a direct impact on the Government’s ability and capacity to implement the Act and to deliver services in the Official Languages. However, it seems to make little sense to regulate training opportunities or terminology development in legislation. The Committee therefore came to the conclusion that the Government needs to recognize these capacity issues and commit to planning solutions that would increase the ability to deliver services to the public in the Official Languages.

Of further concern to the Committee is that the shortcomings in the delivery of health and social services in Official Languages have not been addressed. The implementation of the SCROLA recommendations or recommendations of the Languages Commissioner to improve official languages services in these fields remains outstanding.

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In 2004 Official Languages Board Regulations and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board Regulations were established to deal with the nomination process and the terms for the appointment of their members. In 2006, the Government Institution Regulations were established to designate agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, offices or other bodies as government institutions for the purpose of the Official Languages Act.

As stated earlier, no further regulations or policies were established or reviewed that would have improved the implementation or administration of the Act.

The Minister Responsible for Official Languages has direct responsibility and authority for the Official Languages Act. This portfolio is carried out by the Minister of Education, Culture and Development. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment established the Official Languages Division in 2005, with a direct reporting relationship to the Deputy Minister. This division is tasked with supporting the Minister responsible for Official Languages in carrying out his mandate and responsibilities under the Official Languages Act, namely by:

- Supporting the development of Official Languages policies, guidelines and regulations,
- Monitoring adherence to GNWT Official Languages policies and guidelines,
- Providing operational support to the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board,
- Conducting negotiations for and managing the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT, and
- Managing the contribution agreements with government departments and language communities.

Of the 11 positions listed for the Division in the spring of 2009, six were related to the French Translation Services unit and two were service officer positions for the French single window service centre. This leaves the Division’s Director, the Senior Advisor for French Language Services and the Official Languages Coordinator for Aboriginal Programs in charge of undertaking the responsibilities as described above.

The Minister responsible for Official Languages commented in his 2005-2006 Annual Report on the establishment of this operational unit to carry out management and policy functions related to the Official Languages:

"This organizational restructuring serves to confirm the GNWT’s interest in strengthening its activities associated with the Official Languages of the NWT."

The Minister had intended to strengthen activities associated with the Official Languages. The Committee saw progress in the delivery of French language services, with the
opening of the “Services TNO”, an increase of French Translators, and increased school programs in French. However, the Committee sees hardly any progress for Aboriginal languages besides the education activities described earlier.

The Committee questions whether the Official Languages Division has the capacity, resources and powers to fulfill its broad mandate and extensive responsibilities.

Other aspects relating to the implementation of the Act will be discussed when examining the roles and responsibilities delegated to the different players identified in the Act.

4.2 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PREAMBLE

The preamble sets a vision for the future of Official Languages in the NWT and speaks to the spirit and intent of the Act.

The Preamble describes several principles upon which the Act is based, including:

- A commitment to the preservation, development and enhancement of the Aboriginal languages of the NWT
- Legal recognition of NWT Aboriginal languages and provision for the use of those languages
- Establishment of English and French as official languages in the NWT with equal status, rights and privileges
- Preservation and enhancement of official languages as a shared responsibility between language communities, the Legislative Assembly, and the Government of the Northwest Territories

The preamble was changed with the last amendments to the Act, in 2003. It expresses an ambitious vision and speaks to future achievements. However, stakeholders are becoming more critical of the achievability of this vision.

The Languages Commissioner recommended changes to the wording of the preamble that would clarify the intent of the Act. Paragraph six of the preamble speaks to the use of Aboriginal languages “for all or any of the official purposes of the Northwest Territories at
the time and in the manner that is appropriate;” Because there is no definition of “official purposes of the Northwest Territories” the Commissioner suggested the following wording:

“Desiring to provide in law for the use of Aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories, including the use of Aboriginal languages in the manners and circumstances specifically identified and provided for in the Act”89

The Committee heard many concerns from Aboriginal people about the inequality of Aboriginal language rights versus French language rights as manifested in the Act. Many Aboriginal language stakeholders perceived the existing language rights as not reflecting the demographic realities of the NWT and the political reality of the NWT with emerging Aboriginal self-governments. They also questioned whether Government institutions have the capacity to provide equal services.

More and more stakeholders asked if the rapid decline of the Aboriginal languages, in times where the use of French as a second language is “booming” can be seen as a consequence of this inequality in law. They perceived the Government’s commitment as “lip-service” and questioned if the recognition of Aboriginal languages as more a political “good-will” statement than a de facto granting of rights.

Official recognition of languages can also have a powerful, symbolic effect. However, if the language rights are intended to extend to communication and services, mere recognition is not enough. The Committee concluded that if the intent is to be “committed to the preservation, development and enhancement of the Aboriginal languages”90 Government actions have to be recognized as supporting this commitment. If languages are addressed in policies and legislation, but their use is not required or there are insufficient financial resources, it is more difficult to promote language use.

“A language policy that is positively disposed towards the use of local languages does not in and of itself guarantee positive results for local languages. The policy must be enforced, and it must have provision in it that allow the policy to move beyond a purely symbolic role.... Any policy, in the long term, is only as good as its enforcement, an adequate level of funding for it, and the administrative commitment it receives.... Official language alone has little impact on how a language is perceived

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90 Official Languages Act, paragraph 4 of the preamble
and used. Language policy must also include incentives toward the use of local languages”. 91

The Commissioner of Official Languages (Canada) also commented on the preamble in his submission to the Committee. He referred to paragraph nine of the preamble stating that “the legal protection of languages will assist in preserving the culture of the people as expressed through their language.” and recommended that,

“... the Act include a specific provision articulating the commitment of the territorial government to support and assist the development of the Francophone community and other official language minority communities in the Northwest Territories. Such a measure would be an additional and important step in preserving and enhancing official language minority communities, and would demonstrate the territorial government’s commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Northwest Territories.”

The desire to “establish English and French as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories having equality of status and equal rights and privileges as Official Languages”, as stated in the preamble, has proved difficult to implement in the context of the NWT.

The Languages Commissioner (Northwest Territories) suggested that paragraph ten of the preamble be deleted if it is not the intention of the legislation to include language rights in the workplace in the Act. She provides the following explanation.

“This paragraph appears to be largely drawn from the preamble to the federal Official Languages Act, which specifically provides for equality of the use of English and French in the workplace. The Northwest Territories Official Languages Act does not have any provision with respect to language of work. As such, this section incorrectly suggests that language rights in the workplace are provided for in the Act. In addition, it suggests that the Act protects from discrimination in employment practices based on racial background. This is provided for in the Human Rights Act of the Northwest Territories and not in the Official Languages Act.” 92

The Committee agreed with this recommendation.

91 Grenoble & Whaley, page 28
4.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

The Committee examined the effectiveness of the provisions of the Act, in particular, the extent to which they contribute to the objectives stated in the Preamble.

While the Act recognizes Aboriginal languages as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, the provisions that speak to how these rights can be exercised are weak and do not provide sufficient clarity for either the rights holder or the government institutions offering the services. This concerns sections 8 and 11 of the Official Languages Act in particular. The Act provides for the establishment of regulations that could then provide clarity and details on the provision of services and communication with the public in Aboriginal languages.

Since no regulations providing such clarification have been established, the Committee must conclude that the provisions of the Act have not been effective in providing for the use of Aboriginal languages.

Further, there are no provisions in the Act that would provide for achieving “the wish that the Aboriginal languages will be entrenched in the Constitution of Canada as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories.”

The preamble also addresses the role of language communities in preserving and enhancing the Official Languages. The Committee’s consultation process indicates that there was little sense of ownership for this shared responsibility between language communities, the Legislative Assembly, and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The establishment of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and the Official Languages Board was intended to create a link between government and the community languages groups. The intent was to give communities input in government policy and language planning, while recognizing them as key players involved in the continued use of languages and responsible for bringing forward their community language priorities. Regretfully, the provisions of the Act, which should have helped achieve these goals, have failed. There was agreement between all stakeholders and witnesses that these sections of the Act need revision.

93 Official Languages Act, preamble, paragraph 7)
Shortcomings within the languages boards’ formation were identified at an early stage. However, the Minister responsible for Official Languages and the Official Languages Division in charge of operational supports to the two boards were not able to provide solutions to support the board members to fulfill their mandate.

The French language community also expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of the Act, with communication and service delivery in French.

### 4.4 Roles and Responsibilities Designated Under the Act

The Committee was also tasked with examining the roles of the Minister responsible for Official Languages, the Official Languages Board, the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, and the Languages Commissioner and the extent to which those roles and responsibilities have been fulfilled and are contributing to the objectives stated in the Act.

**Minister Responsible for Official Languages**

The Minister has the overall responsibility for the Act and is responsible for the general direction and coordination of government policies and programs related to Official Languages.

The Minister is responsible with overseeing the development of policies and regulations. As stated earlier, little progress has been made in establishing policies and regulations that would provide for the implementation of the Act, setting standards for government communication with the public in Official Languages or for providing services and programs. The Minister has not initiated long-term comprehensive planning for Official Languages services delivery or Aboriginal languages revitalization as recommended by SCROLA. This lack of policy direction has meant little advancement of the objectives stated in the preamble.

The Committee recognizes that since the last amendments of the Official Languages Act in 2003, there were two changes of Government, which required the transitioning of new Ministers. This only emphasizes the importance of a long-term strategic plan, which would provide continuity while enhancing service delivery and capacity building within government, as well as supporting language communities.
The Committee acknowledges that some progress has been made in the promotion of Official Languages education in schools and post-secondary institutions. The ministerial directive to Divisional Education Councils and Authorities, the funding for language nest programming, the extension of the Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Instructor and the Teacher Education Programs are examples. Many language stakeholders have commented on these positive developments and recognize that they are steps in the right directions. Community language groups were disappointed, however, with cut-backs for adult language and literacy programs. These courses are seen as complementary to programs provided through educational institutions and as equally important in enhancing and protecting Aboriginal languages.

French Language education in schools has also seen positive developments with the opening of a second French school in Hay River and the expansion of French immersion programs in schools around the territories.

While the Committee was glad to see these positive developments in language education, the question remains as to whether these advancements are more to the credit of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment or the Minister responsible for Official Languages. Simply put, the Minister with this dual portfolio is likely using his authority over the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to give direction for programs and services in language education.

The Committee found that the Minister responsible for Official Languages has no powers over other Departments and Government institutions to ensure compliance or implementation of the Act.

