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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, September 27, 2017****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Colleagues, before we begin the business of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a special day for one of our colleagues. It happens to be the birthday of the Member for Hay River North, Mr. R.J. Simpson. Happy birthday.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 212-18(2):
MANDATE SUCCESSES – DEVELOPING OUR
NATURAL RESOURCES

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, our government has committed in its mandate to supporting exploration and the mining sector. It is the lifeblood of our economy. Our people and businesses are innovative, self-sufficient, and resilient, and want to do their part to contribute to a strong Northwest Territories. We need the kind of well-paying, long-term jobs that come with sustainable economic development, and our government is working towards economic self-determination for all NWT residents.

Our strategic approach to unlocking the potential of responsible mining and exploration in the NWT is defined in our Mineral Development Strategy. We committed in our mandate to its implementation and, Mr. Speaker, we are making progress. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a vision of a strong, prosperous territory that provides opportunities for all our communities and regions. Sustainable, responsible development of our natural resources is a significant part of realizing that vision, and strengthening our economy through the responsible development of these resources will allow us to reach our full potential.

Today I'd like to highlight how we have met and surpassed a number of important milestones to helping us reach that full potential. In the first two years of our mandate, we have invested approximately \$3.4 million in support for geoscience, marketing, Aboriginal capacity building, and our ongoing annual funding for the Mining Incentive Program.

Mr. Speaker, while mining is the foundation of our economy geoscience is the foundation of mining. Later today I will be tabling the recently released five-year strategic plan for the Northwest Territories Geological Survey. It is the guide by which this important division of our government will continue to provide the geoscience data behind the responsible development of our mineral and energy resources.

Last Friday we officially opened the doors to our Northwest Territories' Geological Materials Storage Facility. The completion of this facility is one that was recommended by our Mineral Development Strategy. It is a resource that has the potential to advance mining projects and increase development in our resource sector.

Elsewhere, Mr. Speaker, we have responded to the needs in our marketplace by implementing, and extending, incentives for exploration. This includes our Work Credits Program, which we extended by two years. The implementation of the Mining Incentive Program is a direct investment by our government in the future of exploration in the NWT. Not only did we implement this program, Mr. Speaker, we more than doubled it.

Meanwhile, we have worked to close the skills gap by partnering with the Mine Training Society and other stakeholders to offer training programs targeted to meet demand within the mining industry. This includes new surface mining and prospecting courses to build capacity within our local workforce. Our mandate commitment also includes supporting Aboriginal governments looking to benefit from mining. That is why we have established the Client Service and Community Relations Unit, in part to support Aboriginal governments as they build their capacity to deal with mining-related activities. This unit was instrumental in facilitating the attendance of Indigenous government representatives at last year's roundup event in Vancouver, and in the work

that we have supported to advance a regional mineral development strategy for the Dehcho.

In June we introduced the Resources and Energy Development Information Project to connect NWT residents with the information they need to understand what energy and non-renewable resources exist in the NWT, what is entailed in their development, and the benefits that can be realized from their development.

Mr. Speaker, a related commitment in our mandate is the development of the Northwest Territories' first-ever Mineral Resources Act. We are moving forward on an aggressive timeline to see that our territory's unique needs are reflected in our legislation before the Legislative Assembly dissolves. We are engaging Indigenous governments and organizations, stakeholders, and all NWT residents to inform the development of this act. We've visited seven communities, held focus group sessions with stakeholders, and had meetings with representatives from both the public and Indigenous governments. We will continue to take meetings, collect input from our new interactive engagement portal, and take phone calls, e-mails, and mail comments until December 1st.

While mining and exploration are the bulk of our natural resource sector, we also committed in our mandate to delivering an oil and gas strategy for the Northwest Territories. A draft strategy and proposed implementation plan is now complete. It offers a viable, balanced, and made-in-the-NWT approach to advancing oil and gas development in the Northwest Territories and is positioning our territory to realize economic benefits that this sector may have to offer.

As our government works on energy and climate change moves forward, there is also a need to reconsider our Oil and Gas Strategy in the context of our government's emerging vision for greater energy security. While work on our Oil and Gas Strategy is largely complete, we need to ensure that it is consistent with other Government of the Northwest Territories strategies, including the Energy Strategy and upcoming Climate Change Strategic Framework. For this reason we are delaying the delivery of a final Oil and Gas Strategy and action plan until later on in our government. Mr. Speaker, much work has been completed. Of course, there is also much more to do over the next two years. We are committed to continuing to push initiatives which will strengthen our foundation of natural resources for a resilient, sustainable economic future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 213-18(2):
COMPLETION OF THE MACKENZIE VALLEY
FIBRE LINK

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to advise the House that the Government of the Northwest Territories has fulfilled its mandate commitment to complete the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link, a project that will help modernize the economy and enable growth in all economic sectors. The Mackenzie Valley fibre link is an important part of the 18th Legislative Assembly's commitment to strategic investment, diversification, and modernization towards a high-tech future.

The completion of the nearly 1,200-kilometre fibre link brings affordable high-speed telecommunications to six communities along the Mackenzie Valley highway, including Inuvik. An additional five remote communities will also have the ability to benefit in the future. Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Valley fibre link enables our government to offer improved delivery of social services, supporting healthcare, education, and social support programs, and facilitates economic development and diversification.

Our government is working to spark economic growth across all sectors and to foster an environment in which companies and individuals feel confident investing in northern opportunities and jobs. When residents drive in from Inuvik now, they may notice the cluster of remote satellite stations poking through the trees. As a result of the Mackenzie Valley fibre link, Inuvik is now positioned to be one of the leading sites for tracking and receiving real-time data from polar-orbiting satellites used for scientific mapping, weather surveillance, and more.

The Mackenzie Valley fibre link will further enable growth of the remote-sensing and commercial satellite industry in Inuvik. Since construction commenced, we have experienced considerable interest, nationally and internationally, in the growth of the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility. The potential impact of an expanded satellite ground station in Inuvik on the Aurora Research Centre is significant and could make this facility one of the "places to be" to conduct space-based Arctic research.

Mr. Speaker, the potential of growing Inuvik through national and international customers is very positive for our territory's future. Current federal licensing processes for satellite telecommunications are outdated, Mr. Speaker, but our government will work with Canada to encourage them to modernize their regulatory regime and better support the opportunities for Inuvik.

I would like to congratulate all the partners involved in this project and thank the sustained efforts and support from our residents, businesses, and community leadership throughout the Northwest Territories to ensure the successful completion of this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. We have with us Mr. David Ramsay. He is a former Member, former Minister. Welcome to our proceedings.

Also with us at the Clerk's table is Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford. As many of you know, Mr. Whitford is a man of many roles; former Commissioner, former Speaker, former Minister, former Member, former Sergeant-at-Arms. He joins us today in his capacity as Honorary Clerk. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Whitford to the House this afternoon. It is a pleasure that he is joining us in the House today. Masi. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INGRAHAM TRAIL SAFETY CONCERNS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our road system is important to our people. Northwest Territories residents need to travel our territory for many crucial purposes. Members know that I support expansion of our highway network for social and community needs and to help grow economic opportunities.

One of our most utilized highways is the Ingraham Trail. The trail is used by boaters, snowmobilers, campers, hikers, hunters, and fishers. Most of our growing numbers of tourists take home memories of the trail from their aurora-viewing expeditions. Many, who happen to be my constituents, make their homes and raise their families on the trail and drive the road multiple times a day. Of course, the NWT's biggest economic driver, the diamond mines, count on the trail as their essential lifeline for resupply.

That the Ingraham Trail is such an important corridor to so many of our residents underlines the needs to continually monitor and improve the road's safety. During last year's ice road season, there was an abnormally high number of incidents and accidents involving haul trucks on the trail, and this spring, on the May long weekend, sadly an accident resulted in a tragic fatality.

Because of the increasing use of the trail by so many different users, Mr. Speaker, it is important to make sure that all possible safety measures are in place. We do not want the increase in incidents we

saw last year to become a trend or the norm. The Minister has been very open to discussing the department's continuing efforts to upgrade road conditions. I thank him for being forthcoming on these matters. I certainly noticed the roadwork and improvements on the Ingraham Trail this summer. These improvements are welcomed and much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, as we are moving towards the cold season again, I am thinking forward to the building of the ice road. It is the Ingraham Trail's busiest season. I wonder if we have made progress in all the areas of road improvements, safety patrols, and a public communication strategy that are necessary for promoting and preserving public safety on our highways. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON UNIVERSAL AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The creation of a universal system of affordable childcare is one of the biggest promises of this Assembly, something we all agreed to work on at the beginning of our term. Collectively, we agreed to "develop an action plan for universal daycare within the next two years, including a timeline for implementation." This does not mean we have to implement universal childcare by 2019, but to at least develop an action plan to do so within an appropriate timeline.

Universal childcare is no pie-in-the-sky hallucination. It is a matter of priorities and making choices. The fact that affordable pan-territorial child care could be achieved was documented during the last Assembly by the Feasibility Study of Universal Affordable Daycare in the Northwest Territories commissioned by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in response to a motion of this Assembly on October 31, 2013. That analysis provided in the study proved that child care could be offered to all NWT children up to four years old for about \$20 million per year delivered on the same model as Quebec. It predicted a resulting increase in GDP of \$16 million or more, an increase in labour income in excess of \$15 million, creation of about 200 new jobs, increased female participation in the workforce, increased tax revenue, and decreased social assistance. Anyone who wanted it, would have had access to daycare for their kids with all the early childhood development benefits that it would provide.

