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16th Legislative Assembly Key Results and Accomplishments

A. Background

The purpose of this report is to highlight some of the key results and accomplishments of the 16th Legislative Assembly. It is not intended to describe all activities of the government, but rather focuses on some of this Assembly's key activities and initiatives.

At the start of the 16th Legislative Assembly, Members established a vision and goals that would guide their activities and identify areas where they hoped to make progress. A vision and goals are statements of where you want to be in the future. They are not intended to be short-term objectives, but rather statements of where you eventually want to be.

The vision of the 16th Legislative Assembly is:

Strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories

The goals that the 16th Legislative Assembly established in order to achieve its overall vision are:

Healthy, educated people

Sustainable, vibrant, safe communities

An environment that will sustain present and future generations

A diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices

A strong and independent north built on partnerships

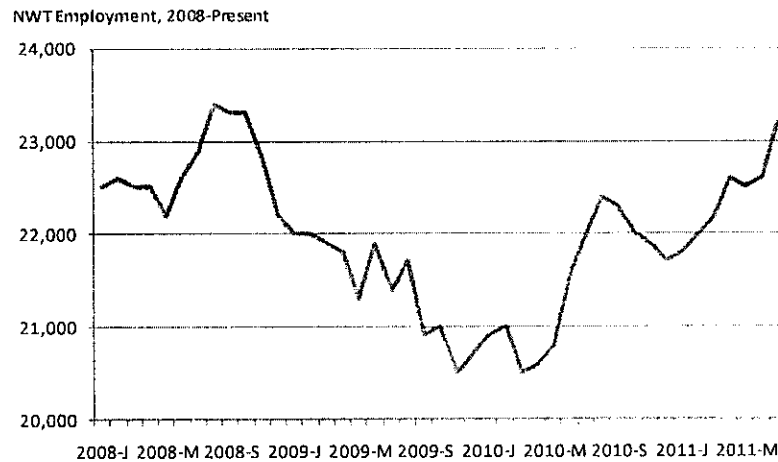
Effective and efficient government

To support these goals the Legislative Assembly advanced a number of initiatives, made strategic investments to enhance current GNWT programs and services, invested in infrastructure, and passed legislation. In each of these cases, the activities of the 16th Legislative Assembly built on existing programs and services and targeted areas with a view of advancing towards the vision and goals that had been established.

B. The Operating Environment

The GNWT does not operate in a vacuum. Progress towards the vision and goals is often influenced by external factors. These factors often present challenges for the government and in many cases may require a response from government in terms of changing plans and adjusting priorities.

The single largest impact on the operating environment for the 16th Legislative Assembly was the global recession that hit in late 2008 and from which the global, national and territorial economy is still recovering. The Northwest Territories was not immune from the impact of the recession. Information on resident employment in the NWT between 2008 and 2011 is one indicator of the impact of the recession.

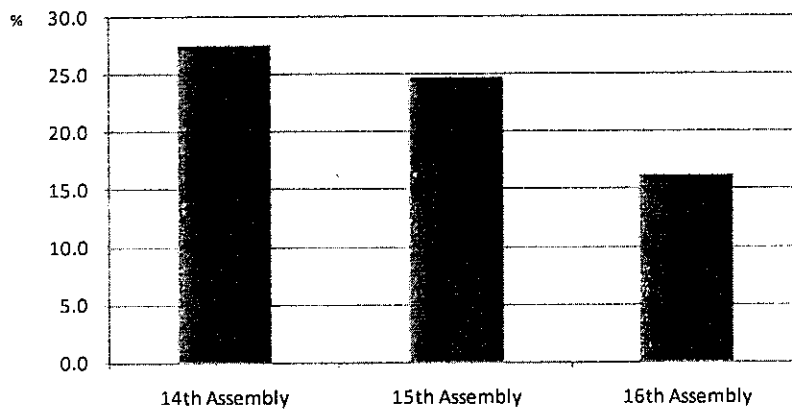


The impacts were greater than just employment, however. Private investment in the Northwest Territories dropped significantly, in part as a result of the recession, and indicators related to key drivers of the territorial economy like non-renewable resource production, exploration activity, and retail and wholesale trade all experienced declines in 2009 and are just now recovering.