The Annual Report on Official Languages tabled by the Minister responsible for Official Languages is a further indication for this finding. Most detailed information is provided for areas that fall under the portfolio of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. This is partially due to the big role education plays for the revitalization of Aboriginal languages. However, there is little information relating to the Minister’s responsibility for promoting the use of Official Languages in government institutions for program and service delivery and administration. Instead the Annual Report lists activities of the GNWT departments mostly as output lists indicating the number of translations of departmental documents and, recently, the number of bilingual bonus positions.

The latest amendments to the Act, in 2003, moved the promotional role for Official Languages from the Languages Commissioner to the Minister responsible for Official Languages. The Minister is now also tasked with the encouragement of the maintenance
and revitalization of Aboriginal languages. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides funding through a contribution agreement to the French language community to support their cultural activities and promote the use of French. Apart from that funding, none of the Government commitments to the SCROLA recommendation relating to the promotion of Official Languages have been addressed.

Therefore, the Committee must conclude that the related provisions of the Act had no effect on contributing to the objectives as stated in the preamble.

The Minister is also required to consider advice and recommendations from the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.

The languages boards expressed their disappointment about the lack of engagement demonstrated by the Minister. Some board members did not have a clear understanding of their role or mandate, the recommendations going to the Minister sometimes focused on smaller issues instead of the bigger picture. At the same time, the Committee must conclude that the Minister and the Official Languages Division were ill-prepared to support the board members in understanding their role. For example, there is no comprehensive list of language programs and services for the NWT that would have helped the boards to understand which programs and services they should be monitoring and evaluating. Both board chairs commented on the fact that follow-up on their action items from meetings, requests for information and their recommendations was slow, sometimes requiring persistence and repeated reminders and on receipt, ineffective.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BOARD & ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES REVITALIZATION BOARD

The mandate of the Official Languages Board allows it to review the rights and status of each Official Language, to review the use of Official Languages in the administration and delivery of government services, to evaluate how the Act is working and to give advice and make recommendations to the Minister.

The mandate of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board allows it to review community, government, and other program and initiatives designed to maintain, promote and revitalize Aboriginal languages, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Act and to give advice and make recommendations to the Minister.

The two languages boards are facing similar challenges with many of their members representing their language communities on both boards. Some of the board members themselves did not understand the different roles of the two boards.
During the consultation the Committee repeatedly heard that the boards should be amalgamated into one body with a clarified mandate and more support. Therefore, the Committee will summarize its findings and conclusions as applicable to both boards.

The Committee’s finding support the following conclusions:

- Neither the Official Languages Board nor the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board had the capacity, power, funding and support to fulfill their mandates.
- The two year term of the boards do not allow for continuity. Longer terms and the staggering of appointments would provide more stability, allow for better planning and follow-up.
- The current appointment process combined with the limited capacity for operational support was not successful in creating boards that could meaningfully link the government and language communities. The process lacks integrity. The Language Communities are represented by political bodies that are often overburdened with other priorities and do not always nominate community language experts as their representatives to the languages boards. The current appointment process,
  - should be improved by broadening the list of bodies that are able to nominate candidates. This may also help with filling all positions.
  - should include a wider recruitment base as it would allow for input from the language speakers and communities on language policy, programming and service delivery, and Aboriginal languages revitalization.
- The mandates for both boards state that they may review and evaluate the provisions, operation and effectiveness of the Act. This caused many questions regarding the duplication of roles between the boards themselves, and with the Languages Commissioner.
- The board regulations did not include terms of reference for the Boards that could have clarified the broad mandates as described in the Act. This slowed down the operation of the boards. The new board members had to agree on the terms of reference, become knowledgeable about the service provisions and programs in place, and conduct strategic, action and communication planning. The Committee questions whether those expectations are realistic given that the board only met a few times per year and had no dedicated administrative support.
- The operational support for the boards was provided by the Official Languages Division, the same division that supports the Minister in overall responsibility for the Act causing questions about the independence of the office. Can the same
division that is responsible for leading the government-wide implementation of the Act also support the boards that are mandated to review and evaluate how the Act is working?

- The Act provides for the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board to review community, government and other program and initiatives to maintain, promote and revitalize Aboriginal languages. On the other hand, section 3 of the Official Languages Act specifically excludes municipalities and settlements from the applicability of the Act. The Committee questions whether the mandate as described is reflecting the intent of the SCROLA recommendations to establish an Aboriginal Languages Board.

The Government’s response to SCROLA also indicates different expectations from the Government regarding the role and responsibilities of the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. At the time of its response, the GNWT suggested that the Board would play an active role in supporting research and development for official languages and for official languages promotion overall.

In 2006, members of the two boards requested an assessment of their first two years of operation. The Minister had agreed with this request, and the Official Languages Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment tasked an independent consulting firm with the evaluation of the two languages boards. The firm described the evaluation objective in their report.

“The objective of the project is to evaluate and assess the work of the two Boards since their appointment in October 2004 and make recommendations for improvement to the Minister.”

The evaluation identified nine key issues and recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the boards. Key issues were: board structure and relationships; participation of board members at meetings; mandate, focus and recommendations by the boards; administrative support; accountability, attendance and communication between the board members and the language communities; board member terms; board members awareness of language programs and services; meeting minutes and follow-up; and frequency of board meetings.

The evaluators found that,

“Before either Board can accomplish their mandate the correct structure needs to be in place. Role clarity needs to be established between all parties involved as a first

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94 Genesis Group, Official Language Board & Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board Evaluation, page 4
The report presented three structural options and commented that, “...the optimal structure should be decided upon with an open discussion between the Boards, the Minister and the GNWT support staff. The optimal structure will be the one that results in the highest levels of objectivity, accountability, efficiency and independence.”

The evaluators found that the current administrative support structure needs more objectivity and accountability and recommended, that

“The Board should have dedicated permanent full time administrative support. This will support the Board members in focusing on their mandate. It will provide dedicated and timely communication to Board members. As well it will support the Board’s external communications to its constituent language groups, schools, governments, tribal groups and other necessary contacts. A full-time executive director position should be created with an accompanying administrative support position.”

In many Aboriginal communities the stakeholders did not know who their board representatives were. They felt uninformed about the boards’ activities and recommendations to the Minister and they did not understand the different mandates of the two boards. There was no consistent approach for communication between the board members, their language communities and nominating bodies.

The Francophone community organization withdrew their participation on the Official Languages Board as they felt their community’s needs were not addressed in the mainly Aboriginal structure that was focused on issues surrounding the survival of their languages. Other participants questioned why English as the dominant language of the Northwest Territories was represented on the Official Languages Board.

The evaluation report concluded that the board system must be persuaded to support improved governance in order to focus on and fully accomplish its mandate. This, in combination with independent, dedicated administrative support, would also allow for improved accountability and objectivity into the languages evaluation process.

Improved board governance would be composed of the following steps:

- “identifying the appropriate board structure;
- finding and retaining qualified board members;
- planning for succession;

95 Genesis Group, Official Language Board & Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board Evaluation, page 15
- orienting, engaging and developing board members;
- establishing role clarity;
- holding effective board meetings;
- engaging in strategic planning;
- upholding responsibility;
- enhancing transparency and accountability; and increasing public trust.  

The Government did not address many of the recommendations in the evaluation. The Official Languages Division attempted to improve the orientation process for the second term of the boards, however the testimony of the languages board witnesses was a clear indication that those attempts failed.

Several of the proposed recommendations required changes to the Act and the regulations as they relate to the languages boards. The Minister had the power to propose amendments to the Legislative Assembly. The Committee regrets that instead, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment chose to wait for the statutory review of the Official Languages Act, despite recognizing that the established board process was not working.

Therefore, the Committee must conclude that under the circumstances described above the languages boards were not able to fulfill their respective mandates. The Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board did not contribute to the overall objective of revitalizing and maintaining Aboriginal languages. The Official Languages Board does not contribute to ensuring compliance with and implementation of the Act.

**LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER**

The Languages Commissioner’s mandate can be summarized as ensuring that the rights, status and privileges of all Official Languages are recognized, that the government institutions comply with the spirit and intent of the Act, to investigate complaints from the public that government is not following the Act, and to investigate language issues on his or her own initiative.

The Committee found during the review process, that in most communities the Languages Commissioner (the Commissioner) was not known. People reported that they...

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96 Genesis Group, Official Language Board & Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board Evaluation, page 22
did not know that the NWT currently has a Languages Commissioner, who the incumbent was, or anything about the activities of the Commissioner.

The Committee undertaking this review was also tasked with the review of the Language Commissioner’s Annual Reports. During these reviews, the Committee noted that the travel budget of the Commissioner was seldom used, triggering budget reductions over time. Very limited activities were undertaken to promote Official Languages rights and the Office of the Language Commissioner with its mandate to ensure compliance with these rights. In its reports on these reviews, the Committee repeatedly encouraged the Languages Commissioner to become more active in planning community visits to promote the role and office.

Several community members pointed out, that their calls to the Language Commissioner’s office remained unanswered, and they did not feel the Languages Commissioner was an ombudsperson for their rights. The stakeholder also commented that the lack of community outreach by the Commissioner can be directly linked to the fact that there were little or no complaints with regards to the Act.

The Commissioner complied with the statutory requirement to prepare an Annual Report to be tabled by the Speaker in the Legislative Assembly. The Commissioner’s recommendations in these reports addressed the need for clarification of sections of the Act, such as:

- Changes to the preamble
- Consideration of increasing the languages that should be protected as Official Languages
- Section 11 dealing with services to the public
- Reconsidering language rights that concern the Members of the Legislative Assembly during proceedings of the House

The Commissioner also recommended that the government should,

- implement a government toll-free number for Official Languages and a website policy,
- implement Interpreter/Translator training and certification as well as a registry, and
- consider the role of the two languages boards.

Section 23(3) of the Act requires the Legislative Assembly to refer the Annual Reports of the Languages Commissioner to a committee for review. This committee is to report back within 180 days of the referral. The Committees tasked with this review have complied with this statutory requirement. Typically the GNWT responds to the Committee’s report within a reasonable time frame, even though there is no statutory requirement to do so.
The Languages Commissioner has expressed her frustration with this process and recommended that the Legislative Assembly report directly back to her. The Commissioner also felt that her recommendations were not acted upon. She asked that the scope of powers for the Commissioner be reconsidered.