The revised mandate tabled in this House on September 21st abandons universal child care for

the NWT, and will represent a broken promise if it is approved. A firm priority is replaced by a weak statement about "making child care available and affordable" with no timeline, no action plan, and no measurable commitments. Gone is the promise in the mandate of an action plan. Gone is the timeline for implementation. A broken promise, Mr. Speaker.

What happened with the commitment to put together an action plan on universal child care within two years in the current version of the mandate? I will have questions for the Minister on what work has been undertaken on the mandate commitment to develop an action plan for universal child care for the NWT. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. With the help of the federal and territorial governments, the City of Yellowknife recently completed a 10-year plan to end homelessness. The plan includes a comprehensive analysis of the homelessness problem, and a robust set of recommendations to implement over the next 10 years. The next step is to move from planning to implementation with all orders of government at the table.

I want to share what I learned about homelessness from this report. First, homelessness is a problem that is located in Yellowknife, but only one in 10 people who identified themselves as homeless were born in this city. Homelessness in Yellowknife is a territorial issue. Its origins are unemployment, poverty, and a lack of suitable housing in the communities. People relocate to Yellowknife because they want the services and opportunities of the city. Of course, not everyone who migrates to Yellowknife lives happily ever after, and a significant number of people become homeless.

Mr. Speaker, one of the plan's strengths is that it was developed with extensive consultation with people who are now homeless, or were recently homeless. While they need a place to live, many people said they also need the supports that will help them hold onto housing they have including help with mental health and addictions.

Ending homelessness is going to require an investment. The plan as presented will cost \$11 million per year over the next 10 years to implement. Once implemented, the investment in housing will return \$5 million a year in savings. Most important of all, 240 people who are now homeless will have a place to call home.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the federal government plans to invest the better part of \$600 million in the NWT in the next decade. It can't and won't all go to roads. Some of it must be allocated to social infrastructure, and housing in particular. I want to say again that homelessness in Yellowknife is a territorial issue. This report confirms a point made often in recent years: it costs the government more to manage homelessness than to end it.

What we need next is leadership on homelessness in the form of a commission which would include the mayor and the Housing Minister to implement the plan. We need the commitment from all levels of government to work together on solutions the plan outlines. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERPRETATION OF TREATY RIGHTS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. One of the highlights of my summer was participating in summer assemblies, enjoying good food, the company of friends, and cultural activities. This summer, I attended the Dehcho First Nations Annual Assembly in Fort Providence, and the 47th Annual Dene Nation Assembly on the Hay River Reserve.

As always, the assemblies provide an opportunity for Dene people to come together and talk about the issues that affect us. A common theme running through the discussions this year was Treaties 8 and 11 of 1899 and 1921 respectively, and how they are being interpreted in modern land claim and self-government negotiations.

These treaties were negotiated between First Nations and the Government of Canada. There are opposing views as to whether those treaties were agreements of peace and friendship only, or cessation in nature. Dehcho First Nations believed that, based on the treaties, all of Denendeh was and remains Dene land. Our land was never ceded to the federal government. Our ancestors lived on the land long before European contact, and we continue to live here today.

It is Canada's view that treaty rights need to be modernized in the form of land claim and self-government arrangements. The challenge with this perspective is how to interpret the treaties based on today's circumstances.

One of the reasons that this was a topic of concern at the summer assemblies is because Canada and the GNWT are asking the DFN to clarify the position on the role of the GNWT modern treaty

negotiations. They are also asking the DFN to clarify their position regarding the development of an integrated system for managing and protecting natural resources in the NWT.

The DFN is understandably frustrated by persistent delays to the negotiated process, and talks have been stalled again since the Government of Canada wrote to the DFN in April of this year.

Since the treaties were negotiated, the federal government moved decision making to the North, and in the process, delegated its authority to the GNWT. The First Nations hold the perspective that treaties are negotiated agreements, and that it is a matter of recognition by both governments. Yesterday, the DFN issued a press release confirming this and further confirming that they have always supported the development of a truly integrated system of resource management.

I agree with Grand Chief Herb Norwegian when he says, "Our people are patient, but we've had far too many delays." Today, my question to the Premier is this: how does the GNWT recognize treaty rights, and is the GNWT prepared to get back to the negotiating table as soon as possible? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE SECURITY CONCERNS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "We are the prisoners." Mr. Speaker, those are words spoken to me by my constituents who live next to the North Slave Correctional Facility. Over the summer months, they have been bothered by frequent noise late into the evening, and almost direct interaction with inmates, only a stone's throw away from their backyards, Mr. Speaker: catcalls from the inmates at their children and living in concern of a perceived unsafe situation, especially after last year's incident where an inmate escaped the facility.

Now, I know the Minister and his department have been diligent at responding to these concerns, with the construction of the extension of the current perimeter fence that has begun during the week of September the 11th and will be completed in another week or so. Now, if everything goes according to plan, this six-foot extension should discourage individuals from unintentionally crossing onto the private property of residents, while also creating a certain degree of additional privacy for residents. With this, I am sure my constituents will be very happy.

What does not make them happy, Mr. Speaker, and certainly also does not make me happy, is that the tender for the installation of the additional barriers needed to address the security flaw that enabled the escape of an NSCC inmate has been cancelled. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre brought this up earlier this week, and largely, this is due to the fact that the bids that were received were well in excess of the appropriated budget.

Now, I am very concerned that we are only hoping to address this situation. Those are the words of the Minister; "hoped" that it gets addressed. This is a public safety concern, and my residents have a right to be concerned about their safety and their level of comfort in a residential neighbourhood that this government had a part in creating.

I hope that the Minister takes this situation seriously and will do everything possible to ensure that these security improvements are put in place. I will have questions for him later today, and I hope he has the answers. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework is making significant progress. It's a global initiative, and our small jurisdiction of Canada is contributing to that initiative.

The strategic plan is based on three pillars; the three pillars are knowledge, resiliency and adaption, and emissions contributions and mitigation. A statement from the appropriate Minister this past March the 8th outlined a previous engagement through regional consultation, input from the engagements by the people for the people, gave marching orders in producing, followed by Premier's statements made on May the 19th moving forward.

As a result of these consultations and moving forward in our contribution and efforts to emissions reductions and the footprint allowed, it leads us to the conclusion that two days ago the appropriate Minister made contribution efforts using that footprint endeavour and framework to bring reality and calmness to the community. One only has to look at the windmill project in Inuvik and the installation of solar panels in Tulita.

My last visit to Tulita, I witnessed that by seeing the work crews doing site preparations, and they were quite happy knowing the fact that they were developing their community on independence of energy and making a difference in the footprint.

Later I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EULOGY FOR MELISSA PASCUA-MATTE

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak about another constituent who recently passed away this summer, Melissa Pascua-Matte. I had the pleasure of knowing her personally throughout her young years.

Melissa was born on the 19th of February, 1998. Her family moved to Fort Simpson from Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2005. She went to school from grade 2 to 12, with a break of grade 11 where she went to the Philippines to finish off her grade 11. She was a very beautiful, happy, friendly, caring, intelligent person. She was full of ambition and very adventurous. She loved to travel and see the rest of the world. She was involved in politics and cared about youth empowerment issues, which gave her a chance to participate at the United Nations Winter Assembly in New York City this past year.

While she was in high school at Thomas Simpson School, she had the chance to be part of the NWT Youth Ambassador Program. This gave her the opportunity to travel to Iceland and Greenland for the Arctic Winter Games, participate in the NWT Association of Municipalities General Assembly. MACA staff would constantly contact her when she moved down to university to participate in conferences on youth issues.

Melissa was an active volunteer in Fort Simpson. As well, she participated in fundraising activities for the Historical Society, Community Garden, and Fall Fair.

Melissa loved children and, since the age of 14, she worked at Open Doors Society as a student supervisor, organizing activities for the youth. She was active in soccer and track and field, where she had the opportunity to participate in sporting events across southern NWT and northern Alberta.

Melissa just finished her first year of schooling at University of Ottawa, where she was working on her joint Honours program of Political Science and Communications, which was in French immersion under a co-op program.

At the time of her passing, she was working as a summer student involved in agriculture projects and activities with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. She also worked as a part-time employee as a visitor information centre attendant with the Village of Fort Simpson.

She was a young lady who was seen as a leader. Unfortunately, she has moved on to another dimension of her life. Her parents know that she is still watching over them and her siblings.

Melissa's family is forever grateful for the support and love they received from the community members during this time.

Melissa is survived by her mother, Renalyn, father, Rock, and her two sisters, Abegail and Sylvia. Melissa will be sadly missed by her family and the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the family and also to the region as well. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT
PROGRAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2007, when I became MLA, one of my first and biggest issues was employment in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, the 16th Assembly made a decision to address issues on employment rates in small communities

Programs like the Community Access Road Program, programs that supported traditional economies, were enhanced. The budgets were tripled, Mr. Speaker. Programs such as single window service and small communities' employment were created.

With these initiatives, employment rates continued to increase gradually to a point where the average is nearly 50 per cent, which is still 20 per cent lower than large communities and almost 30 per cent lower than Yellowknife. In all fairness, Yellowknife has one of the highest employment rates in the country.

Mr. Speaker, this government sharply increased employment programs for small communities, and that was great; however, Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Minister of Education decided to spread the money to all communities except Yellowknife. Employment rates are derived from participation rates. With the addition of regional centres, we have almost 19,000 people participating for these employment dollars, as opposed to 7,000 in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have a committee of small communities' members who have worked for three governments. The government recognizes this is a big issue and has been supporting small communities to increase employment rates.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite concerned with what the Minister's game plan is for the upcoming months. I would like to see more job creation in small communities. I would like to see the Minister focusing on creating jobs in smaller communities so people can remain in their home communities with their children. As I've said many times in this House, employment is the best cure for the social ills we face.