The government was able to mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis to a degree by increasing the level of infrastructure investment and supports for individuals impacted by the recession. As described below this placed considerable strain on the fiscal capacity of the GNWT but the government has been able to avoid the wide spread restraint measures that have been put in place by many governments in Canada.

The fiscal strategy adopted by the 16th Legislative Assembly could be summarized as conservatively managing expenditure growth, making key operational investments, and targeting infrastructure spending to mitigate the economic downturn.

Operational Spending Growth

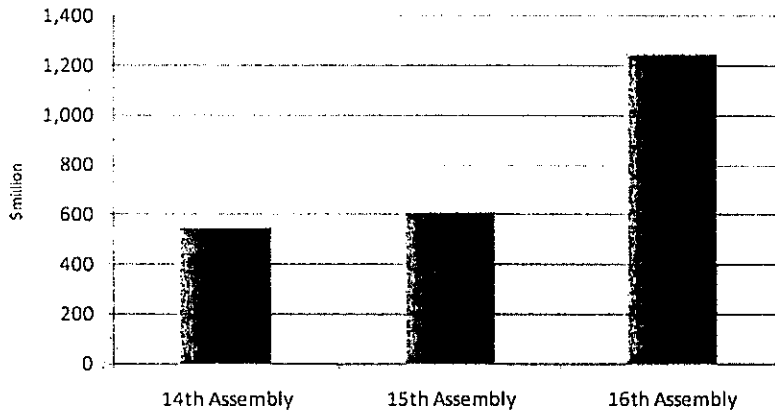


During the 16th Legislative Assembly, operational spending was effectively managed and growth in spending on operations was 16.2% over the four year period. This is a lower overall rate of growth compared with the previous two Legislative Assembly's where operational spending increased by about 25% for each Assembly.

As noted, infrastructure spending during the 16th Legislative Assembly was significantly higher at about \$1.2 billion in projects over the four year period.

During the each of the 14th and 15th Legislative Assembly's infrastructure spending was about \$600 million. As will be noted in the following section, the spending on infrastructure was an important

Infrastructure Spending, by Assembly



component of the activities to advance towards the overall vision and goals of the 16th Legislative Assembly, in addition to the role that infrastructure spending had in supporting the territorial economy during the recession.

The 16th Assembly had to carefully manage its financial resources to be in a position to make the investments to support the territorial

economy during the recession while also seeing its revenues significantly impacted by the global recession and other factors. Own source revenues, such as personal and corporate taxes, declined by about 26% between 2007-08 and 2011-12. While this amount was largely offset by increases in the formula financing grant from Canada, overall revenue increases were lower than during previous Legislative Assembly's.

Another factor that significantly impacts revenue increases is population growth. There has been very limited population growth in the Northwest Territories since 2004. The territorial population in April, 2011 was 43,505 persons, which compares with 43,149 persons on January 1, 2004. This lack of population growth is an important contributor to the lack of revenue growth for the GNWT and is likely to mean continued limited revenue growth in the medium-term.

The overall fiscal strategy of the 16th Legislative Assembly did require taking on additional debt to make the infrastructure investments. Total debt of the GNWT is expected to be \$516 million at the end of 2011-12. Total debt at the end of the 15th Legislative Assembly was \$189 million and at the end of the 14th Legislative Assembly total debt was \$214 million.

C. Advancing Towards the Vision and Goals

Within the operating environment, the 16th Legislative Assembly undertook many initiatives to advance the Northwest Territories towards the vision and goals. In this section, a summary of key actions and activities is provided for each of the goals.