The Committee is not convinced that increased powers are necessary to strengthen the “ombudsperson” mandate of the Commissioner. Section 20 (2) of the Act also provides for the Commissioner to conduct and carry out investigations on her own initiative. Section 22 lays out details for the follow-up process after an investigation was conducted:

- Report the investigated matter to the government institution concerned “...The Languages Commissioner shall report that opinion and the reasons for it to the Minister, and to the Deputy Minister of other administrative had of the institution concerned.” (OLA, section 22(1)).
- This report may include recommendations of the Commissioner directed to the Government institution requiring action within a specific time frame (OLA, section 22(2)).
- Section 22(3) directs the Commissioner to inform the complainant on results of an investigation, recommendations made and action taken.
- Section 22(4) provides for an additional remedy to the Commissioner: if in the Commissioner’s opinion no appropriate action had been taken, the Commissioner is authorized to report the issue to the Legislative Assembly.

The Committee finding show that this section of the Act has not been used by the Commissioner. The Committee therefore concludes that it would be premature to expand the scope of powers for the Commissioner. The investigative powers provided for under the existing Act may prove quite effective if used.

The Committee recognizes that the Languages Commissioner had difficulties in fulfilling her role as an Ombudsperson and in ensuring compliance with the Act. However, the Committee is not convinced that this is due to weakness of the Act or the lack of promotion of the Office of the Language Commissioner including a lack of outreach to the population and language communities of the Northwest Territories.

The Committee also looked at other Canadian jurisdictions to compare compliance with Official Languages regimes. New Brunswick (the only bilingual province of Canada), Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Canada itself have a Languages Commissioner. In the remaining jurisdictions, processes are established that make the Ministers or Official Languages Secretariats responsible for dealing with complaints and ensuring compliance with existing languages regimes.
4.5 THE FUTURE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The preamble of the Official Languages Act speaks to the spirit and intent of the Northwest Territories languages regime including goals for the future.

The stakeholder and speakers of the Official Languages however, do not seem to have a common vision for the Official Languages of the NWT. Their needs and interests are quite different from each other.

The Act treats all Aboriginal languages the same and does not distinguish between their different levels of vitality and endangerment. The Committee suggests that it is important to distinguish between the individual Aboriginal languages of the NWT because their speaker base, their geographic base, and their grades of endangerment differ greatly. The Francophone community organizations believe in equal rights between French and English similar to the federal Act and seek the full implementation of those rights.

Granting language rights makes only sense when languages are used. If the languages are losing their speaker it first must be decided, if there is a willingness to support initiatives that reverse this language loss.

The Committee found the Aboriginal languages in a “state of emergency”. The stakeholders and community language groups are desperate for supports that help them with their revitalization efforts.

The Government cannot reasonably expect that devolving the responsibilities for language revitalization to the language communities can ensure the survival of the languages. Language stakeholders and communities have pointed out the same key supports they expect from the Government: language and literacy training at the community level and for language professionals like interpreter/translator and teachers; a clearing house for resources, terminology development and standards; an Aboriginal languages website; Unicode Dene fonts; an annual Aboriginal languages gathering and stable, and adequate funding. These needs were only marginally addressed. These activities must become part of a comprehensive revitalization plan.

Language Communities also expressed their frustration with government consultations on language issues, where stakeholders repeat their lists of needs and appeals for support to save what is left of the Aboriginal languages of the NWT. The feedback from the Aboriginal language community groups clearly demonstrates that the Government needs
to shift its consultation to the language resource people and specialists working on the frontline.

The Committee found that the Language Communities do not receive the support and resources required to implement their work plan and language plans; they do not receive the supports they would need to be key players for language survival and revitalization. Therefore, we have indentified many issues related to language revitalization and to the need for renewed commitment and partnerships between all parties to contribute to the survival of the Official Languages in the NWT.

The Committee encourages the Language Communities to work with their leadership to promote the use of Aboriginal languages and to get involved and take stake in community language revitalization initiatives. We are aware that increased Government commitment and supports alone cannot save the Aboriginal languages. The Committee intends that the implementation of its recommendation will foster community development including capacity building allowing Language Communities to take ownership of their languages' revitalization.

Language policies influence language use in many social spheres like the courts, the schools or government offices. Language policies and legislation can support the use of language if they are enforced and resources are made available (the promotion of French throughout Canada since the early eighties is a good example).

The Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories must agree to face the challenges of language revitalization now if they are committed to help the Aboriginal languages to survive. The Aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories are basically in a state of emergency. As several hearing participants pointed out if no committed and comprehensive measures are taken now, the Aboriginal languages will disappear in a few generations.

The Northwest Territories is not alone in facing decisions on language survival and the challenges are multifold. Globalization, the spread of a single language, growing integration of economy, transportation and communication networks have influenced social change not only in NWT communities but throughout the world. For example, the knowledge of English is widely seen as a path to better education and consequently to social mobility with more economic opportunities and better chances to acquire wealth.

The possibilities for information and entertainment that the Internet provides to youth hinder revitalization efforts. Compared to the use of English in these new technologies Aboriginal language does not seem to offer any rewards and decreases the motivation for youth to learn the community language.
When English language proficiency is equated with successful education it is very difficult for local language communities to create incentives for revitalization programs. If regional or local autonomy is high, and education policies can be influenced, language use is more likely to increase.

“Linguistic diversity is being threatened around the world, and this threat is acutely felt by indigenous people. ... Saving indigenous languages is a matter of great urgency and is crucial to ensuring the protection of the cultural identity and dignity of indigenous peoples and safeguarding their traditional heritage.

Aside from the basic right to maintain and use their own languages, indigenous peoples’ language rights include:

- The right to be educated in their mother tongue.
- The right to have indigenous languages recognized in constitutions and laws.
- The right to live free from discrimination on the grounds of language. The right to establish and have access to media in indigenous languages.”

The Committee concluded that the Aboriginal languages are endangered to various degrees. In order to secure a future for all Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, the Committee suggests a revised languages regime for the Northwest Territories. This regime has an Official Languages services component and an Aboriginal languages protection component. We concluded that there is a need to acknowledge the degree of endangerment and the urgency for a comprehensive revitalization approach if there is a collective wish to ensure the survival of the Aboriginal languages.

The existing Official Languages Act does not fulfill its spirit and intend and certainly does not serve the speakers of the languages it protects.

The Committee’s recommendations address these short-comings and concerns. We have suggested solutions that address a particular challenge that is unique to Canada: that the Northwest Territories has 11 Official Languages with a population of about 43,000.

The Committee took a practical and realistic approach in its recommendations. The Members are aware that there are limited resources. We suggest that our recommendations would free some expenses within the current set-up of the administration of the Act. Those could be used towards the new measures we recommend. However, we strongly believe that additional resources must be committed towards supporting the language communities to coordinate the development of resource materials, to make these materials accessible and to create a long-term strategic plan.

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97 Fact Sheet from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, spring 2008
In the following chapter the Committee will also suggest a new approach to service delivery in Official Languages. This includes that the Government must commit to enforcing its Official Languages regime, provide the necessary resources and build capacity to deliver on those commitments.

The Committee believes that with political will, commitment to a long-term planned, comprehensive approach and community involvement, the Aboriginal languages can be saved and can be honoured together with French as Official Languages of the Northwest Territories.
CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

The Terms of Reference allow the Committee to make recommendations for amendment to the Act that it considers desirable. Based on its findings and conclusions the Standing Committee on Government Operations makes the following recommendations to create

- a new “Official Languages Services Act” with a focus on service delivery, and
- a new Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime that focuses on protection and revitalization of Aboriginal languages.

The Committee is aware of the breadth of its recommendations and that their meaningful implementation will take some time. As a first step thorough strategic planning must take place, including an analysis of the fiscal requirements for the implementation of these plans.

The Committee did not see its task as developing strategic or implementation plans on behalf of the Government. Instead we have provided and a foundation for what must be addressed in those plans. We recognize that the Government also needs to address challenges related to human and fiscal capacity and resources during this planning process. The Committee has left room in its recommendations allowing the Government to be diligent on this matter.

The Committee recognizes that interim measures will be necessary to address the most urgent needs of the Aboriginal language communities and the most obvious shortcomings of the existing Official Languages Act. A section, entitled “Transitional Provisions”, gives recommendations on what interim measures should be taken immediately.

5.1 PROVISIONS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES SERVICES ACT

1. Rewrite the OLA to get away from the federal model of legislation that does not match the demographic, socio-geographic, and political realities of the NWT

2. Lobby the federal government to allow the GNWT to create its own and more appropriate Official Languages legislation/regime
3. Create a service orientated Official Languages regime for the GNWT and commit to a regime aimed at saving the Aboriginal languages of the NWT.

4. Acknowledge the different situations and needs of the Aboriginal languages and French in terms of legal recognition and protection by Canada, speaker base and available resources (financial, human, linguistic and capacity).

5. Recognize Aboriginal languages and French as Official Languages of the NWT including rights granted in reference to legal proceedings and proceedings in the Legislative Assembly.

6. Government retains the obligation to provide services and communication with the public in Official Languages with the following qualifiers:

   6.1. Determine service delivery priorities through consultations with the different language communities while recognizing the Government’s capacity and resource limitations.

   6.2. Address Government capacity issues through comprehensive long-term planning (language service plans for each language) while acknowledging language community priorities.

   6.3. Create designated areas for Aboriginal languages in the communities where Aboriginal languages are indigenous (see Nunavut OLA, s.3 (3)) and add further provisions similar to the wording in the Active Offer Policy of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat in Manitoba, i.e.

   A region is recognized as a designated area for [name of the language] by the Government of the Northwest Territories due to the concentration of Aboriginal Language speakers or the validity of the region’s Aboriginal community, as demonstrated by the use of the Aboriginal Language in local schools, cultural organization, community groups, etc.

   Apart from acknowledging regions where Aboriginal languages are indigenous this provides for recognizing facts and trends of our modern NWT society including mobility and urbanization.

   6.4. Create designated areas for French, i.e., “A region is recognized ... by the Government ... due to the concentration of Francophones or the validity of the
region’s Francophone community, as demonstrated by the use of French in local schools, cultural organization, community groups, etc. ⁹⁸

7. Establish an Official Languages Secretariat (OLS) and place it with the Department of the Executive as a central agency that has the authority to implement the Official Languages Services Act government wide. Such an organizational structure could improve accountability and oversight of the implementation of the “Official Languages Services Act” as well as increase focus on language community consultations and relationship building. The reporting relationship of the Official Languages Secretariat should be directly to the Deputy Minister.