Mr. Speaker, with regards to the major changes to the employment program in the NWT, under whose direction was it to disregard this and pass our successes on for the small communities to all communities?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will seek clarification from the Minister at the appropriate time. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the life of this Assembly we've seen the Department of Health and Social Services release the Quality Mental Health Care Action Plan, the Mental Health Strategic Framework, and we've seen a draft Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action Plan.

While I don't like endless strategies and actions plan, I give the department credit for focusing its efforts on addressing mental health issues in the NWT. However, there is one element that is missing from every one of these plans: ensuring that all residents who suffer from mental health issues have access to all necessary treatment options, including prescription medication, if that's what is required.

Right now the fact is that there are people in the territory suffering needlessly simply because they can't afford the medication. This issue is often overlooked. Most people in the territory have prescription drug coverage either because they're registered under the Indian Act, are Indigenous Metis, are 60 years old or over, are receiving income assistance, or have benefits through their employer or their spouse's or parents' employer, so the issue of not being able to afford medication isn't brought up often enough.

However, Mr. Speaker, medications for mental health conditions can easily cost \$500 to \$1,000 a month. Not every mental health issue requires medication, and some people suffering from a certain condition may need medication while others suffering from the same condition don't; however,

when prescription drugs are needed to treat these issues, they're needed.

Sometimes they're needed to improve the quality of one's life, or even just to give them something that can be considered a quality of life, and sometimes, Mr. Speaker, these medications can mean the difference between life and death.

Not only do we need to think about those who benefit from medication who haven't yet received it, we have to consider the fact that there are serious mental and physical health effects that occur when a person abruptly starts/stops taking psychiatric drugs. This happens when someone loses benefits as a result of, say, a change in employment or relationship status.

Extended health benefits to residents for certain conditions is not unheard of in the NWT. In fact, the GNWT does it for those suffering from cancer, hepatitis, cirrhosis, and about 50 other conditions. Absent from that list, Mr. Speaker, are any mental health conditions. When I brought this up with the Minister before, he stated that there's a cost involved with extending these benefits.

Mr. Speaker, mental disorders in youth are ranked as the second-highest hospital care expenditure in Canada after injuries. Medical conditions linked to depression have a global cost of \$1 trillion annually, and, like many negative social indicators, the rates of mental health issues in the NWT are many times higher than that in the rest of Canada. So, Mr. Speaker, I think there is a cost with not doing this. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River South.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Charles Thornton, Ph.D., P.E., from Easton, Maryland; Larry Grimms from Haymarket, Virginia; Darrell Beaulieu, president and CEO of Denendeh Investments; Margaret Gorman, chief operating officer, Denendeh Investments; and Dave Ramsay, director of Denendeh Investments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to recognize and introduce Ms. Ray Solotki, my constituency assistant from Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to recognize Darrell Beaulieu, a constituent of mine from Ndilo. It is partly his fault that I am here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to also welcome Yellowknife North resident, former MLA, and former Minister, Mr. Dave Ramsay. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Yellowknife North resident and constituent, man of many hats, Mr. Tony Whitford. Welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my mother, Bette Lyons. It is partially her fault that I am here today.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Father Joe Daley. He is a tour guide this time, with Vicky and David from Victoria, BC. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a constituent in the gallery, from Fort Smith, my wife, Anne.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Mr. Darrell Beaulieu, Mr. David Ramsay, and Margaret Gorman. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize our Pages from Tsiigetchic that we have, Shayleen Shae and Thomas Norbert; also their chaperone, my CA, Liz Wright. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral question. Member for Hay River North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 890-18(2): PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I just stated, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services about the lack of coverage for any mental health conditions when it comes to prescription drugs. I would like to ask the Minister, first off: what is the justification for offering prescription drug coverage under the Extended Health Benefits program for specified disease conditions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, drug coverage under the Extended Health Benefits program for specified disease conditions has evolved over time. With regard to mental health, which is the issue the Member is raising, the only reference within the GNWT Extended Health Benefits Policy to cover conditions is chronic psychosis. Within this broad category of chronic psychosis, there are a number of specified conditions that are open to interpretation and application to a number of specific conditions.

I would add, however, that this approach to extended health benefits is clearly dated, as eligibility for programs is based on a list of specified conditions rather than based on the clinical and/or financial need of the individual or family. Members may recall that there have been two previous attempts to review the approach to supplementary health benefits. Both were not successful. The last attempt was in 2010-2011, during the 16th Assembly.

I recognize, and the department recognizes, that there is a need to review and update the approach to supplemental health benefits, and it is in its initial stages of updating some inter-jurisdictional research to inform a review, with the intention of moving this project forward in 2018.

MR. SIMPSON: I bring up this program because there are no mental health conditions covered under that, and, while the territory is doing a lot to address mental health issues, it gives the impression that they do not take it seriously because there has always been a stigma attached with it, and it seems like they are just second class to physical conditions.

The Minister brought up some of the work that has been done. What work has been done when it comes to including mental health conditions in that

specified disease and condition program? I am speaking in terms of: do they know how much it would cost? Because, if we know how much it would cost, there is no reason we cannot just, with the stroke of a pen, add those conditions to the list.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I would just like to provide a little bit of clarification. There might be a slight misunderstanding. The broad category of chronic psychosis does provide for coverage of a variety of mental health conditions. Those are based on advice from referring clinicians. Individuals need to consult with their referring clinician to determine whether their condition is in fact covered by the extended benefit under the chronic psychosis category.

I believe that most patients in the Northwest Territories are getting the care they need. However, it is clear that we need to update the policy and associated guidelines to ensure that they are focused on patients' needs and support the clinicians in the work that they do. I would also suggest to the Member and all Members that, if you are aware of someone in real need who is not being served by the system, I would encourage them to reach out to their local healthcare providers or even our system navigator to explore the opportunities for exceptions that the system can put in place where there is hardship.

MR. SIMPSON: As an MLA, I am the person who a lot of these people reach out to. I have never heard about these exceptions, and the people who come to me have never heard from their physicians about these exceptions, so what is being done to inform physicians, let alone the general public, that this coverage could be extended to them?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The department does work with the medical association and others to try to get that information out there. I will have a conversation with the department to make sure that they are working with our practitioners across the Northwest Territories. It does not cover every condition, but it does cover a lot of conditions. Where it is not covered, as I said, I would encourage the Member and all Members to have these people get in touch with system navigators or come to them, and the Members can come to us and we can explore opportunities.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I bring this up because people get swept under the rug because, like I said, most people have coverage, and so this approach of looking at a case-by-case basis does not seem like the best way to do things. When can we expect this review to be done and hopefully some specific conditions added to this list

to help those who are in need of prescription medication for their mental health conditions but cannot afford it?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I would just like to confirm once again that the broad category of chronic psychosis provides for coverage of a variety of mental health conditions, so a number of them are covered. People need to make sure that they are working with their practitioners to get that information out. A full review of the supplemental health programs will take over a year as it will involve significant cross-jurisdictional review, analysis, and consultation. Once again, we are doing that work now. We will certainly keep the Member and committee updated as we move forward.

However, if the Member is aware where people are experiencing hardship, I would encourage them to deal with their practitioners or go through their MLAs to explore opportunities for exceptions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 891-18(2):
DEH CHO BRIDGE MAINTENANCE AND
REPAIRS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was talking about my travels across the Southern NWT and asked questions of the Minister of Infrastructure. I'd like to follow up with some questions here today.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed that, when I was crossing the Deh Cho Bridge, on both sides there was work being done and gravel being moved from a spot along the north side that hadn't been moved in a long time, and this work was being done by a company from outside the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please advise what work is being done to the bridge and the rationale why a company not from the Northwest Territories is doing this work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of our bridge monitoring inspection regime, we've been closely monitoring the side slopes on the approaches and the embankment movements of the Deh Cho Bridge. Some longitudinal cracks have appeared and we've been observing them on the bridge approaches, and as a proactive and preventive measure of our ongoing part of our maintenance program, we're working to stabilize these approaches and

embankments to stop future cracking of the longitudinal cracks that are appearing.

As to the contractor that's on-site, they are called GeoStabilization International. This was awarded, a contract, through public procurement through the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. That's very helpful and clears up a number of things. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please tell us if this work is covered under the warranty or are these additional costs that the Government of the Northwest Territories has to cover with this bridge?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The cost of this preventative work is actually covered by various bridge capital projects. It's ongoing preventative bridge maintenance across our system, and it's there to extend the life of our bridge assets.

MR. THOMPSON: I appreciate the department is actually doing preventative work on there. I was hoping it would be covered under the warranty, but I guess it isn't; it's part of our new capital projects or O and M direction.

I've also heard during my travels there that the slope on both sides is very steep and some truckers, especially on the south side, have to speed up to get across the peak there. If they don't, the vehicle could stall. Can the Minister advise if he's heard these concerns and, if so, what is the department doing to address these issues?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I'm not aware of this concern. The bridge is built within normal sloping operating grades and, I suspect anyone who has a Class 1 driver's licence operating should have the skills to navigate the slope of that bridge.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his answer, but it's been an issue, so I'm addressing it to him so maybe he can look into it.

Mr. Speaker, I've also been told that one of the piers wasn't built correctly and it needs to be replaced. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise if this is true and what the department has planned to replace this pier? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I'm not aware of a requirement to replace any pier on the Deh Cho Bridge. This bridge has been functioning well since it opened in 2012, and as far as I'm concerned there's no need for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 892-18(2):
UNIVERSAL AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My statement earlier today referred to the Feasibility Study of Universal Affordable Daycare in the NWT that was prepared at the direction of the last Assembly. You can find the study in our tabled documents if you know where to look. It's available on the University of Toronto website, but if you look on the GNWT website, including the Education, Culture and Employment Department, you can't find it there.