Goal: Healthy, educated people

In support of the goal of healthy, educated people many of the strategic activities undertaken by the 16th Legislative Assembly focussed on children and youth, improving infrastructure and services, and on prevention.

Expanding Programming for Children and Youth

- A total of \$2 million in annual funding has been added to support early childhood development programs. Included in this amount is \$600,000 that has been targeted to support early childhood programs in rural and remote communities.
- Activities have been advanced to improve education outcomes, including \$1.8 million in on-going funding to support the activities related to the Aboriginal Student Achievement initiative. Support has also been provided to expand the community based teacher education program.
- Base funding of about \$3 million for youth programming has been added relating to support for youth centers, programs, youth sporting events and the youth ambassador program.
- Other activities for youth and children have been expanding in house respite services in smaller communities, establishing an office to support children in custody matters and other matters, and additional support for the Take a Kid Trapping program.
- The Standing Committee on Social Programs completed a comprehensive review of the *Child and Family Services Act* including recommendations on a way forward on the government's approach to child protective services.

Encouraging Healthy Choices

- The Healthy Choices Framework is the overarching mechanism used by the GNWT to promote healthy living. Some \$2.3 million has been added to implement activities related to healthy eating and nutrition, anti-smoking and other awareness campaigns, and promoting physical activity among youth.
- Support has been provided for the development of family centered treatment programming for alcohol aftercare programs.

Strengthening the Continuum of Care for Seniors

- More than \$6.6 million has been added in annual operations funding to strengthen the continuum of care for seniors. This has included operational funding for the territorial dementia center, costs associated with the territorial assisted living facility and enhancing continuing care services by enhancing medical patient care services available through homecare.
- These investments were further supported by capital investments of more than \$27 million to complete the territorial dementia center, territorial adult supported living facility and the Northern Lights Special Care Home.

Improving Infrastructure to Support Health and Education Programs

- A number of major infrastructure projects were completed by the 16th Legislative Assembly related to schools in the NWT. The new combined elementary and secondary school in Inuvik was the

largest of these, but major projects to renovate or replace schools included the Chief T'Selehye School in Fort Good Hope, Diamond Jenness School in Hay River, Ecole Allain St. Cyr and Ecole St. Joseph Schools in Yellowknife, Jean Wetrade School in Gameti, K'alemi School in N'dilo, and the Moose Kerr School in Aklavik.

- Approximately \$30 million in infrastructure projects related to hospitals, health care centers and clinics were undertaken by the 16th Legislative Assembly.
- Considerable capital investments were made to support health service delivery through electronic service delivery and the move to electronic health records. The use of improved systems for imaging and for telespeech services has improved access to health services in rural and remote NWT communities.

Goal: Sustainable, vibrant, safe communities

To support the goal of sustainable, vibrant, safe communities, strategic activities of the 16th Legislative Assembly focussed on improving transportation access to communities, improving the quality and cost of shelter, addressing factors that impact the cost of living, and increasing safety and security in communities.

Improving Transportation Access to Communities

- There were considerable capital investments in the transportation system during the 16th Legislative Assembly.
- There were a number of major projects to improve the Mackenzie Valley winter road and to advance the work on the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Significant investments have been made in bridges along the Mackenzie Valley road, including the Blackwater River Bridge, and to improve the winter road. Baseline environmental studies for the Mackenzie Valley Highway have been undertaken and project description reports are being completed.
- The 16th Legislative Assembly invested in completing the gravel access road near the community of Tuktoyaktuk and considerable work is being completed to plan for the highway extension from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk.
- Many other highway investments have been supported including the Yellowknife by-pass road, the Deline winter road realignment, improvements in winter roads near Trout Lake, Colville Lake and Wekweeti, other investments to accelerate ice bridge construction or extend ferry operations, and bridge projects like the Kakisa River Bridge.
- The construction of the Dehcho Bridge was undertaken during the 16th Legislative Assembly and is a major accomplishment. The project will provide all year linkage for a significant portion of the territorial population to the rest of Canada.
- There have been significant infrastructure investments to support air transportation including runway extensions in Fort Good Hope, Tulita and Fort McPherson, and improvements to various airports.