8. The Government’s Official Languages Secretariat shall be sufficiently resourced, supported and empowered to fulfill the following mandate by:

8.1. Developing government services in the Aboriginal languages and French. Determine service delivery priorities through consultations with the different language communities while recognizing the Government’s capacity and resource limitations (see “Minister Responsible” for details regarding this plan and the reporting on the progress of the plan)

8.2. Addressing Government capacity issues through comprehensive long-term planning (language service plans for each language) while recognizing language community priorities

8.3. Addressing matters of Aboriginal languages services in general

8.4. Addressing matters of French language services in general

8.5. Addressing complaints from the public about Aboriginal and French language services

8.6. Facilitating, guiding and monitoring departments and agencies on their Aboriginal languages and French service activities

8.7. Liaising with Aboriginal language communities, organizations and their political bodies, and Francophone community organizations

8.8. Coordination of agreements and funding from Canada

⁹⁸ Definition from the Active Offer Policy, Francophone Affairs Secretariat (Manitoba)
8.9. Coordination of funding and other supports to the Francophone language communities

9. Acknowledge that in order to grant equal rights to the Aboriginal languages a comprehensive language protection regime addressing protection, revitalization and modernization of the Aboriginal languages has to be implemented first.

5.2 PROVISIONS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR AN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES PROTECTION REGIME

10. Acknowledge continuous Aboriginal Language loss, endangerment resulting in a need for protection and revitalization

11. Government commits to an Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime through:

11.1. Acknowledging the different situations and needs between the Aboriginal languages of the NWT in terms of speaker base/vitality, capacity, endangerment, need for protection, maintenance, revitalization and modernization

11.2. A realistic long-term strategic revitalization plan (10 to 20 year range) must be developed in consultation with each language community highlighting priorities to address needs and actions for protection, revitalization, maintenance and modernization for each Aboriginal language. This plan must include measures, monitoring and evaluation criteria. Measures must distinguish between government and language communities responsibilities

11.3. Annual action plans for each language that relate to the long-term strategic plan outlining responsibilities and activities by the Government, its agencies and the language communities including timelines and measures for progress towards established goals and objectives

11.4. The establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Authority (ALA)\(^9\) in charge of the development and implementation of this plan, being the liaison to the language communities with sufficient resources and powers to fulfill this

\(^9\) Examples: the Inuit Language Authority established under the Inuit Language Protection Act of Nunavut or the Maori Language Commission established under the Maori Language Act of New Zealand
mandate and to provide on-going support and capacity building to the Aboriginal languages communities and their organizations

12. Include statutory requirements to have a Committee of the Legislative Assembly review the Annual Report on Official Language Services and Aboriginal Language Protection and report back within 180 days

5.3 ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AUTHORITY AND ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

13. The Aboriginal Languages Authority is responsible for the development and implementation of a long-term strategic revitalization plan, annual action plans, and being the liaison to the language communities with sufficient resources and powers to fulfill this mandate and to provide ongoing support and capacity building to the Aboriginal languages communities and their organizations

13.1. The Aboriginal Languages Authority is obligated to consult with the language communities (set minimum requirements for consultation)

13.2. The Aboriginal Languages Authority is responsible for stable and sustainable funding arrangements with language communities

13.3. The Aboriginal Languages Authority must have a close working relationship and take advice from the Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee (see below)

13.4. The Aboriginal Language Authority of the GNWT needs to liaise with the Aboriginal Language Centre (see below) to ensure a continuous work relationship is established

14. The Aboriginal Languages Authority would work with an advisory committee represented by delegates of the Aboriginal Language communities. The establishment of this Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee in combination with prescribed consultation requirements would ensure concerns of the languages communities are being heard and their advice being taken under consideration.

14.1. The Aboriginal Language Advisory Committee would replace the existing Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.
14.2. Mandate, competencies, meeting and consultation requirements of this working group shall be clearly established in policy

14.3. The obligations of the Aboriginal Language Authority towards this advisory body shall be clearly established in policy

14.4. The Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee is composed by representatives of all Aboriginal languages

14.5. The mandate of this advisory body shall be to participate in the development of the long-term strategic revitalization plan and the annual action plans concerning language revitalization

14.6. This body shall be linking the community needs with the planning and policy activities of the Government in regards to Aboriginal languages revitalization

5.4 ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES CENTRE

While the Aboriginal Languages Authority and the Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee would be concerned with strategic planning and policy development relating to the revitalization of Aboriginal languages, the Aboriginal Languages Centre would be tasked with language activities and program delivery aspects of a comprehensive revitalization regime.

15. Support and fund an Aboriginal Language Centre (ALC) outside of Government tasked with:

15.1. Providing central resources and supports necessary for language protection, revitalization, maintenance and modernization (for example linguists, community development/capacity building, collaboration with existing programs)

15.2. Functioning as a clearing house for resources developed by language groups and with funding from the GNWT

100 Examples: the Yukon Native Language Centre or the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (Victoria State, Australia)
101 Examples: The University of Alaska in Fairbanks in conjunction with the Yukon Native Language Centre has established a program leading to the Associate of Applied Science Degree in Native Language Education. Or: The Certificate Program in Aboriginal Language Revitalization of the University of Victoria (BC)
15.3. Developing an Aboriginal languages resource website

15.4. Accelerating the development of Unicode Dene fonts

15.5. Coordinating the development and offering of Interpreter/Translator training and standards (can be in collaboration with other agencies for example the existing pilot project through the Akaitcho Government)

15.6. Developing Adult language training and other initiatives to increase the day-to-day use of Aboriginal languages that can be adapted and used by the different language communities

15.7. Other activities as identified and supported by the Language Communities

15.8. Maintain an on-going working relationship with the language communities and the Aboriginal Languages Authority

15.9. Providing an annual report to the Aboriginal Languages Authority

Note: There is nothing that shall prevent the installation of an Aboriginal Languages Centre within any existing language society. Language Community groups and organizations shall be consulted before the structure of the Aboriginal Languages Centre is decided on.

5.5 MANDATE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER DEVOLVED

16. The implementation of our recommendations to create an Official Languages Secretariat and to strengthen Government’s commitment to service oriented legislation makes the position of the Languages Commissioner no longer necessary\(^2\). Similar to the set-up of most other Canadian jurisdictions the Official Languages Secretariat, if provided with adequate powers, could address and resolve complaints regarding Government services, while the Aboriginal Language Authority could ensure the progress of the Aboriginal Language protection regime.

17. If the term of the Languages Commissioner appointed under the exiting Official Languages Act has not expired when the new Official Languages Services Regime comes into force, then the Languages Commissioner shall be repositioned in the

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\(^2\)The following Canadian jurisdictions have an Official Languages regime but no Languages Commissioner: PEI, NS, QUE, ON, SASK, MAN, AB, YK
Official Languages Secretariat to ensure continuity during the transitional period until the Commissioner's term of office has expired.

5.6 MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES SERVICES AND THE PROTECTION OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

18. Designate a Minister Responsible for Official Languages Services and the Protection of Aboriginal languages and place the Official Languages Secretariat and the Aboriginal Languages Authority with the Department of the Executive to ensure accountability for the government wide implementation of the Official Languages Services Act and the Aboriginal Languages Protection Regime is in place.

19. Make the creation of a government-wide long-term strategic/implementation plan for Official Languages services and the strategic plan for Aboriginal Language protection a responsibility of the Minister and establish these responsibilities in legislation and policy.

20. Make the creation of departmental/institutional Official Languages services implementation plan with annual reporting on measures a responsibility of each Government institution.

21. Strategic and implementation plans must include financial needs assessments that would allow the Minister to bring budget requests forward during the established business planning cycle.

22. Make strategic and implementation plans for Official Languages Services and Aboriginal Languages Protection publicly available.

23. Include annual updates on the implementation of these plans including activities of the Official Language Secretariat, the Aboriginal Languages Authority and government institutions part of the reporting requirements of the Minister’s Annual Report on Official Language Services and Aboriginal Language Protection.

5.7 LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

24. Affirm relevance of the languages communities for the use, maintenance, revitalization, protection and modernization of their respective languages.
25. Confirm Government’s responsibility to support the language communities in using, maintaining, revitalizing, protecting and modernizing their respective languages.

26. Confirm Aboriginal Language Communities responsibility to work with their people and political leadership at a community, regional and self-government level to increase daily usage, thus contributing to the recovery and maintenance of Aboriginal languages.

27. The proposed Aboriginal Languages Centre would provide increased support, development and sharing opportunities avoiding duplication and increasing the capacity, programming and resource development for each language community group. Ideally this would lead to a close and on-going working relationship between community language organizations and the Centre.

28. The proposed Aboriginal Languages Advisory Committee would provide opportunities for the communities to provide input in setting Government policy direction.

29. The role of the Language Communities would be strengthened through mandatory consultation requirements of the Aboriginal Languages Authority and the Official Languages Secretariat.

5.8 IMPLEMENTATION

30. Make negotiations with Canada on changes to the Northwest Territories Official Languages regime a priority.

31. Bring a Legislative Proposal forward during the life of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

32. Create an implementation plan for the introduction of the proposed Official Languages Services Act and Aboriginal languages protection regimes in the life of the 16th Legislative Assembly (including fiscal, human resources and capacity building needs).

33. Conduct government wide human resources planning for the service delivery model to address Official Languages services obligations of the GNWT.
34. Use the Corporate Human Resources Strategic Plan currently under development by the Department of Human Resources to determine the GNWT’s capacity to deliver services in the Official Languages

35. Negotiate funding agreements for Official Languages services and Aboriginal languages protection with Canada

36. Provide Language Communities with adequate support and resources to implement their work plan/language plans on a continuous and developing basis

37. Conduct an education campaign for all GNWT staff on Official Language services and Aboriginal Language protection

38. Provide an Official Languages service delivery and communication manual for all staff setting out minimum standards including for an “active offer”

39. Extend the services offered at Single Window Service Centres (example: Manitoba)

40. Future NWT Community Surveys shall include information on mother tongue and home language to allow for improved tracking of language shift in particular for the Aboriginal languages of the NWT. The tracking of language shift every two to three years could be an important indicator to evaluate if the revitalization measures put in place are successful

41. Ensure that the NWT Bureau of Statistics works closely with Statistics Canada to include all Aboriginal Official Languages of the Northwest Territories when collecting and reporting language information during the Census

5.9 TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recognizes that a meaningful implementation of these recommendations will take some time. Therefore, the Committee recommends that in the meantime the following transitional measures be acted upon without delay.