Will the Minister commit to putting this study back among the resource documents of his departmental website? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, that's a question to the Minister of Education. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we are committed to improving the accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity of childcare in the Northwest Territories. It continues to be a priority of our department, as well as a priority of this government. We want to ensure that we support the creation of new childcare spaces and programs in all of our communities across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, currently we have childcare spaces in 23 of the 33 communities of the Northwest Territories. We need to put our focus, our finances, financial resources into making sure we have childcare spaces throughout the NWT, so there are 10 communities that we need to continue to work with.

The GNWT over the past two years has put into place a variety of initiatives to address the accessibility and the affordability, and we continue to focus on that. We've implemented junior kindergarten. We've made significant changes to streamline and simplify the licensing and funding application process for NWT licenced early childhood programming among many other things, Mr. Speaker. We're continuing to commit to focus on accessibility and affordability to ensure that all of our communities in the Northwest Territories have early childhood programs and spaces. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister for his statement in the House about childcare. Unfortunately, he didn't answer my question about whether he would make the study available on his

department's website, but maybe I'll give him a chance to answer that with my next question.

The proposed changes to the mandate were brought forward to this House by Cabinet. What is the position of the Minister on universal childcare for the Northwest Territories and when will that happen?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: With the mandates and the focus of this government to ensure that we do have childcare spaces in all of our communities, before we can even get into universal childcare we've got to make sure that all of our communities do have childcare spaces, and the fact we can actually put our resources that we have now within the remainder of this government to focus on addressing the childcare spaces and needs in 10 more communities across the Northwest Territories while maintaining and sustaining the early childhood programs that currently exist in all of our other communities.

I think that, as a government, we should put our focus on getting all our communities childcare to not only help the child, give the child every chance to succeed, but also help families as well.

MR. O'REILLY: I don't seem to be having much luck with the Minister today. He still hasn't answered my question about whether he can make this study available on his departmental website.

Of course, if there are 10 communities missing childcare facilities or programs, that should be part of an action plan. The proposed revisions to the mandate would axe the commitment to universal childcare and the action item in our current version of the mandate calls for an action plan for universal daycare within the next two years. It doesn't mean we're going to do it; it just says that we should have a plan to do it. That's from 18 months ago. This means that, until the mandates change, the department should have been working on this commitment and the work should almost be done by now.

Can the Minister tell us the status of the work on an action plan for universal childcare in the Northwest Territories?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We do currently have an early childhood development action plan within this government, and we're also working on an early learning and childcare agreement with the federal government to look at outlining where our focus is going to be over the next three years.

The Member asks us if we're going to put energy into creating this action plan. We have some documents that we're referring to right now, but a lot of our energy has been working with some of those communities to create daycares. We have

two new daycares in two of our smallest communities, and it's a very successful story.

I'm working to make sure that all communities across the Northwest Territories will have that opportunity to see their children, their youngest, succeed, as well as families getting the supports that they need with child daycare.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I seem to be having problems here with the Minister, getting actually any answers to any of my questions today. He cannot tell me if he is going to post a study to his website. He does not want to tell me what his position is with regard to universal childcare. He cannot tell me what is happening with the action plan that his department was supposed to be developing.

Let us go back to the feasibility study. It estimated that a territory-wide program could be introduced for a cost starting at about \$20 million a year. Since then, junior kindergarten has come on-stream, which largely replaces the need for child care spaces for junior kindergarten-aged children. Has the Minister's department calculated the reduced implementation cost for universal childcare in the NWT, given junior kindergarten is in place; and if so, what are the reduced costs for universal child care? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I did give him a heads up, so I don't know what the problem is. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned, our focus is to make sure that we provide those childcare spaces. We have increased subsidies for early childhood programming, specifically on the infant spaces. We are putting more time and energy into making sure that all families in the Northwest Territories have that opportunity in early childhood programs. Subsidies, we made changes to the childcare benefit, the NWT childcare benefit. We are doing a lot of work in the area around early childhood development, and we want to continue to make sure that all of our communities have access to childhood spaces so that our children can succeed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral question. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 893-18(2):
YELLOWKNIFE TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END
HOMELESSNESS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for Homelessness. Yellowknife has the largest homeless population in the Northwest

Territories, and the city's 10-year plan to end homelessness provides an action plan to eliminate this problem. Will the Minister prepare a formal response to the plan, and release this response publicly when available? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Homelessness.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to give some thought to actually releasing a public statement on the plan, but I can say in the House here that the plan was actually a great joy to read. Dr. Alina Turner, who wrote the plan, actually backed up everything that I have been saying for the last two years, that we need a continuum of support, that this is not just one strategy will fix all. A lot of her plan actually was very complementary to my own personal beliefs based on my expertise in dealing with homelessness by working with homeless people for the last 20 years. I have also been in contact with the City of Yellowknife on this issue, and have agreed to work with the City of Yellowknife on this issue. I will have to give some more thought whether I do it as a public announcement, more than what I am doing just now in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for her response. I understand that she is very engaged with this issue, and I am glad that she supports the approach that the report has taken. One of the findings of the report is that it costs more to manage homelessness than to eliminate it. I am wondering if the Minister agrees with that statement.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I absolutely agree with the statement that it takes more to manage homelessness than it does to address it before people become homeless. That is why the Housing Corporation last year spent \$132 million, \$70 million coming from the Government of the Northwest Territories, \$35 million coming from the federal government, and \$30 million actually coming from the low rents for the accommodations that we have. We spend a lot of money to try to deal with not only homelessness, but homelessness is housing, so to deal with housing.

MS. GREEN: I think the key distinction here is between homelessness and housing. I know that the NWT Housing Corporation funds public housing throughout the Northwest Territories, and that there are some pots of money that go to the shelters. I think that what I am asking about here is whether the Minister will work to a more comprehensive response as it relates to the territorial problem that exists in Yellowknife. The plan calls on all the orders of government, that is, Indigenous, territorial, and federal, to work together to create this

commission that will work on implementing this plan. Is the Minister planning to take part in this opportunity?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated earlier, the City of Yellowknife has approached me. When the 10-year plan was developed, they came in and we had a meeting. We did talk about the Homeless Commission, and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, myself, and/or the president, Tom Williams, have agreed to take part in this Homelessness Commission on a quarterly basis.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good news. I think high-level leadership on this issue is very important to the implementation of the plan.

My final question has to do more with housing than homelessness. The report concludes that while overcrowded and substandard housing persists, people will continue to migrate to urban centres. Does the Minister agree with this conclusion, and is it on her radar to address the core need in housing? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: In regards to homelessness, I do recognize that it is a territorial issue. I have known that for a long time, and the MLA is correct. The majority of people actually who are in our capital city are not from the capital. They are from the communities.

To that effect, I have been providing a lot of support. Not only am I funding the Housing First initiative in Yellowknife, we are doing shelters in four communities coming up. We have a homeless shelter coming into Aklavik, one coming into Behchoko, one coming into Fort Simpson, and the newest one is Fort Good Hope. My goal is, like I said at the beginning of this Assembly, that I would hopefully have a homeless shelter in every region throughout the Northwest Territories, because people do better when they are around their families. Wellness is all about having social supports, and the major part of social supports is not government programs. It is family and community. We need to focus our efforts in putting homes and shelters into the communities so that people all through the Northwest Territories have options, and they can seek out wellness after they have actually been housed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 894-18(2):
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE
SAFETY CONCERNS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, obviously, the concern of my constituents living close to the North Slave Correctional facility cannot be understated. These are people with families. These are people who have a right to be concerned about their public safety, and earlier in the week the answers have only created more confusion. I would like the Minister to confirm that the perimeter front's extension has begun, and is ongoing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I informed this House the other day when I was asked a question by the Member opposite, the tender for the perimeter fence project closed on August 29, 2017. I understand that the project is now under construction, and that it will be completed by mid-October. It is on course to be completed, as I say, by October, so the project, which I know has been long awaited by the residents of that area, should be completed within the next couple of weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I would like to thank the Minister for offering a new kind of hope, a hope that comes from getting projects done, and making firm commitments in this House. Now, I would like to turn to the other issue of the security improvements. What is the status of them? Does he have any new information for the House today on those projects, which are significant in that the deficiency that they are designed to address resulted in an escape from the facility, an escape that brought an inmate into very close proximity with a residential neighbourhood?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, this of course is an important project. As I mentioned the other day, we did go out for bids for this project, and, unfortunately, the response from the contractors who submitted tenders was way above the money that had been approved for this work. We therefore are looking at a revised approach to secure the yard from which the inmate escaped, and I will certainly keep this House informed as to progress. The original idea was to, in essence, put up a new interior fence. That proved to be much too expensive, so we are looking at other alternatives to secure this area. Hopefully once completed, that will assure the residents of their security, also.