Improving the Quality and Cost of Shelter

- Through a combination of federal and territorial government investments about 475 new dwellings were developed in communities across the Northwest Territories. In some cases, these replaced public housing units that were no longer able to be used.
- The quality of housing was addressed through an investment of \$2 million in annual funding added to the repair program offered through the NWT Housing Corporation. These investments were supported by \$1 million added to improve the energy efficiency of public housing units.
- Administration of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy program was returned to the NWT Housing Corporation.
- The Shelter Policy Review that is currently being undertaken will provide a basis for further refinements to housing programs and delivery in the NWT and address challenges like the declining funding from CMHC that supports the public housing program.

Addressing Factors that Impact the Cost of Goods

- The major initiative that took place in this area was the electricity rate review. The changes undertaken to electrical rates resulted in significant cost of living reduction in thermal communities which include most rural and remote communities.
- Through the priority energy investments, there was a substantial expansion of programs that support household energy efficiency and the support in communities through the Arctic Energy Alliance.
- Activities were also undertaken to support commercial harvesting, processing and marketing of locally produced meat and fish. This was also complemented by investments in agricultural infrastructure that supported greenhouses and other activities related to local food production.

Supporting Individuals and Families

- The GNWT continues to spend more than \$135 million annually on income security programs. During the 16th Assembly a number of investments have been made including adding to the base funding for income support and the seniors supplementary benefits program.
- Reviews of the support provided to individuals related to cost of living that have been undertaken include examining the cost of living rent reduction used in public housing rent scales and examining benefits under the student financial assistance program.

Increasing Safety and Security

- A total of \$2.9 million in annual funding has been invested in enhancing policing services and expanding RCMP services in smaller NWT communities. This funding has been related to

implementation of the RCMP Back-Up Policy and increasing police presence in the smaller NWT communities without resident RCMP members.

- Safety and emergency services have also received investments including support for ground ambulance and highway rescue services, expanded fire emergency training in NWT communities, and enhancing the Drive Alive! safety program.
- A number of strategic activities related to crime prevention have also been undertaken including support for the South Slave Drug Interception Team, as well as community-based drug awareness and prevention initiatives under the *Not Us!* Campaign.
- A number of activities were supported to implement activities identified in Phase II of the Framework for Action on Family Violence. Activities have included enhanced shelter outreach services such as provision of follow-up and after-care for clients who use the shelter services and programming for children who have witnessed violence, the development of interagency protocols to enhance integration and coordination of services.
- A specialized domestic violence court was established in collaboration with the judiciary. This court is an option for low-risk offenders who are willing to take responsibility for their actions. Offenders are carefully screened, with particular consideration of victim safety, and are required to attend appropriate programming. A longer-term program is being created for higher risk men who use violence in intimate relationships
- Family violence services have also been enhanced including providing funding to stabilize current shelters in smaller communities as well as for projects in non-shelter communities and increased support and victim outreach services in communities without shelters.

Goal: An environment that will sustain present and future generations

Strategic activities related to protecting territorial water, mitigating climate change impacts, and improving environmental stewardship were advanced in support of the goal on an environment that will sustain present and future generations.

Protecting Territorial Water

- Overall, more than \$2.3 million has been invested in annual funding to protect territorial water. Much of this activity is related to actions associated with *Northern Voices, Northern Waters: The NWT Water Stewardship Strategy* which will guide the effective long-term stewardship of our water resources. GNWT investments contribute to the overall activities in partnership with the federal and Aboriginal Governments, land and water boards, environmental non-government organizations, and other agencies.
- Almost \$600,000 of this investment relates to activities that are being undertaken to protect and improve the public water supply through activities such as public education, training for community operators, improved results reporting, and the initiation of source water protection planning.