42. Improve service delivery in Official Languages

43. Provide increased financial and capacity supports to community language groups including multi-year funding agreements
44. Improve communication and consultation with the community language groups and their organization

45. Conduct Aboriginal language community consultations to prepare for the establishment of the Aboriginal Language Centre in the fiscal year 2010/2011

46. In the interim make the following amendments to the existing *Official Languages Act*

46.1. **Languages Commissioner**

46.1.1. Include NWT residency as statutory requirement

46.1.2. Include minimum requirements for community outreach to promote Official Language rights and the Act itself

46.1.3. Review whether the existing *Official Languages Act* sections on investigations by the Commissioner's on his/her own initiative, need to be clarified or strengthened

46.1.4. Review whether additional powers for the Languages Commissioner to audit government agencies for their implementation of OLA, would strengthen the ombudsperson function of the Statutory Officer

46.2. **Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board**

46.2.1. Amalgamate the two Languages Boards into one Aboriginal Languages Board (ALB) that will provide the link between the Aboriginal language communities and the Minister responsible for Official Languages

46.2.2. Change the appointment process by broadening the list of organizations who nominate representatives of their Language Communities. The intent is to involve a more diverse group of language stakeholders in the nomination process

46.2.3. Clarify the Aboriginal Languages Board’s mandate, powers and its relationship with the Minister in the Act
46.2.4. Include a description of the roles, responsibilities, competency requirements and compensation/per diem schedule in the Regulations establishing the Aboriginal Languages Board

46.2.5. Include requirement for board members to consult with their communities and stakeholders

47. The Minister responsible for Official Languages shall include a detailed progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Government Operations contained in its Final Report on the Review of the *Official Languages Act* 2008-2009 in his Annual Report on Official Languages

48. The GNWT shall communicate with the Committee on the progress of the development of the proposed Official Languages services regime and the Aboriginal languages protection regime
Flowchart to illustrate functions, relationships and setup of the proposed Official Languages Service and Aboriginal Language Protection regimes
### APPENDIX

|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A1 | The current version of the OLA be updated to remove repealed sections and correct spelling, terminology, and translation errors. | The government is proposing amendments to the Official Languages Act (OLA) to be introduced in the fall 2003 session of the Legislative Assembly to remove repealed sections and correct spelling, terminology and translation errors. | • 14th Legislative Assembly amended the OLA in 2004  
• Amended Act came into force in July 2004 |
| A2 | Dene terms be used in the OLA for North Slavey, South Slavey, Dogrib, and Chipewyan, with the advice and consent of the affected language communities. | Obtaining the advice and consent of the affected language communities to have the Dene terms for North Slavey, South Slavey, Dogrib and Chipewyan included in the OLA will require sufficient lead time for effective consultation to take place in early 2004, in time to begin further amendments to the Act in the fall of 2004. | • Amendments included changing Dogrib to Tłı̨chǫ  
• Chipewyan, North and South Slavey remain official names in the Act |
<p>| A3 | North and South Slavey (as such, or using Dene terms) and Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun be listed as separate languages in Section 4 of the OLA, and removed from the Interpretation section, with the consent of the affected languages communities. | The separate listing of North Slavey, South Slavey, Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun in Section 4 of the OLA, and their removal from the Interpretation section, will be included with other amendments to the OLA to be introduced by the government in the fall 2003 session of the Legislative Assembly. | • Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation |</p>
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<tr>
<th>A4</th>
<th>Michif research be funded with the intent of determining an appropriate designation for this language</th>
<th>ECE will conduct this research on Michif Languages through Aboriginal Language Initiative funding. The focus of the research will be to determine the number of Michif speakers in the NWT before decisions are</th>
<th>• ECE reviewed research and concluded the current Act is appropriate</th>
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<td>A5</td>
<td>The Preamble be amended to recognize the important role of language communities in preserving and developing their own languages and to acknowledge shared responsibility for language enhancement.</td>
<td>The GNWT agrees that the Preamble to the OLA should be amended to recognize the important role of language communities in preserving and developing their own languages. There is significance in acknowledging the shared responsibility for language enhancement. Amendments to the preamble will be included with other amendments to the OLA being introduced by the government in the fall 2003 session of the Legislative Assembly.</td>
<td>• Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation</td>
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| A6 | Section 14 of the OLA be clarified and defined through a combination of regulation and policy. Regulations be established for service delivery relating to occupational health and safety, health, and social services. Other services be defined through policy rather than guidelines. | The government will proceed to examine the cost of, and options for, implementing this recommendation. The GNWT will explore options for clarifying more specific services provided through a combination of regulation and policy. Progress will be reported to the Legislative Assembly within twelve months. | • It is unknown to what extent the GNWT followed through with this recommendation. The GNWT did not share the options on the results of its examination with the Legislative Assembly.  
• The Annual Report on Official Languages reports no details on this commitment.  
• No new policies or regulations regarding service delivery were put in place since 2003.  
• Currently the GNWT is working on a plan to improve its French language services. |
| A7 | Departments and agencies required to comply with the OLA be listed in regulations, along with provisions for compliance where these services are being provided for other agencies. | The government will address the issues immediately by updating policy and introducing regulations over time. Developing regulations, including consultation costs, will be considered through the government’s business planning process. | • Government Institution Regulations came into force in 2006.  
• The Regulations provide a schedule of the agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, offices and other bodies designated as government institutions and subject to the provision of the OLA. |
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<th>A8</th>
<th>The OLA designate a Minister responsible, with the authority to</th>
<th>The recommended change to the OLA will be included with amendments to the OLA to be</th>
<th>• Minister responsible for Official Languages was established in the OLA.</th>
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|    | implement the Act and the obligation to submit an annual official languages report to the Legislative Assembly. | introduced by the government in the fall 2003 session. The Minister will recommend to his successor that an annual report on Official Languages be tabled in the Legislative Assembly commencing in the 2004-05 fiscal year. | • Minister of Education, Culture and Employment was appointed to be the Minister responsible for Official Languages  
• Annual Report from the Minister is tabled |
| A9 | An Aboriginal Languages Board be legislated through the OLA to advise the Minister responsible regarding planning, promotion, coordination, and resource allocation. This Board will provide a legislated accountability link between the language communities and the GNWT. The terms of reference for this Board – along with its structure, appointment process, consultation functions, and other necessary matters – be established through regulation. | Consistent with the Special Committee’s recommendation, the government proposes to establish in legislation and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and to concurrently establish in legislation an Official Languages Board. The Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, comprised of representation from all official Aboriginal language communities, will have a broad mandate to provide the Minister with advice on both government and community efforts to maintain, promote and revitalize Aboriginal languages. The Official Languages Board, comprised of representation from all official language communities of the Northwest Territories, will provide the Minister with advice on the provisions and operation of the OLA and ongoing administration and delivery of services by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Each Board will be able to make recommendations to the Minister within its respective mandate. It is further proposed that the existing Commissioner’s Advisory Board, which reports to the Languages Commissioner and is not | • Contrary to the recommendation, the GNWT established two languages boards under the OLA: the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board (ALRB) and the Official Languages Board (OLB).  
• Regulations dealing with the appointment process and the terms of the appointment were established in 2004.  
• These Regulations do not include terms of reference or a consultation function as recommended by SCROLA.  
• The mandate as established in the OLA does not fully address the recommendations of SCROLA.  
• The Language Commissioner’s advisory board was dissolved in accordance with the Governments response |
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<td><strong>established through legislation, be dissolved.</strong> Under the new model, the promotional role will be moved to the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. The Office of the Languages Commissioner would continue to have an independent monitoring role and would continue to report to the Legislative Assembly.</td>
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| Ao | Aboriginal Languages Board members be nominated by their respective language communities, recommended by the Minister responsible, and appointed by the Legislative Assembly. | **Included in the amendments to the OLA, to be introduced by the government in the fall 2003 session, the government proposes that the appointment of members to the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board be made by the Executive Council on the recommendation of the Minister. Nominations would be sought from the respective language communities and the Minister would consult with Members of the Legislative Assembly prior to recommending nominees.** | • Members of the two languages boards are appointed by the Commissioner in Executive Council on the recommendation of the Minister and on the nomination of the prescribed representatives of each language community.  
• The Minister did not establish a consultation process with Members of the Legislative Assembly prior to recommending nominees as stated in the GNWT response of 2003. |
| Aii | Concurrent with the establishment of the Aboriginal Languages Board, the board promotional mandate of the languages Commissioner be reduced through the repeal of the last phrase in Section 20(1) and Section 20(3) of the OLA. The Commissioner’s promotional role is transferred to the Minister responsible and the Aboriginal Languages Board. The Commissioner continues to ensure compliance with the strengthened OLA. | **The GNWT has assessed this recommendation as part of plans to introduce a Bill in the fall 2003 sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Through the proposed amendments, the sections of the OLA dealing with Aboriginal languages promotional activities will be transferred to the Aboriginal Revitalization Board upon establishment of the Board effective July 1, 2004.** | • Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation  
• The Minister’s mandate in the OLA sections 26(2)(c)–(e) includes promoting Official Languages education, the use of Official Languages by government institutions and the encouragement of Aboriginal Language maintenance and revitalization while the ALRB’s mandate in section 31(1)(a) refers to reviewing programs and initiatives of communities, government institutions and other bodies or institutions to maintain, promote and revitalize Aboriginal languages. |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Section 19(2) and 19(3) of the OLA be repealed, allowing the Office of the Languages Commissioner to be independent of the public service. The Legislative review the Office of the Languages Commissioner to clarify its management systems and administrative support relationships. | The government is introducing a bill to amend the OLA in the fall 2003 session that will make the Office of the Languages Commissioner independent of the public service. | • These provisions and how they are interpreted by the GNWT in its response to the recommendation point to the need to clarify the provisions of the Act that deal with language promotion  
• It is also questionable if the ALRB was set-up and supported in a way to conduct these activities as expressed by the GNWT in its response from 2003  
• Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation |
<p>| A12 | A provision be added to the OLA to allow for the appointment of an acting Languages Commissioner between appointments or where the Commissioner is otherwise unable to perform his/her functions. | The government is proposing amendments to the OLA in the Fall 2003 session that will include provisions to appoint an acting Languages Commissioner. | • Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation |
| A13 | A provision be added to the OLA requiring the Legislative Assembly to respond to the Commissioner’s annual report within 180 days of the tabling of that report. | The government’s proposed amendments to the OLA in the fall 2003 session includes provisions to the annual report of the Official Languages Commissioner within 180 days of tabling of the annual report. | • Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation |</p>
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<th>A14</th>
<th>The OLA provide for recognition of the collective language rights of Aboriginal peoples within their homelands, consistent with current and pending</th>
<th>The government is introducing proposed amendments to the OLA in the Fall 2003 session that will include provisions for the recognition of the collective language rights of</th>
<th>• Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation (preamble)</th>
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<td>A16</td>
<td>The OLA [Section 29(1)] be amended to require smaller-scale evaluations every five years, beginning in 2008 (concurrent with the release of the 2006 Census Canada language data), to ensure the provisions and implementation of the OLA and other official language initiatives are effective.</td>
<td>The government is introducing proposed amendments to the OLA in the Fall 2003 session that will include provisions for smaller scale evaluations every five years beginning in 2008.</td>
<td>• Amendments are according to the SCROLA recommendation</td>
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**B: TO IMPROVE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