MR. TESTART: We are hoping again. What are some of the options that are being looked at by the Minister? He is talking about revising a plan. I am of the opinion that there is no cost too great for public safety. If he could tell us what some of the cost-effective solutions are that his department is looking at, I am sure my residents would be greatly appreciative of that.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: It was thought initially that a completely new fence would be required. We are looking at less complicated and hopefully less expensive alternatives.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When does the Minister anticipate that this work will be done, Mr. Speaker? Will it be done next year, the year after, the year after that? When do we expect the tender to be released, and the work to be done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: This is an important issue, of course, Mr. Speaker, because we would like to have the inmates to again have access to this portion of the facility. I do not have an exact date to provide to this House when this work will be done, but it is an important project. We are working on it, and I will keep the House informed. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 895-18(2):
TREATY RIGHTS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about Treaties 8 and 11. Most of the Northwest Territories First Nations are descendants of leaders who negotiated Treaties 8 and 11 of 1899 and 1900. Those treaties were built and founded on the ideal of Nation to Nation. As I indicated in my Member's statement, my question is to the Premier. I would appreciate hearing the Premier's perspective on how the GNWT views treaty rights. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As spelled out in our Respect, Recognition and Responsibility Policy, the Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes and affirms the Aboriginal and treaty rights of Aboriginal people. The Government of the Northwest Territories supports the recognition of rights of Indigenous peoples, honouring treaties and claims, and implementation of calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

I should also point out that the Government of the Northwest Territories has signed the Gwich'in and Sahtu Land Claim Agreements, which are recognized as modern treaties by the constitution. The Government of the Northwest Territories is also a full party of the Tlicho Agreement and the Deline Final Self-Government Agreement, which are also modern treaties recognized by the constitution. The

Government of the Northwest Territories also recognizes and respects Treaties 8 and 11, the Salt River Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement, and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

MR. NADLI: I believe in 2001, as well, this government signed the Interim Measures Agreement and also the framework agreement that recognizes the role of the GNWT, the federal government, and the Dehcho First Nations in the current negotiations process. How is the GNWT planning to help move the negotiations forward in respect of the Dehcho Process?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I will be speaking to Minister Bennett about the letter received from the grand chief, as well as the letters attached to it from Chief Norwegian of the Jean Marie River First Nations, Chief Bonnetrouge of the Deh Gah Got'ie First Nation, and Chief Cayen of the West Point First Nation. The GNWT and Canada continue to work together on how to advance these negotiations and resolve areas of disagreement for which there is no clarity.

MR. NADLI: The question I would like to ask is: is the GNWT willing to accept the advice of DFN to engage the services of a mediator at the negotiating table? If not, why not?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Dehcho Framework Agreement contemplates that, should an impasse be reached at negotiations, any party can request the use of a facilitator. I understand this to mean that the parties could engage a facilitator to assist them with finding a solution to the impasse that each party could support. Should the Dehcho or Canada request the use of a facilitator, the Government of the Northwest Territories would be prepared to engage the use of a facilitator with Canada and the Dehcho First Nations.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my last question is in terms of maybe the idea of a facilitator, but we do also have a joint working group between Cabinet and the Regular side. Of course, on the Regular side, we have a vested interest. We all have a vested interest in ensuring that the negotiations and the parties move forward. However, we have a joint working group. Would the Premier contemplate the idea of perhaps having the Joint Working Group on Aboriginal Affairs have an active role in terms of trying to encourage and support the negotiations process moving forward?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We will be very pleased to adhere to the terms of reference of the joint committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 896-18(2):
INGRAHAM TRAIL SAFETY CONCERNS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister for Infrastructure with regard to safety on Highway No. 4, also known as the Ingraham Trail. Mr. Speaker, in late winter and again in the spring the Minister told the House about ongoing work on the Ingraham Trail. There was some widening that was going to be going on, some chipsealing, potentially installing some new guard rails. I asked specifically about guard rails on the corner where the fatality took place this summer. As we wrap up the construction season here, can the Minister please provide me and residents of the Ingraham Trail with what improvements have been made on the trail this summer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister for Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to do extensive safety and structural improvements on Highway No. 4. As most Members of this House know, we have invested roughly \$2 million per year on ongoing reconstruction of this section of road.

To update Members, this year we have completed road widening, structural strengthening, drainage improvements, resurfacing. Application of chipseal and guard rail installation were needed on kilometre 46 to 49. We have also, like I said, done impressive amounts of chipseal, of overlay, this year from kilometre 7 to 22, along with our ongoing patching of potholes and slumping that occurs. Through our ongoing safety enhancements, the Department of Infrastructure has replaced guard rails on Highway No. 4 at kilometre 33.8, kilometre 37.6, and kilometre 45.5. Planning, including survey design work, is currently under way for installation of guard rails at kilometre 17 and 13.5 for the 2018-2019 season.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for the detailed reply. It's almost as though somebody gave him a head's up.

SOME HON. MEMBER: Didn't work for me.

MR. VANTHUYNE: It works for some. Mr. Speaker, in March, following a number of incidents involving haul trucks with regard to the resupply season to the mines, the Minister mentioned that his department had met or was going to meet with the joint venture operators of the ice road. I just want to know: did the meeting take place? What has come of that? What have we learned about those incidents that took place last year and will we be

prepared for safety on the road during the ice road haul this year?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Again, we met with the joint venture group and their insurance providers to complete a discussion around the incidents that happened last year. There were a couple of trucks that went off the road. There were a number of fires that took place. The department does not have an accident investigator, as many of us know in this House, but we do have our guys that go out there and do the dangerous goods checks, secure of cargo on the loads, check the log books, those sorts of things.

I can update the House that we followed up with the joint venture operators who investigated the accidents last season, and we understand this year they will be further improving on a northern driving training improvement safety program. The orientation training is going to be northern-specific and we understand that it will include enhanced video situations.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. It's good to hear that there will be a number of recommendations coming forward, and hopefully that improves the safety of the ice road winter season dramatically. Much appreciated.

Also, Mr. Speaker, last March the Minister committed to gathering some key stakeholders together along with members of his department to develop a public safety communications plan. Can the Minister advise the Assembly on the progress of this plan and did that gathering of key stakeholders come together?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: We are always committed to improving our communications, as I said in this House on a number of occasions, to update residents and tourists in particular on this section of road in the wintertime, which is, as I've mentioned in the House, how the numbers are increasing in the use of this road, winter operators and general public who also use this highway. We will continue to work on our communications plan.

We have our digital signage that's out at the entrance of Highway No. 4; that will be placed there again once the season gets going. We have Twitter. We use radio. We use our website to give the most up-to-the-minute reports on the condition of the road, and we will continue to do that to improve communications with the general public and users of the winter road.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for his reply. I hope that sometime we can get an actual tangible completed

communications plan that we can get into our hands.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, in May I asked about the potential for highway patrol and the RCMP and even the municipal enforcement division from Yellowknife. I asked the Minister if there is a way to improve and enhance patrols and possibly including things like check stops and other ways to enhance public safety. This road is now being used 24 hours a day. It is arguably busier from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 in the morning than it is during the daytime hours.

Can the Minister report on any progress with regard to this area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Highway patrol meets and regularly trains with other enforcement agencies. The department participated in a blitz together on a regular basis with these other agencies. In particular, recently we just did a bison awareness check stop both with ENR and the RCMP to check both commercial and public traffic on the highway, and we will continue to look at opportunities to collaborate with all enforcement agencies in the future.

As I said, we will continue to do our inspections on the winter road this coming season around the heavy truck traffic in particular to make sure people are well aware of the conditions of the highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 897-18(2):

SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, I'd like to ask the Minister if the Small Community Employment Support Program budget of \$3 million that was added to the \$1.2 million now supports all communities except Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; there is \$4.2 million in GNWT funding that aims to expand employment as well as training opportunities across the Northwest Territories.

On April 1, 2017, we did make enhancements to encourage success and look at having the program become more successful than it has in the past, and one of those enhancements was expanding eligibility, and that included the communities that I

had mentioned earlier this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'm wondering if the Minister could tell me who was consulted prior to making this decision.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Since the enhancement of the program was in the last budget, we had to look at how we can look at improving the program in many different areas so that we can see success through the Small Community Employment Support Program. It is application-based. We continue to encourage businesses, Aboriginal governments, community organizations, even other governments to work with us to apply on the program so that they can get funding.

Since then, we've also had some consultations in May and June, and those consultations were with Aboriginal governments, communities, leadership, staff, employers, residents, other GNWT departments, Aurora College. We are waiting on that report and look forward to sharing that report with committee. That will help guide and develop small community employment strategy for the next fiscal year.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to ask the Minister if the department at first intended to deliver the Small Community Employment Support Program to small communities only.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I said, with the increase of \$3 million to this program we didn't see that the \$1.2 million previously get fully utilized within the small communities. With the new \$3 million that was increased to this funding, my staff has been going out and getting that information out to the communities to allow them to understand that they can apply for this funding.

We're working with businesses, Aboriginal governments, and community groups so that they can actually apply on this program. With the enhancements that were made, we looked at expanding eligibility that included the communities; we looked at increased benefit levels and added flexibility for community employers as well as organizations that wanted to apply on this program. We continue to ask these businesses, organizations, Aboriginal governments to apply on the program and let's get our people working, let's get our people trained in our communities.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said in my Member's statement, this is a major disappointment to watch 10 years of our work go down the drain with one decision.

I'd like to ask the Minister: who made the decision to change the communities that this program was intended for? This program was intended to address the small communities; not the regional centres, the small communities. The regional centres have other ways of getting employment, obviously. Who made the decision to go outside the small communities with the Small Community Employment Support Program? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I do not think this is a disappointment, or the hard work from the rural and remote communities are going down the drain. Actually, it is an enhancement. We have \$3 million added to the fund to top it up to \$4.2 million. We made enhancements to the Small Community Fund. Like I said, program eligibility, you get more people who can apply on the program, increased benefit levels as well as flexibility for community employers and organizations. At no way do I think this is a disappointment. I think this is something that we should be excited about and promoting. It is focusing on employment, and it is focusing on training opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 898-18(2):

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see progress being made in the area of several strategies, including the one that I mentioned in my Member's statement, and my question today is for the Minister of ENR. Executing this strategic climate framework is paramount to our contribution efforts. What more regional consultation is under way, if any, on this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had initial input and an initial round of consultations on the Climate Change Strategic Framework. We are putting a "what we heard" document together, and our intention is that it will be released for external review and more feedback and comment in October. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks for the answer, Mr. Minister. On the issue of traditional knowledge, traditional knowledge can make a contribution effort to research development and the research institution. Is it the plans of the department or the strategy to set up a research centre in the Northwest Territories?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member is correct. Traditional knowledge plays a large part in some of the work that we are doing, and I think we see that

all across the Northwest Territories in the Mackenzie Delta, and you have just seen in the news in the last few days, some of the slides that they are having on the river just down from Inuvik. As far as opening a research centre, if the federal government is willing to put a lot of the money into it, and we can put some contribution towards it, we would be glad to look at a research centre.