- Support for transboundary activities related to upstream water management is an important part of overall water management in the Northwest Territories.

Mitigating Climate Change Impacts

- Two main components of the Energy Priority Investments related to energy development and supply and alternative energy and emerging technologies played a central role in efforts to mitigate climate change impacts through the development of cleaner energy alternatives.
- Energy development and supply activities have included support for planning for mini-hydro facilities in Lutsel'ke and Whati, examination of hydro potential in the Sahtu and for studies related to natural gas conversion in communities along the pipeline route.
- Other alternative energy projects have also been invested in including implementation of the biomass strategy, investment in the wind energy project at Tuktoyaktuk, use of solar power for community swimming pools, investing in instream hydro technologies, and providing support for the development of geothermal technology.

Improving Environmental Stewardship

- Significant declines in the Bathurst caribou herd resulted in considerable work with Aboriginal governments to develop wildlife management approaches to halt the decline in the herd. In addition to these activities, substantial investments have been made in wildlife management activities including monitoring. These activities have focused not only on caribou, but also other key species including bison and polar bears.
- The waste recovery program has been established and has had a significant impact on recycling activities. The beverage container program was expanded to include milk containers and the single use retail bag program has been introduced to reduce the numbers of plastic bags in the waste system.
- Two major legislative initiatives have been advanced. Implementation of the *Species at Risk Act* continues with the intent that an important first step in providing effective protection to biodiversity is to prevent species from ever becoming at risk. Significant work was also undertaken on the *Wildlife Act* and it is now being reviewed and should be considered before the end of the 16th Legislative Assembly.
- Other activities under environmental stewardship have included investments in developing community fire protection plans, adding capacity to support implementation of the Protected Area Strategy, and implementation of the Traditional Knowledge Strategy.

Goal: A diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices

In order to support the goal of a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices, strategic activities initiated by the 16th Legislative Assembly included

improving skills for living and working, supporting diversification, promoting the NWT as a place to visit and live, and positioning the NWT to maximize benefits from resource development.

Improving Skills for Living and Working

- In addition to the investments made to support improved education, a number of activities were also undertaken by the 16th Legislative Assembly related to improving skills.
- Support for Aurora College has been expanded including expanding the labour market and industrial training programs, establishing the office administration certificate program and supporting student wellness coordinators. In addition, support has been provided to labour market literacy including programs that address the needs of working age youth and adults so that they can access education and employment opportunities.
- Support for trades has been a focus with activities including supporting apprenticeship and for apprentices within the GNWT, developing the mobile trades training program, supporting on-going trades activities within high schools, and delivery of heavy equipment training.
- In addition to training, job-related experience is also an important factor for those seeking employment. This is a particular challenge for those in rural and remote communities. More than \$1.2 million in annual funding has been invested in a small community employment program to support employment and provide work experience in smaller NWT communities and a similar program has been created that targets students in smaller NWT communities.

Supporting Diversification

- The Support to Entrepreneurs and Employment Development program, known as SEED, has been a major initiative to consolidate existing programs that support residents in smaller NWT communities to start a business, improve capacities and skills, and help small communities to expand their economies. Strategic investments of \$2.4 million in annual funding has been added to this program to support economic development in smaller NWT communities.
- Tourism has also been supported with the completion of activities under the Tourism 2010 plan including supports to diversify tourism products available in the NWT. With the 2011-12 Main Estimates an extension of tourism supports are proposed as part of a renewed Tourism 2015 plan.
- Approximately \$10 million was invested in parks infrastructure by the 16th Legislative Assembly to further support the tourism sector.
- An investment was made through the Opportunities Fund that helped support the territorial transportation sector.
- Investments have been made to support commercial harvesting and expand local food production. This investment complements the investment made to expand the Community Harvesters Assistance Program, or CHAP. The CHAP program is an important contributor to supporting residents to provide traditional food for their family and to pursue traditional economic activities.