| B1 | The Minister responsible considers establishing a small Official Languages Secretariat (OLS) by re-profiling existing resources. The OLS would provide a single point of access regarding official languages matters and a focus for accountability within the GNWT. The OLS would report directly to the Minister and would carry out the following management and policy functions:  
• Liaison with the French and Aboriginal communities  
• Preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the official languages implementation plan and evaluation framework  
• Liaison with the Bureau of Statistics (see B4)  
• Negotiation and management of the | The GNWT will initiate work to develop a framework for the creation of an Official Languages Secretariat that will support the proposed Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and the proposed Official Languages Board. | • GNWT did not address the full recommendation  
• Restructured the reporting relationship of the Official Languages Division within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, reporting directly to the Deputy Minister  
• No resources were added to the division to fulfill its expanded mandate, for example to support both languages boards  
• Since the acceptance of this recommendation neither the GNWT or its Official Languages Division have prepared or monitored and evaluated, an official languages implementation plan and evaluation framework |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement  
• Management of contribution agreements with the official language communities  
• Operational support for the Aboriginal Language Board  
• Operational and leadership support for the establishment of one-window service centres  
• Support for the development of official languages regulations and policies  
• Intergovernmental relations regarding languages. | The GNWT will analyze the requirements associated with implementation of an evaluation/accountability framework based on Treasury Board guidelines. | • No implementation plan in place  
• The GNWT informed Committee that a Result-based Management and Accountability (RMAF) has been developed and that its implementation is linked to the next Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement |
| B2 | The Minister responsible develop a GNWT-wide official languages implementation plan and evaluation / accountability framework, based on the Treasury Board (2001) model, that calls for the identification, gathering, and ongoing analysis of output and outcome-based data. |                                                                                           |                                                                                                  |
| B3 | The Minister responsible ensures that language communities are fully consulted on the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement action plan and evaluation framework. | ECE will consult with all language communities in preparation for negotiation of a new Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages. This consultation on the action plan and evaluation framework for the Agreement. The current Agreement expires March 31, 2004 and negotiations for a new Agreement are expected to commence in November 2003. | • The GNWT was not able to negotiate a new multi-year agreement with Canada since 2004. Funding from Canada has been provided to the GNWT by extending previous agreements  
• There is no evidence to what extent the language communities have been consulted in preparation to negotiations of a new 2009-2014 Canada-NWT cooperation agreement  
• The GNWT informed the Committee that ongoing consultations with the two languages boards on the negotiations are taking place |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| B4 | The Bureau of Statistics be tasked to gather and analyze data from Census Canada, a modified Labour Force Survey, and current sociolinguistic studies, and incorporate this data into a language report every five years, beginning in 2003 with the release of the 2001 Census Canada language data. | The Bureau of Statistics will prepare a report on language data for the Northwest Territories. In conjunction with ECE, the Bureau of Statistics will also identify deficiencies in language information and propose solutions including costs in order to remedy the deficiencies. | • The NWT Bureau of Statistics does not publish a “language report” in accordance with the recommendation  
• The NWT Bureau of Statistics provides statistical information on its website and on request  
• Only the 2003-2004 Annual Report on Official Languages tabled by the Minister included language data. Deficiencies and solutions to address them were not included |