MR. MCNEELY: I recall years ago going to school in Grollier Hall in Inuvik, and there was a research centre there. The building is still standing there. I guess it is the beginning of what could be a future research institution contributing to research such as permafrost and the effects of climate change, as we see so much of these days. Even the animals that are around in the North have not been around here 10 or 15 years ago. Is it the department's initiative to seek funding from the federal government to set up this institution in Inuvik?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member is absolutely correct. There is a research centre in Inuvik. The old one that the Member recalls seeing back in the days when he was going to school in Inuvik, that one is gone now, and we have replaced it with a brand new research centre. We are taking advantage of all the opportunities that are available to do polar research around the world, and that is one of the reasons we are quite excited about the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link and the opportunities that might bring to continue to do more research.

In speaking with the members of the industry, and they talk about the benefits of the location of Inuvik, they are able to gain a lot more information off the satellites. We have done a lot of work to enhance programs that we have up in Inuvik, and as we improve their telecommunications and everything else we are looking forward to the opportunity for more work up in Inuvik.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just trying to reveal the hidden election platform of the Minister, considering that it is community, and their satellite to support the institution of this building. As the Minister said earlier, the fibre optic line will increase the technology and database of transmission in the area of communication. Ideally, it just makes sense that this research centre be set up and established in Inuvik. My question is: is there a time frame related to this incorporation of this building? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The building has been completed for a couple of years now, and we are starting to see more and more researchers with the climate change making their way up to the Beau-Del. We would like to see this as a beginning of the University of the North, and we are better to have it

than in an area where you have a lot of everything as far as scientific research and that goes. I think the term I heard was that Inuvik was geographically gifted for this type of work, and we hope we continue to build on that and see this program expand to where it may become a University of the North in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 899-18(2):

SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue my questions for the Minister of Education on the Small Community Employment program. Mr. Speaker, I said that this was disappointing, and the Minister said it was not disappointing, but I think I would know if I was disappointed. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, considering that he was not in the room when we were negotiating \$3 million, if he consulted with anyone. I am wondering if he even consulted with the Minister of Finance before making this decision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and yes, we do go through a budgeting process with O and M, and some decisions are made when moving forward on where we implement our dollars, and this was part of those discussions. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: I am going to try for the third time here: did the Minister consult with someone else before he made the decision to take this money and put it outside the small communities? This was clearly a small community fund. This was clearly for small communities. This is clearly understood by this side of the House, that this was for small communities. Did the Minister consult with anyone else on his side of the House before making a decision to move this money out of small communities into the regional centres?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, there were policy decisions made at the departments that we supported to focus on the success of this program. As I mentioned yesterday in the House, we also have communities that are hurting economically, and we want to make sure that we continue to support all residents across the Northwest Territories. We looked at some of the communities that were ineligible before that we thought we could bring into the eligibility list, and those are the communities that I mentioned in previous answers to the questions.

MR. BEAULIEU: This program was not to prevent communities from being hurt by economic downturns. It was to change the employment rates in the small communities because they are much lower than anywhere else in the NWT. That program was put in place so it could address the issue of low employment rates in small communities. I said in my Member's statement, they are clearly way below regional centres, and way below Yellowknife. I am asking the question: did the Minister make this decision unilaterally to take the money out of the small communities to try to address the economic downturn in other communities in the NWT?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I just want to mention again that, previous to the enhancement of the \$3 million into the program, it was at \$1.2 million previously and was not being fully utilized. With the increase of that \$3 million, my staff is working with the communities to try to promote that program so we can see more success. We are six months into the program with the new funding. I encourage the communities, and even the small communities and the communities that are now eligible, to work on getting applications in to get the employment, as well as to get the training that they need so that they can become part of the workforce. I encourage businesses, Aboriginal governments, as well as other governments to put their applications in. We want this program to succeed.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this program is not for what the Minister thinks it is for. We know. We negotiated this. We know exactly why we negotiated this. We negotiated this money, \$3 million, and we asked for a lot more than that. We dealt with the Minister of Finance, and we negotiated this money to address the low employment rates in small communities.

I have asked the Minister now 16 questions. I am trying to find out what happened. How did this shift occur? All the Minister is telling me is that there is an economic downturn, we are trying to help this; this is very clear. We are trying to address low employment rates in the small communities. Why did the Minister make the decision to take money out of small communities to try to address something else that was not what the money was intended for? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, the focus on the Small Community Employment Support Program is around employment and training development. We know what it is for, and that is why we worked with committee and Members to enhance that program. We want to see success in this program. That is why we made some enhancements. I will go back

to the department and get some more clarity for the Member on some of these policy decisions that were made, and I will get back to the Member on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 900-18(2):
REPLACEMENT GENERATORS DELIVERY AND CONTRACT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, because it has been a while, I have some questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, in my last line of questioning to the Minister, I revisited the matter with regard to the generators that are being built out of California. The Minister indicated that we are still unsure whether we are getting them or potentially pursuing some legal action. Can the Minister today report in the House any more clarity? Are we in fact going to be receiving these generators at some point in time, or is that dead and gone and are we pursuing legal action? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any new news with respect to this matter. Of course, as I did mention in the House previously, we are hoping we will get at least some of these generators. There is also always the possibility, I suppose, of litigation in California, but that may not lead to any great success because you are probably going to be dealing, should it come to that, with issues surrounding creditors' rights and so on. I will certainly give this House an update as soon as I have heard anything further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I think we need to ask ourselves: when are we going to actually cut this loose? When are we going to stop costing ratepayers and taxpayers more and more money every day on this particular boondoggle that has obviously gone off the rails? What are the next steps? Can the Minister tell us what the next steps are going to be? We have to make a decision. Maybe we have to get another RFP out and start getting generators built and get them here soon. We are using backup generators in the meantime that are costing us daily. Can the Minister tell us when we are going to draw the line and put out an RFP and get some new generators built?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As this House knows, we have invested a considerable amount of money in this project. We do not want to cut that loose unless there appears to be no hope at all of getting these

generators. If, however, it does come to that, we will have to go out for an RFP because we do need these generators.

MR. VANTHUYNE: My final question is: we have been incurring costs daily, notwithstanding the costs that we are potentially losing as it relates to the deposit that we put down on these generators and the generators themselves that we may never see. We have got a lot of equipment that is in place that is being used as backup equipment in the meantime. The last number that the Minister shared with us, I think back in March, was somewhere in the neighbourhood of about \$500,000 at that point. I am afraid to ask what that number is today, but I would like to know: who is going to be paying for that, then? If this generator contract goes off the rails, who will be paying for those costs that have been incurred today that that proponent, Viridi Power, was supposed to pay?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Clearly, Viridi Power would be responsible for these costs if they have breached the contract. However, realistically speaking, it may be that that is not a likely option to recover our money. It may be, unfortunately, that, should we not receive the generators, we may simply have to write off this money.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written question. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 456-18(2):
NWT OIL AND GAS ANNUAL REPORT 2016

TABLED DOCUMENT 457-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES GEOLOGICAL
SURVEY STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Tabled Document 456-18(2), NWT Oil and Gas Annual Report 2016" and "Tabled Document 457-18(2), Northwest Territories Geological Survey Strategic Plan 2017-2022." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 458-18(2):
EVERYONE IS HOME – YELLOWKNIFE'S 10
YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the report "Everyone is Home – Yellowknife's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 12-18(2), Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning Report on the Progress Review of the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019; Minister's Statement 186-18(2), Update on the A New Day Program; Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019; Tabled Document 419-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 (Revised), with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019, concluding the Department of Health and Social Services and going on to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Justice.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will consider the tabled document after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. We have agreed to continue our consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services in the Capital Estimates, 2018-2019. I will invite the Minister to invite any witnesses he has into the Chamber. Minister Abernethy, would you like to invite witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the

witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses to the House.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with me today on my right is the assistant deputy minister of corporate services, Derek Elkin, and on my left, the director of infrastructure planning, Perry Heath.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will open the floor to general comments. We have a few MLAs who have not spoken to the department with general comments. Would anyone like to make general comments? Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, looking at the plans, it is good to see that the long-term care facilities are getting a boost in beds and taking care of our elders. The Minister mentioned a few times during the session that aging in place is also important. I would just like to point out one of my communities, Ulukhaktok, in particular. That community holds a lot of culture; two different languages, two different dialects, and it is important for elders to remain in the community to continue to blend with the youth and the other community members. I believe, next year, I think it is important to start to look at facilities for elders in the communities as we move ahead. Other than that, I do not really have much else to say. That is it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, similar to questions that were raised yesterday, when it comes to long-term care facilities, those are level 3/4 facilities for individuals who are no longer to live independently and have medical issues that need to be addressed in a 24/7 facility. Given the model, we are not looking to develop those in smaller communities, but rather communities where we do have medical practitioner positions on site and where there is a greater degree of care available given the acuity of these patients. We absolutely without question support aging in place. We want to keep our people in their homes and in their communities for as long as possible.