Promoting the NWT as a Place to Visit and Live

- One area that supports the strategic action of promoting the NWT as a place to visit and live and also supports diversification is investments in the arts. More than \$1.6 million in annual funding has been added to support the arts, promote NWT artists, and promote arts and crafts production. An additional \$500,000 in annual funding has been added for collection and exhibit renewal both at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center and for travelling exhibits.
- The center piece of other activities to promote the NWT was the investment related to participation at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This one-time investment provided an important opportunity for youth, artists, and traditional athletes to support the activities at NWT House which was one of the most popular pavilions at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games and provided a great venue for promoting the NWT.
- There are other activities that have been undertaken to support promoting the NWT including a national marketing campaign and support for the immigrant nominee program. Building on the success at the Olympics and these other initiatives, additional activities are being consolidated within an overall NWT Growth Strategy that is currently being developed.

Maximizing Benefits from Resource Development and Related Initiatives

- Significant investments have been made by the GNWT to support the planning and regulatory review activities associated with the Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion. While final decisions about this project have yet to be made, considerable work and planning related to the project has been undertaken.
- Investments have also been made related to ensuring the GNWT has the needed capacity to participate in the regulatory review and the permitting and planning processes related to the Mackenzie Gas Project.

Goal: A strong and independent north built on partnerships

Activities of the 16th Legislative Assembly to advance the territory towards the goal of a strong and independent North built on partnerships activities included continuing to develop governance and promoting the northern culture and heritage.

Continuing to Develop Governance

- The agreement in principle for the devolution of the administration and management of crown lands from the federal government to the GNWT is a major milestone towards northerners making decisions about NWT land and water.
- The Regional Aboriginal Leaders Meetings involving the Premier and leaders of regional Aboriginal governments provided a forum to work with regional Aboriginal governments on areas of common interest. The development of the Water Stewardship Strategy is an example of northern governments working collaboratively.

- Investments have been made to ensure that the GNWT meets its obligations to consult with Aboriginal government and organizations. A consultation framework was developed and an office is being established to support GNWT departments to meet their respective consultation obligations.
- The Creating Our Future Together initiative was undertaken to develop a common vision and roadmap for the NWT to help guide actions and decisions of future NWT governments. The initiative was led by the Northern Leaders' Forum made up of the NWT's regional Aboriginal governments, representatives of the Association of Communities, and representatives of the 16th Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories. A common vision and roadmap for the NWT was produced entitled: *Forging the Future, Anchored in Our Past, Building on Our Present – A summary of people's perspectives on a vision for the Northwest Territories and planting the seeds to achieve it.*
- The Principles of Consensus Government and a series of process conventions were developed by the Legislative Assembly. These guide the activities of Members of the Legislative Assembly and lay out key processes related to the operations of the Legislative Assembly.

Promoting Northern Culture and Identity

- Support was provided for northern identity and culture through a variety of strategic activities. Investments were made to support the arts, artists, and arts and craft production and in museums.
- The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games provided a world-wide venue for promoting the NWT as a place to visit and invest, an enormous opportunity to promote our performers and artists, and to provide leadership and development opportunities for our youth. Similar success in promoting the NWT on an international stage was apparent in the recent royal visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.
- The Standing Committee on Government Operations completed a comprehensive review of the *Official Languages Act*. The Committee provided numerous recommendations to help revitalize NWT languages. The government provided a comprehensive response to the Committee's report.
- Strategic activities were pursued to support language activities, with significant investments in Aboriginal language nests to support youth learning their Aboriginal language. The development of the Aboriginal Languages Plan will help guide activities in the coming years.

Goal: Effective and efficient government

In order to ensure effective and efficient government the 16th Legislative Assembly undertook strategic activities related to changing the GNWT approach to planning and delivering infrastructure, improving human resource management, strengthening service delivery, and managing the cost of government.