**C: TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND ADEQUATE FINANCING**

| C1 | The Minister responsible for the OLA ensure that all funding allocated for official languages be used for that purpose.                                                                                                       | ECE is working on revisions to its accountability requirements with education boards, giving particular attention to Aboriginal language and culture funding.                                                                                         | • The GNWT plans to address this recommendation in conjunction with Aboriginal language education (see section G of this table) |
| C2 | Funding for official languages initiatives be increased as required to implement the recommendations contained in this report.                                                                                               | The GNWT will conduct further financial analysis to calculate implementation costs for various recommendations that currently do not have a budget. Given the overall demands on its fiscal resources, the GNWT must closely assess all identified needs for resources including the recommendations put forth by the Special Committee to ensure that support can be sustained over the longer term. The government, in the immediate term, sees the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and an Official Languages Board as a top priority and is prepared, in the | • ALRB & OLB were created  
• The Committee is not aware of any comprehensive financial analysis to implement the SCROLA recommendations  
• The GNWT sees the implementation of further strategic language initiatives or future funding for the languages boards as depending on the next Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for Aboriginal Languages and French in the NWT |
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<td>remainder of its term to commit the fiscal resources required to fund these initiatives forthwith.</td>
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<td>C3</td>
<td>The Minister responsible take steps to ensure that the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement is maintained and maximizes federal participation.</td>
<td>As has been the case with previous agreements, the Minister will make every effort to negotiate the best agreement possible for the NWT, to ensure the GNWT has the capacity to support official languages. The GNWT will consult with the French and Aboriginal language communities in preparation for upcoming negotiations to renew the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT.</td>
<td>• The GNWT intends to negotiate a new multi-year agreement with Canada in 2009 and confirmed its commitment to consult the languages communities and the two languages boards</td>
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<td>C4</td>
<td>The GNWT enter into multi-year, flexible-funding agreements with the language communities to provide more certainty and program stability, with appropriate accountability mechanisms.</td>
<td>The GNWT has put into place the capacity to enter into multi-year flexible funding arrangements. The Minister recommends that multi-year funding arrangements be implemented and, wherever possible, recommends that funding received through the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages be aligned with the multi-year needs of language communities.</td>
<td>• No multi-year funding agreements have been put it place with language communities • The GNWT sees multi-year funding arrangements for communities depending on the successful negotiation of a multi-year funding arrangement between the NWT and Canada</td>
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| C5 | The GNWT support language community initiatives to generate other sources of language revenue, including endowment funds and business activities that support language enhancement. | The government, through ECE, will continue to offer support and work with language communities to compile information on other sources of support for languages. A web site will be developed that will include information on funding sources for languages. | • During the 2008-2009 review of the OLA, language communities consistently reported to the Committee that: o It is difficult to find information on funding sources for Aboriginal languages and that such information is not centrally available o An Aboriginal language website is
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<td>urgently needed, but has not been made available despite repeated Government promises</td>
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<td>• The Minister reported in his 2007-2008 Annual Report that a proto-type website was developed and tested in 2007, that language communities will be responsible for its content, however “The installation, maintenance and ongoing administration of this website are still under discussion and review.”</td>
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<td>D: TO ENHANCE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SERVICE DELIVERY</td>
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| D1 | “Active offer” with respect to occupational health and safety, and health and social services be defined through regulations, and through policy for all other services. | The GNWT departments will examine incremental costs associated with developing regulation and policies on, “active offer”. Future decisions on regulation and policy development will be undertaken by the GNWT. | • The GNWT has not followed through on this recommendation.  
• There are no regulations or policies on “active offer”  
• The GNWT is presently working on a plan to improve its French language services  
• The GNWT did not indicate that any work is underway to improve Aboriginal Languages services |
| D2 | The Minister responsible ensures that all departments and agencies properly implement “active offer”, with procedures and measures for tracking demand and service delivery. | It is relatively easy to track offers of service; however, the real challenge for government is to track demand. The GNWT will conduct further analysis to determine effective means of tracking demand for services as they relate to “active offer” to determine how well they are responding to the demand and to identify mean of improving response capacity. | • The GNWT has not followed through on this recommendation.  
• There are no consistent procedures and measures for tracking demand and services delivery  
• The GNWT expects this to be addressed in its plan to improve its French language services  
• The GNWT did not indicate that any work is underway to improve Aboriginal Languages services |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D3 | The GNWT evaluate the bilingual bonus directive, with the intent of prioritizing and increasing the number of bilingual positions for front-line service delivery.                                                                                                                                                                                                 | The GNWT will conduct analysis to determine the financial impacts of this recommendation including implications for collective bargaining agreements.                                                                 | • The GNWT has not followed through on this recommendation.  
• The GNWT expects this to be addressed in its plan to improve its French language services                                                                                                                  |
| D4 | The Minister responsible work with stakeholders to provide communities with cost-effective access to basic translation equipment for government, industry, and public information meetings and gatherings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | The GNWT will conduct financial analysis to address not only the cost of equipment, but also the maintenance, warehousing, shipping and receiving costs associated with managing that equipment. The GNWT will cost this recommendation and review its past experience with respect to requirements for translation equipment. | • The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation                                                                                                                        |
| D5 | The Minister responsible work with the federal government and francophone community to support the establishment of a pilot French language service centre for Yellowknife. This centre would provide one-window access to government services in French and would include a 1-800 line for outlying communities.                                                                                                                                  | Some exploratory discussions have taken place with the federal government and the Francophone community. The GNWT will conduct an analysis of services, along with related financial analysis, to determine the benefits of the service centre.                                                                 | • After three studies the French Single Service Centre called “Services TNO” opened in June of 2008                                                                      |
| D6 | The Minister responsible consult with the Aboriginal language communities and the Aboriginal Languages Board regarding the possible establishment of a pilot Aboriginal language service centre.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | The GNWT will conduct a service needs analysis and related financial analysis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | • The GNWT has preliminary plans to phase in the establishment of a Single Window Service Centre for Aboriginal Languages  
• The evaluation of the pilot “Services TNO” project will be considered                                                                                                            |
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<th>D7</th>
<th>The Minister responsible evaluates the pilot service centres after two years to determine their viability and make</th>
<th>An evaluation should be completed on the pilot service centres as recommended by the Project.</th>
<th>• The GNWT plans an evaluation of “Services TNO” after its first year of service in 2009</th>
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<td>recommendations accordingly.</td>
<td>Special Committee.</td>
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| D8 | The Official Languages Secretariat publish an updated public registry of French and Aboriginal language interpreter/ translators (I/T) | ECE currently publishes a list of interpreters/ translators and distributes the list to departments, boards and agencies. There are some ongoing costs to keep the information current and accessible. This information will be made available to the public on the official languages web site that will be developed. | • Official Languages Division updates its list of Interpreters and Translators annually.  
• The list is distributed to government department but not published |
|    |                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| E1 | The Minister responsible work with the Aboriginal language communities to expand the development of regional and/or territorial certification standards for interpreter/ translators and provide I/T training in regions. The initial focus be on health, social services, justice and other regional priorities. Training is tied to forecast employment and business opportunities arising from increased official languages service delivery. | The GNWT will continue to update and distribute its interpreter/translator listing and will develop a formal register of certified interpreters and translators once a recognized certification process has been implemented. The GNWT will continue work with the Akaitcho Territory Government to ensure the completion of the pilot project in 2003, and with other language communities to ensure testing materials are developed for all official Aboriginal languages of the NWT. The certification process should include annual testing for the industry. The GNWT will also examine models for providing training in the regions. | • The Minister provided information in its Annual Reports on the progress of this Government commitment:  
○ Occupational standards and certification process were reviewed and updated in 2006  
○ Piloted testing of the certification process and materials with the same participants who finalized the occupational standards.  
○ The 2007-2008 Annual Report on Official Languages states that “...it became apparent that there was a lack of qualified Aboriginal evaluators among some of the Aboriginal languages. ... In order to properly develop a certification process for Aboriginal I/Ts there needs to be a pool of qualified I/Ts. In order to have a pool of qualified I/Ts, there needs to be a training process primarily for I/Ts” and further  
○ “The intention now is to complete the certification process in the future when
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| E2 | The Minister of ECE consolidate and increase the regional delivery of Aboriginal language instructor training according to standards set jointly by the language communities and ECE. Training is tied to forecasted employment opportunities arising from a strengthening of Aboriginal language provisions in the Education Act (1995). | The GNWT will work with Aurora College and education bodies to conduct a financial analysis regarding the expansion of regional training delivery. | • The GNWT plans to address this recommendation in conjunction with Aboriginal language education (see section G of this table)  
• The GNWT plans to deliver the Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Instructors diploma program on a rotational full-time basis throughout the regions  
• The GNWT has also identified funding for the part-time delivery of the Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Instructors certificate program |
| E3 | The Minister of ECE develops an Aboriginal second-language curriculum for adults and promotes and supports language training for GNWT employees, parents and other interested adults. | The GNWT will assess training needs and funding requirements to proceed with language training for employees. ECE, through the Dene Cultural Institute, is currently working on the development of an adult Aboriginal Language as a Second Language curriculum. | • The GNWT has not fully addressed its commitment to this recommendation  
• It is not clear what if anything the GNWT has done to assess training needs and funding requirement to proceed with language training for employees  
• The Yamozha Kue Society (formerly: Dene Cultural Institute) has developed and piloted two levels for a “Dene as a Second Language” curriculum  
• The GNWT explained that the implementation of this curriculum is dependant on funding |
| E4 | The Minister responsible and the Minister of ECE meet with Aurora College, Aboriginal language communities, and culture institutes to review the development and delivery of I/T, language instructor, and adult language training, to improve cost- | Aurora College is currently reviewing the Aboriginal Language and Culture Instructor Program, with involvement by ECE. The Minister responsible will ensure Aurora College and language communities on how best to offer such a course. ECE is working on the development of language programming for | • The GNWT has addressed this recommendation partially:  
  o The ALCIP program has been expanded with an option of for a two-year full-time diploma program first offered in the Tł̨̱chǫ region  
  o The part-time delivery of the one year |
|---|---|---|---|
| effectiveness and the overall success rate. | adults through Aurora College and the Dene Cultural Institute. The department will coordinate meetings of the parties involved in these projects to ensure there is information sharing and coordination to the greatest extent possible. Interpreter/Translator courses are necessary and the Minister responsible will work with Aurora College and language communities to determine how best to accomplish this. | ALCIP certificate continues with one or two courses offered per year and region  
○ Education, Culture & Employment intends to improve the community based delivery of the TEP and ALCIP program starting in 2009-2010  
• The GNWT supports the Akaitcho pilot regional training of Interpreter/Translators  
• The GNWT did not address the recommendation with the comprehensive approach suggested bringing all parties together |
| E5 | Aurora College and other public agencies providing language training submit an annual report of their activities to the Minister responsible and the Aboriginal Languages Board. | The GNWT supports accountability to the public. Mandatory annual reporting will help to increase awareness of government activities and lead to increased coordination. However, since Aurora College would not have a reporting relationship to the proposed Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board nor the proposed Official Languages Board the report from the College and other public agencies will be submitted to the Minister. The Minister will share that report with the Boards. | • The GNWT did not agree that the reports from Aurora College and other public agencies providing language training should be shared with the languages boards, instead:  
• The Minister reports outputs (number of participants and number of courses delivered in regions) of the TEP and ALCIP program in the annual report on Official Languages, which -is tabled in the Legislative Assembly |
| F: TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES | The Minister responsible work closely with the Aboriginal language communities, the respective cultural institutes, and Elders’ Councils to identify terminology needs, fund terminology development, and establish regionally endorsed terminology | The Minister will recommend to his successor that ECE undertake a financial analysis with budget requirements and options for how the GNWT could further support terminology development and approval capacity of the Aboriginal language communities. The proposed Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board should be charged with the | • The GNWT reports that it did not address this recommendation and its own commitment from 2003  
• The Department of Education, Culture and Employment sees future action with the regional language groups to identify terminology needs and set up training workshops |
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<td>approval processes.</td>
<td>responsibility for consulting with the language communities to determine how best to coordinate terminology development needs. ECE can contribute to this process by conducting an evaluation of existing programs and a financial analysis of required funding based on recommendations from the Board.</td>
<td>• This non-action is of particular concern for the Committee. The urgent need for terminology development was identified by all stakeholders, in all regions and languages. These needs, proposed actions and solutions have repeatedly been expressed to the Government • Furthermore, the importance of terminology development for language survival and revitalization has been well documented (not only in the SCROLA final report), consequently it must be understood that not supporting and advancing terminology development has devastating consequences for languages already under threat</td>
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<td>F2</td>
<td>The Minister responsible work closely with the Aboriginal language communities, and cultural institutes to establish a coordinated cataloguing and distribution process for Aboriginal language resource materials.</td>
<td>The proposed Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board should be charged with the responsibility for consulting with the language communities to determine how best to coordinate a cataloguing and distribution process for Aboriginal language resources. ECE can contribute to this process by identifying what funds are needed to proceed, based on recommendations from the Board.</td>
<td>• The GNWT reports that it did not address this recommendation, its own commitment from 2003 • The question remains if the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board was ever set-up and supported in such a way that it could possibly accomplish these tasks assigned to it by the GNWT • The Department of Education, Culture and Employment sees future action with the use of an Aboriginal Languages website as a clearing house • Again this non-action by the GNWT is of great concern for the Committee. The sharing of resources, access to existing resources, cataloguing, the need for a clearing house and/or an Aboriginal Languages Centre have been highlighted as priority needs by all stakeholders</td>
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<td>F3</td>
<td>The Oral Traditions (now Cultural</td>
<td>The GNWT will conduct an analysis of</td>
<td>• Education, Culture and Employment reports</td>
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<td>Projects) and Geographic Place Names programs be evaluated and considered for increased funding.</td>
<td>resources required to evaluate the Cultural Projects and Geographic Place Names programs. Any evaluation to be conducted will include a need to identify recommendations for the two programs.</td>
<td>that this recommendation and the Government’s commitment have not yet been addressed and that in 2005-2006 preliminary work towards developing a Heritage Policy was undertaken and later put on hold.</td>
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**G: TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

**G1** The Minister of ECE issue a Ministerial Directive requiring education authorities to use Aboriginal language funding for the purposes intended. This Directive is a necessary first step in improving Aboriginal language programming in the schools.

The Minister of ECE will issue a Directive that will address increased accountability in expenditure of Aboriginal language funding, and in instructional time for Aboriginal languages.

The Directive will:

- State the number of hours of instruction per year to be taught in an Aboriginal language, where the Aboriginal language is chosen as the second official language taught;
- Require the number of minutes of instruction to be consistent with the minutes required in other subject areas;
- Identify the criteria for funded activities;
- Require education authorities to use Aboriginal language and cultural funding for Aboriginal language activities, and Aboriginal cultural activities that include a significant language component;
- Identify required reporting; and
- Ensure funds allocated for language activities are only spent for that purpose.

ECE has initiated action to develop a Directive.