We do not have money in the Health and Social Services capital budget for independent living units, but the Housing Corporation has been very creative over the last number of years and they have been a great partner in the design of these independent living units where we could actually incorporate programs based on other things.

I cannot remember what the status of different long-term care facilities in the Nunakput riding are, but I

am sure the Minister of Housing can certainly give you an update on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further? I see nothing further from Mr. Nakimayak. Anyone else with general comments? Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to going through the capital plans for this department as noted here. There is a new facility going up in the riding of the Sahtu in particular, in the community of Tulita. As we know, Tulita has their encounters with varmints running around the property, and in order to attract new personnel, and preferably long-term employees of the department, facing the challenges like any other small community has, with limitations, including the high cost of living of groceries, for example. A new piece of property would really enhance the attraction of professional people in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Does the Minister have any comments for that?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Member's comments. The community health centre in Tulita is certainly one that definitely needs to be replaced. There has been a lot of debate in this House about the status of that building, both in this Assembly and the previous Assembly, with things like mice and other critters, if you will, in the facility, and the challenges that has for our staff and for the community.

We are excited to move forward with that facility. What we are looking at, obviously, is to get some work done in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Hopefully, if everything works out the way we were hoping, we might see some supplies rolling in the winter road in 2019.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. McNeely. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you for the allowance, Mr. Chair. I just want to make a comment that I look forward to working with both departments of Public Works and Services, or a DOY now on the end of department, to try and merge some input from the community on the cultural design of the appearance of the building so it fits with the community leadership's input into the image of the building, not necessarily the technical side of the interior where it is more to meet health standards. I am thinking the outside definitely would be of interest to the community, to have some cultural features of the building. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is right. When it comes to some of the program space and the technical requirements to meet things like code and program design and infection control, those are things that I think do need to be done by the experts who are aware of those codes and those standards that we have to apply on all health stations. When it comes to getting input into some of the components the Member is referring to, some of the cultural components and maybe some of the aesthetics of the building, we really do rely on the regional wellness councils to provide us with advice and guidance. The regional wellness council is made up of residents from across the entire region. They are a great resource, and they are from different communities. I do believe we have a representative from Tulita, so we are really looking forward to getting input from them, and having them engage and collect information for the residents as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Any further general comments? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Not so much a general comment. It is on page 32. I see that the capital budget for the department jumps around quite a bit. In 2016-2017, the actuals were \$34.8 million. Last year, the original estimate was \$13.1 million, and it ended up being \$45.6 million. This year, it is about \$14 million. What is going on with the expenditures from the department? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. HEATH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The budgets are reflective of carry-overs and work not getting done, and it shows up as previous expenditures.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I will just pick 2017-2018. To go from \$13.1 million to \$45.6 million in terms of the revised estimates, that is a pretty big jump. Are we just not planning facilities very well, or contractors are not building things on time? What is going on? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. HEATH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Department of Health works really closely with its partners, the Department of Infrastructure, and plans jobs as accurately as possible. We do not necessarily have a whole lot of control over

contractors and their determining processes and how they schedule things, and there are always eventualities and realities of living in the Northwest Territories that impact projects, and we struggle to and try our best to plan projects as accurately as possible, but often, there are things beyond our control. It happened in implementation that affects our carry-overs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer from the department. Can you just maybe give me two or three examples of large carry-overs, then, for 2017-2018? I know I might be jumping the gun in terms of the public accounts, but what were just two or three of the big carry-over items that did not get done? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I cannot remember at what point in the schedule the Department of Finance will bring forward supplementals identifying when carry-overs are required and when carry-overs are needed, but that is something that does come through this House. I cannot remember off the top of my head what the specifics of the last carry-over were, but we will look at the previous financial documents and provide the Member with a list of some of the carry-overs from the last budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. Having no one further on my list, we can delve into consideration of the department. We will defer the departmental total until after the activity summaries, the first of which can be found on page 33, with an associated information item on page 34. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 33, we show the ongoing capital investment with regard to the public private partnerships, and, of course, we know that that is the Stanton Renewal Project. I guess my first question would be: we see a number of years that we have contributed to the capital project. How many more years are we expecting that? When will we actually be ending that and transitioning into the, call it, the operating and maintenance agreement portion of that project? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, for the details on when the project is intended to be substantially complete, at which point we would begin our process of verifying that

the equipment is appropriate for health needs and those types of things, I believe it is 2019. However, Mr. Elkin has the more specific detail, so I will go to him for that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. The Minister has indicated that Mr. Elkin will take that. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. The project is targeted to have its essential completion in November-December 2018, at which point we will begin the approximately six-month process of planning to move in. We are targeting May-June as our target for our opening, day one. As the Minister said, then the annual payment for the remainder of the life of the agreement would kick in at that point.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe, because there are still some residents in my riding, some constituents, who are still asking questions about the project, if you do not mind I am going to get into a line of questioning. If it is technical at all in nature, just let me know, and it might be something I might have to save for the Department of Infrastructure later.

These are significant funds. It is going to be a long-term arrangement. I am wondering if you can elaborate a little bit more on who this actual partner is, the Boreal Health Partnership, and maybe explain for us how they were selected. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister. The Minister has directed us to Mr. Elkin. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. We arrived at the BHP, Boreal Health Partnership, and I will pull together the details of the consortium. Initially, we went out for a request for qualifications to get a short list of potential proponents who had both the technical and financial capability to undertake a project of this size. Then from there we narrowed it down to three proponents over a year-long process. We went through a detailed RFP process, working closely through a series of incremental design developments with each of the three proponents. At the end of that process, we had an evaluation which resulted in the project being awarded to BHP, of the three proponents. That was in August of 2016; August 6, 2016. I know we have details on the proponent, BHP consortium, but I will have to find that and then get back to you on that.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the reply. I will note and I have directed many people in the past to the Stanton Renewal Project website that has also been very informative. However, for the purposes of getting some stuff on the record in this House, I am asking some of these ongoing concerns today. Just quickly, as far as the department is concerned, this budget so far is on time and on budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That is correct, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the project was to for any reason go over-budget or there were delays, what do we have built in for accountability? Who would be responsible? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Elkin.

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. I can give you an overview of the agreement, and then, also, the Department of Finance would have more specific details on the agreement. We entered into the agreement with BHP. It is called a partnership agreement, PA, and that outlines the specific relationship between us and them, both on the correction and then on the 30-year arrangement, as well. There are specific terms in the agreement that have to be met on both sides. If there is any deviation, then we will go back to the agreement, both on timing or on deliverables. Actually, the agreement is posted on the Stanton Renewal Project website, as well, and it goes into great detail around how we would go through a resolution process. Then, if still at that point we could not resolve any disagreements around timing or payment, there are terms in the agreement that outline the next steps and processes, as well, so it is very structured, detailed, and outlined in the agreement.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the explanation. I want to get into a little about jobs and staffing. There have been concerns that have been raised in the past that, through a partnership like this, there may be a potential for loss of jobs. Maybe I will start with simply asking: do we know how many people are currently employed out at the current operating hospital? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently at Stanton, it is around 582 employees, but we are constantly staffing, people are constantly retiring and going to other jobs, so it is always fluctuating, but it is hovering around 580. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the reply. Looking at the transition, moving into the new facility, is it anticipated that that number will change at all, whether it is a plus or minus? Could I get a comment to that effect? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are not changing the scope of programming within the new hospital, and we are not anticipating to see a decrease in the number of jobs. The nature of some of the jobs will certainly change as a result of this renewal. When you go into the new building, it is clear that it is laid out differently, that things are going to flow in a different way. There are going to be significant improvements to workflow, which is going to help increase the number of efficiency, which is going to allow more time to be spent on patient care. That will likely result in the re-description of some jobs, but not necessarily, and it is not intended to decrease the overall number of positions within that facility.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, that is good to know. Another question that often gets asked is: the new operator, how can we be assured that they will not go for what often gets termed as the "lowest-cost solution" and in making sure that we still get the best quality of service? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in moving forward with the construction of this facility, the proponents will be responsible for a number of the functions on an ongoing basis within that hospital. That includes basically the maintenance of the building, which is sort of the HVAC systems, the building structure, elevators, sort of the structure of the building. They are also going to be taking on housekeeping, laundry and

linen, security and surveillance, as well as catering. These are currently things that are provided by different contractors that are currently engaged with the existing Stanton facility.

In our agreement with the proponent, we do have standards and agreements in place articulating the quality and the expectations on their side as well as on our side. We will be maintaining and monitoring those things on a regular basis to ensure that we are getting quality laundry and linen, quality housekeeping, quality security, as well as quality catering. This has actually created an opportunity for us to work with our future partner in the delivering of things like catering to incorporate things like traditional foods and traditional menus.

It has created a lot of opportunity for us to do some things in a different way and really focus on the end results. We are excited by those opportunities, but of course, absolutely, without question, it will require constant monitoring to make sure that they are complying with the expectations of our agreements.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Sorry, Mr. Vanthuyne, your time is up, but if you would like, I could put you down on the list again. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 34 I see there is a mental health and addictions information system. It is a new project, and it is scheduled to be completed in 2021. I am assuming this is some sort of electronic database. Just to begin, if the Minister would not mind giving the House a description about what this information system is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, currently when it comes to charting and whatnot around mental health issues faced by residents who are engaged in our facilities such as Stanton or our others, we are using paper forms at this point in time. We need to move away from paper.