Changing the GNWT's Approach to Infrastructure

- Two significant changes to the GNWT's approach to infrastructure were moving consideration of the capital budget to the fall and the introduction of a mandatory planning study phase to make sure better costing of projects before the Legislative Assembly approves capital budgets and projects are tendered.

These changes have allowed for improved planning and implementation of capital projects and have facilitated more competitive pricing on large projects. The recent changes to the Business Incentive Policy should further help infrastructure delivery and a new policy on public-private partnerships was developed.

- Considerable investments were made to address the issues associated with deferred maintenance and also investing to make GNWT facilities more energy efficient through the implementation of the "Asset Management Retrofit Fund".
- There were a number of other activities undertaken to improve overall infrastructure management including improved capacity for planning, improving overall management of utilities and operations of GNWT buildings, and a significant expansion of the settlement maintainer program.

Improving Human Resource Management in the NWT

- In support of 20/20: A Brilliant North, which is the Human Resource strategic plan developed during the 16th Assembly, considerable investments have been made for implementation.
- The two main areas of investment have been almost \$4 million invested in recruitment and retention strategies and an additional \$1.2 million being spent annually to improve and stabilize human resource service delivery within the GNWT.
- A total of \$1 million is being spent annually to improve community government capacity through enhancing collaboration between GNWT and community governments on public service capacity issues, including the development of local and NWT residents to take on management positions in community governments.

Strengthening Service Delivery

- There have been a broad range of activities that have been undertaken by the 16th Legislative Assembly to strengthen service delivery.
- One area of focus has been the on rural and remote communities. The pilot project to establish eight Single Window Service Centers in smaller NWT communities to help residents access GNWT programs and services has received strong support in those communities. Investments have also been identified to expand housing for staff in smaller NWT communities and to expand critical programs like the Community Access program.

- Activities have also been undertaken related to strengthening service delivery in areas such as stabilizing the NGO sector, enhancing communication activities, strengthening electronic delivery through the knowledge management strategy and support for internet services in education.
- A major initiative in health delivery relates to the investments made in electronic health, medical records and imaging services. These new approaches have allowed for improved delivery of health services at the community level. Another area of investment has been in the operations of the consolidated clinic in Yellowknife. Investments here have alleviated pressures on Stanton Territorial Hospital.
- More than \$1.8 million in annual investment has been made to strengthen official languages, with a particular focus on service delivery. A portion of this investment is for implementation of the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communication and Services with the remaining investment focused on Aboriginal languages.
- Investments were made to make available broadcasts of proceedings of the Legislative Assembly to residents in all NWT communities.

Managing the Cost of Government

- A major undertaking by this government to manage the cost of government was the budgetary reduction process undertaken at the start of the 16th Assembly and the subsequent fiscal discipline.
- Reducing GNWT energy costs through some of the energy priority investments has also been a component of managing the cost of government. These activities have included the installation of wood pellet boilers in GNWT assets, the establishment of the capital asset retrofit fund and the investment in upgrades related to energy efficiency in the public housing stock.
- The establishment of shared service centers related to financial processing and procurement provide the opportunity for further efficiency within government operations. This builds on the implementation of the System for Accountability & Management (SAM), which is the financial system for the Government of the Northwest Territories.
- The Program Review Office was established with the objective of conducting targeted program reviews to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of GNWT programs and services. Reviews are providing evidence-based information to support decision-making on future program directions.

D. Conclusion

The vision and goals identified by the 16th Legislative Assembly and by previous Assemblies are by their nature long-term and will require far longer than a four-year mandate to achieve. While, as outlined in this report, the 16th Legislative Assembly has taken significant steps toward realizing our vision and goals, many initiatives are still in progress, and much work lies ahead. It is our hope that the 17th Assembly will be able to advance our territory further on the path toward strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories, and we wish them the utmost success in their endeavours.