- Education, Culture and Employment issued a Directive in September 2004 and established a reporting process.
- ECE established a review committee in 2006 tasked with examining implementation issues for the Directive. As a result the reporting process was improved.
- There are continued challenges for timely reporting from the District Education Authorities and Councils that ECE hopes to address in the future.
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| G2 | The Minister of ECE clarify interpretation and strengthen implementation of Section 73.3 of the Education Act (1995), which directs education authorities to provide Aboriginal language instruction. | The GNWT will emphasize with its District Education Authorities that they have the authority to offer Aboriginal second language instruction, if they so choose, based on the wishes of their community. When a DEA chooses to offer Aboriginal second language instruction, the above-noted Directive will clarify expectations with respect to how that instruction is offered. | • The GNWT has issued a Directive and continue to observe its implementation as outlined  
• The GNWT sees the ALCIP being available as a full-time diploma program since 2007-2008 as supporting this commitment |
| G3 | The Minister of ECE issue a Ministerial Directive regarding the minimum number of instructional hours for Aboriginal languages. This Directive strengthens the provisions of Section 73.3 of the Education Act (1995). Minimum hours of instruction would subsequently be addressed through regulations, consistent with other subject areas. | There are no provisions in the regulations for the number of minutes required in any subject. Since minimum hours of instruction are not addressed through regulations for any subject area, regulations will not be developed for minimum hours of instruction for Aboriginal languages. Instead, the GNWT will develop and issue the above-mentioned Directive regarding the minimum number of instructional hours for Aboriginal second language instruction where being provided. | • The GNWT refers to its Directive |
| G4 | The Minister of ECE amend the Education Act (1995) to rebalance the authority of the Minister and education authorities with respect to Aboriginal language programming to improve accountability. | The GNWT will address the intent of this recommendation through the above-mentioned Directive and amended accountability requirements. | • GNWT refers to its Directive addressing the intent of the recommendation.  
• The GNWT had disagreed that amendments to the Education Act as suggested would be necessary to address SCROLA concerns regarding Aboriginal language programming and accountability |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| G5 | The Minister of ECE oversee the development of a comprehensive Aboriginal language arts curriculum in consultation and cooperation with the language communities and education authorities | The GNWT will continue its work on the development of a generic Aboriginal second language curriculum. The generic Aboriginal second language curriculum will continue to be developed such that it is adaptable for each Aboriginal language. | • Curriculum work is underway, the collaboration with the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre and the Gwich’in Social and Cultural Institute are in particular advancing the implementation of the curriculum in the Beaufort Delta communities  
• Other curriculum work is undertaken by the Yamozha Kue Society and by the Tłı̨chǫ language community  
• However, many community stakeholders and language specialists reported to the Committee that while progress is being made, it is too slow to address the progressing language loss. Activities are not coordinated and shared and that while in many cases curricula have been developed, there is a lack of lesson plans and materials that would assist teachers and instructors with its implementation |
| G6 | The Minister of ECE oversee the development of early childhood immersion programming in consultation and cooperation with language communities and education authorities. | ECE is currently supporting language nests in existing child-care operations. Funding provided through the Early Childhood Development Action Plan concludes on March 31, 2004. As language nests require substantial support, this recommendation will be considered through the business planning process. | • Education, Culture and Employment provides language nest funding to 18 licensed early childhood programs  
• Funding for language nest programs has decreased since its inception  
• The GNWT has undertaken an independent review of its language nest programs in 2006 but has NOT addressed the recommendations issued in the evaluation report |
| G7 | The Minister of ECE work closely with the Aboriginal language communities, College, and other agencies to actively recruit, train, and certify Aboriginal language instructors and teachers. This task would include a review of pay scales and training/recruitment incentives. | The GNWT will conduct an analysis of recruitment, training and certification costs for Aboriginal language instructors and teachers. The GNWT is committed to review pay scales and training and recruitment incentives. | • ECE has release its *Strategy for Teacher Education in the NWT: 2007-2015*  
• The GNWT plans to review salary grids and certification processes to ensure the introduction of the two year ALCI diploma is appropriately reflected  
• Funding for the delivery of the ALCIP increased since 2007-2008 |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| G8 | The Minister of ECE prepare a strategic plan for Aboriginal languages in education, early childhood through grade 12, including the introduction of Aboriginal language instruction in core subject areas. This plan would include partnership with language communities and the need to link language development in the school and at home. | ECE will conduct a financial analysis for implementation of a strategic plan to accomplish this proposal. | • The GNWT did not address the recommendation to prepare a strategic plan for Aboriginal Languages education  
• With the release of the Strategy for Teacher Education in the NWT: 2007-2015 ECE plans to improve ALCIP and TEP community based delivery with the goal to create a more representative teacher workforce in the future  
• ECE hopes that further funding increases for these programs in future years will accelerate the achievement of this goal |
<p>| G9 | The Minister of ECE amend the Education Act (1995) to grant Aboriginal parents the right to petition for Aboriginal immersion schooling, beginning at the primary level, within their language homelands and where numbers warrant. | The Education Act (Section 71(4)) already allows for a local District Education Authority to choose an Aboriginal language as the language of instruction (for all subjects) in the district. Therefore, it is not necessary to amend the Education Act at this time. | • GNWT found that the Education Act already allows for Aboriginal languages to become the primary language of instruction and that no amendments are necessary |</p>
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<th>G10</th>
<th>The Minister of ECE work with the education authorities to increase the role and capacity of TLC’s (Teaching and Learning Centres) to develop resource materials and to enhance partnerships with language communities.</th>
<th>ECE will undertake further financial analysis of resource development and production costs for the Teaching and Learning Centres.</th>
<th>• ECE has not yet addressed this recommendation or the GNWT commitment</th>
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| G11 | The Minister of ECE submit an annual report on the status of curriculum development and Aboriginal language education to the Legislative Assembly and the Aboriginal Languages Board. | The status of curriculum development will be reported to the Legislative Assembly by the Minister responsible on an annual basis. The proposed Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board will report to the Minister. Therefore, the annual report will be developed in consultation with the Board, rather than being submitted to the Board as recommended. | • The GNWT did not fully agree with this recommendation  
• The ECE commented that this recommendation and the GNWT’s commitment should be discussed with the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board and that on-going funding for Aboriginal language courses must be secured |

**H: TO PROMOTE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

| H1 | The Minister responsible develops an Aboriginal language social-marketing plan in consultation with the language communities, to be implemented jointly by the Minister and the language communities. The Aboriginal Languages Board, once established, would play a lead role in on-going language promotion activities. | The GNWT will consider the development of an Aboriginal language social marketing plan through the business planning process. | • The GNWT did not yet address this recommendation or its own commitment  
• The Minister plans to renew the Aboriginal Languages Strategy and intends to address this recommendation in that context  
• The non-action of the Government towards this recommendation is of grave concern for the Committee. This non-commitment speaks to the many serious issues that were brought to the Committee’s attention during the review process |
<p>| H2 | The Minister responsible provide support to the French language community to develop and implement a social-marketing plan. | The GNWT will consider the development of a French language social marketing plan through the business planning process. | • The GNWT provides funding to the French language community to support their cultural activities and promote the French language |
| H3 | Community leaders and other prominent role models take responsibility for using their traditional languages wherever possible. | Under advice from the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, the GNWT will identify ways to promote the use of languages by community leaders and other prominent role models. | • The GNWT has not taken a planned or coordinated approach to address this recommendation or its commitment and hopes this will be addressed with the renewal of Aboriginal Language Strategy |</p>
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<td>H4</td>
<td>The Minister responsible and language communities encourage the federal Government, industry, and other agencies to use and profile the Aboriginal and French languages, particularly in regions and areas where the languages are commonly used.</td>
<td>The government will implement this proposal through the development of a promotional campaign working in conjunction with the proposed Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board.</td>
<td>• The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation or its commitment</td>
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<td>H5</td>
<td>The Minister responsible increase funding for promotional activities targeting youth.</td>
<td>The GNWT will consider increased funding for promotional activities targeted at youth through the business planning process.</td>
<td>• The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation or its commitment</td>
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<td>H6</td>
<td>The GNWT promote and offer cross-cultural and language training for staff as an orientation and professional development activity.</td>
<td>The GNWT will undertake an analysis of cross-cultural and language training needs for its staff and related costs.</td>
<td>• The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation or its commitment</td>
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### I: TO INCREASE THE USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES IN MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

<p>| I1 | The GNWT expand its support for, and utilization of, Aboriginal and French language media, along with support for other communication initiatives, including the use of the internet, digital technology, and emerging media technologies. | The GNWT will consider expanded support for, and utilization of Aboriginal and French language media, through the business planning process.                                                                     | • The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation or its commitment                                                                                                                                 |
| #  | SCROLLA Recommendations                                                                 | Government Response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I2 | The Minister of ECE and other agencies support media and technology training for Aboriginal language speakers through scholarship and other initiatives. | The GNWT will consider support for media and technology training for Aboriginal language speakers through the business planning process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|    |                                                                                        | • The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation or its commitment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    |                                                                                        | • Some basic computer training is included in the ALCIP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| I3 | The Minister responsible ensure current Aboriginal language fonts are available to GNWT staff and encourage their use. The use of these fonts becomes more important as Aboriginal organizations and communities increasingly adopt traditional place names incorporating specialized fonts. | The GNWT will consult with the Aboriginal language communities to determine if there can be agreement to use a standardized Dene font for software applications. The GNWT will commit to working with the language communities to overcome the present technical difficulties with fonts. Once this issue has been resolved, ECE will ensure the standardized font is circulated to all GNWT employees and will encourage its use. |
|    |                                                                                        | • The GNWT is very slow in addressing this recommendation and its commitment. A meeting between the Official Languages Division and language specialist in 2008 issued recommendation for the development of Unicode Dene fonts to the Minister                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|    |                                                                                        | • ECE hopes to implement some of those recommendations pending on the availability of funding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| I4 | The Minister responsible assist Aboriginal language communities to incorporate Aboriginal language fonts on specialized software applications (such as GIS programs) and address other technical issues, as needed, to support the use of Aboriginal languages in a wide range of technical applications. | The GNWT commits to working with language communities to resolve issues regarding standardized Dene fonts and will examine further technical issues to support the use of these fonts in specialized software programs and technical applications.                                                                                                                                                   |
|    |                                                                                        | • The GNWT has not addressed this recommendation or its commitment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |</p>
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<td>J1</td>
<td>The Premier appoint a Minister responsible for the OLA within 60 days of the acceptance of this report by the Legislative Assembly</td>
<td>The NWT Interpretation Act provides that where a Minister is not named in an Act, the ‘Minister’ is understood to be the “Member of the Executive Council...who is responsible for the enactment or its subject-matter or the department to which its context refers.” It is on this basis that the Premier confirmed in the Legislative Assembly on June 11, 2003, that the Minister of ECE is responsible for the OLA. A Bill to amend the Official Languages Act will formally designate a Minister responsible for the Official Languages Act and define the powers and duties of the Minister under the Act.</td>
<td>• Minister of ECE remains Minister responsible for Official Languages</td>
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<td>J2</td>
<td>The Government introduce the proposed Bill to Amend the Official Languages Act during the term of the current Assembly.</td>
<td>The proposed Bill will be introduced in the fall 2003 session.</td>
<td>• Done</td>
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<td>J3</td>
<td>The Minister responsible report to the Legislative Assembly within one year of the acceptance of this report. This report will address: The status and progress of the implementation of the recommendations; The status of the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement; and Business plans and budgetary provision for 2004-2005 and beyond</td>
<td>The Minister will make recommendation to his successor that this information be reported, as recommended, to the 15th Legislative Assembly. The Minister will instruct ECE to prepare a progress report that the next Executive Council may, as its discretion, consider tabling in the 15th Legislative Assembly.</td>
<td>• No progress report  • Annual report has a section on progress on the implementation of the GNWT response to SCROLA recommendation; some other commitments to the recommendations are covered in other sections of the Annual Report</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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