There was a review done by an expert panel that indicated that we need to really move forward and have an electronic record system here to focus on this particular area. There are a number of options that we need to explore. We do have electronic medical records, and it is in this budget as well that we are rolling out. We are hoping to have that done shortly.

We are not 100 per cent sure whether that system will be able to incorporate this. It may. It certainly is a possibility, but we need to put something in place to make sure that we can accurately get that

information into a system that is usable by practitioners in order to help provide a better degree of care to our residents who are struggling with mental health issues.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This brings up a lot of issues. There are a lot of privacy issues. I know there must be a privacy impact assessment done as per the Health Information Act.

There are also issues with medical records, electronic record systems in the territory that I have encountered. There is a variety of them. There are different access points to these. I know that we have a lot of locums in Hay River, and sometimes they just do not happen to have the password to the medical record system that they need at the time when they are seeing a patient, and so the patient repeats all this information. The Minister has stated that this might be integrated into one of the existing or a new electronic record system.

I guess my question is: how integrated will this be? How easily accessible will it be for any practitioner in the territory who needs this information to get this information when they need it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, for many years now we have been moving forward with the implementation of a single electronic medical record system here in the Northwest Territories. We are very close to having that done at a territorial level. All of the information, in, out, to, from, it all has to comply with our Health Information Act to make sure that patients' privacy is protected at all times, and we are monitoring on a regular basis to make sure that there are no breaches. When there are, we have mechanisms to make sure that people are notified appropriately and that their information is not public. People do have to have passwords to gain access to clients for whom they happen to be working.

When it comes to mental health information, we want to have a system that clearly works the same so that the information is an integrated system. We know that EMR might be able to do this, but it is going to require some significant customization if it is the tool that is chosen. If it is not the tool that is chosen, regardless of the tool that is chosen, we do have to make sure that it integrates well with EMR so that we are not duplicating input and duplicating information on a regular basis to make it easier for all practitioners so that they can be familiar with one system, understand that system, and regardless of

where they go in the Northwest Territories, they are faced with the similar portal, similar system, so that it is easy to use. That does not obviously give everybody access to everybody. That is not how health information works. There are privacy limitations. There are passwords. It has to be somebody who you're involved with on a care basis.

Those are the types of things that are happening, and when it come to this one, we cannot tell you today whether we are going to be using EMR, but it is certainly one of the options. Everything that we do in this particular area is going to require significant work and customization to make it seamless.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am wondering why we need a different system for mental health and addictions information. Why can it not just be compiled in the same database that we are currently using? Is this system going to be used to analyze trends? What exactly is the point of an additional system dedicated to just mental health and addictions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I have not been as clear as I had intended. EMR might be the tool, but if EMR is the tool, then we will have to make some significant modifications and customizations to allow it to collect the data appropriate or consistent with the challenges people face around mental health.

What we need to do, and I think it is the appropriate thing to do, is to do some costing, do some planning, do some studying to determine which of the models, and right now, we are aware of at least nine options that are available to us. Three of them look feasible. We are going to continue to look at those three options and see which one is going to give us the best results for our patients, including tying in and working well with patient records, which is EMR.

It could end up easily being EMR, but we need to finish that work, and we need to get that done. It was a recommendation from the expert panel that was done a number of years ago that this is something that is important. We are hearing from the staff that they want it. It is going to help improve tracking and monitoring, but more importantly, it is going to help the patients because they will not have to continue to repeat their stories.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Clearly this is in the early stages. Similar to my last question: is part of the plan to analyze trends and mental health and addiction across the territory and then use that information to plan appropriately for treatment, et cetera? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Any eHealth system that you use generates reports of things that you can analyze to help you make evidence-based decisions. Keeping in mind small jurisdictions, we may have to limit some of that information. If the numbers are small and could possibly identify, we will not use data with numbers that low.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Next we have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I want to follow up on something that Mr. Elkin said. My understanding is that the hospital construction will be complete by the end of the year in 2018, and the move-in will happen six months later. I am wondering why it takes six months between the end of construction and the beginning of the move-in. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we plan cautiously when it comes to moving into these facilities. The building is going to be built. It is going to be completed by the proponent. We have to go in and test all the equipment, all the medical equipment, and make sure every line that provides or supplies oxygen or other medical gases works appropriately, make sure that every line is checked, every system is verified, and we need to make sure that we give ourselves the appropriate time to make sure that the building is meeting the technical and medical and clinical specifications and requirements. This is, I wouldn't suggest, abnormal; moving into Hay River as an example took a large number of months to make sure that everything was safe and functioning, and the same is going to be true for Norman Wells. We need time to get in and do the verification before we start moving staff and, more importantly, patients into those facilities.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you for that response. At what point does the furniture go in there, and the rooms get set up, and all that sort of thing? Is that within this six months, or is that in addition to it? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we will have staff in the building doing mock runs of processes, mock runs of other things. Some of the structure, furniture, et cetera, will be moved in, but for warranty purposes we would obviously be looking at putting off or moving the substantial amount of the furniture until sort of the last minute in order to make sure that we have insurance coverage and we're not wasting warranty time or insurance time, warranty time on facilities that are sitting in an empty building.

It will progress in, and not all divisions or sections are going to move in at the same time. That would never work. We're going to phase a move-in, so different units at different times. The units that obviously have some crossover, we'll want to coordinate those so that we're moving them in in a coordinated, logical fashion. It will all be planned out, phased out, in light of demands in different units, staffing, equipment, when we want to move those types of things in.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The phased move-in, how long will that take? Thank you.

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

MR. ELKIN: Thank you. The six-month period of operational readiness is, as the Minister mentioned, when we will phase in moving all the programs over, having the staff have the opportunity to run through the processes, having the equipment tested and set up, so that once we get to the targeted first-patient day, which will be, you know, around May or June of 2019, then we can actually then move the patients in; but the staff have to have a chance to run and function in the new facility to make sure everything works as designed, and then we can make any adjustments as needed before we actually move all the patients in.

All the various programs in the building will be moving in, as the Minister said, in phases, and they'll test this department and test that department and make sure that all the systems in the building are running correctly before we actually move any patients in.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry, I don't think my question was clear. I appreciate the need to do the testing and so on, but once the first

patient is moved in, how long will it take to move all the others in? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The intention is for that time period to be very short. Once we get -- say let's talk peds, as an example. We'll have the staff go in; they'll do some test runs in the area. They'll make sure everything's working, and they'll move of the stuff over. Once the first patient day happens, we will be moving over the rest of the material from the peds unit as quickly as possible. It could be a week, but we don't want to have an under-resourced peds unit at any given time. We do have to have some time, but those periods of time from first patient day to all the material in in each unit will be very short.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. For those listening at home, could you please define "peds?"

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Certainly; pediatric unit.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. That will make things a little more clear in Hansard. I see nothing further from Ms. Green. Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to talk a bit about what's not here. Earlier we did talk a bit about some of the long-term care beds that are in this capital plan that we'll be rolling out over the next couple of years, the beds in Hay River and Inuvik. There are also some facilities in some of the communities, the small communities, communities that have maybe 400 to 600 people. One that comes to mind, of course, is Fort Resolution. Fort Resolution has the Great Elders' Facility. The Great Elders' Facility can actually accommodate four individuals living right in the main facility. That main facility now houses social services and some home care.

I'm wondering if the Minister would look at having that place opened up again for residents, older residents, who may not be at the full level where long-term care is needed, but at a level where care is needed, and do the costing on a model such as that. My understanding, at this point, just from the numbers that we've been talking about for elders in a long-term care facility in Hay River, for example, which is generally where Fort Resolution elders go, would cost something in the neighbourhood of \$550,000 to \$600,000 per year. If the department comes up with something that is less cost for individuals who may not need the full long-term care but there's nothing in between, there's nothing in the gap, so right now they go right from their

homes to long-term care, so in order to fill the gap that facility used to house people who were in there prior to long-term care. Some even passed away; they actually went palliative and passed away in that home.

I'm wondering if the Minister would take a second look at that, considering that it would be quite a savings to house people there as opposed to going directly into long-term care. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I will note that that is more appropriate for the next activity summary. Seeing that, I'd like the Minister to keep that question in mind, and I will call the first activity summary, then we can move on to it and the Minister can answer your question, if that's appropriate. Mr. Beaulieu, do you have a comment?

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I apologize for that. Mr. Chairman, on the administrative and support services, the same system the previous Member spoke of, the mental health and addictions information system, on the detail it indicates clinical data from mental health patients. I'm just wondering if that includes addicts as well. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, all of them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my questions would be for the next section, so I can wait.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Seeing nothing further, I will call this section. Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, infrastructure investments, \$32,442,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will now turn to page 35, with the accompanying information on page 36, and I will allow the Minister to respond to Mr. Beaulieu's first question. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will have to verify with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, but I believe the facility that the Member is referencing is actually an asset of the Housing Corporation, not the Department of Health and Social Services, and it's my understanding, it's certainly before my time

but it's my understanding that that was an independent living unit, not a long-term care facility. Certainly not a level 3/4 long-term care facility.

My comments that I've made with respect to long-term care facilities, level 3/4, stand, but the Member is correct. I mean, we want to support individuals to stay in their homes and their communities, which recognizes that there are times when somebody may no longer have some independence; they might have some independence limitations, but they are maybe not acutely ill or limited as a level 3/4 facility requires, which is why the Housing Corporation has moved forward with so many independent living units across the Northwest Territories. Once again, I applaud them for their co-operation with the Department of Health and Social Services in making sure that there's program space and other things available in those facilities.

I'll certainly have a conversation with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to see what, if anything, can be done to that building to see if it can be recommissioned as an independent living unit. I've been in it with the Member, in fact, and it does have programming space and those types of things.

I'm not sure, and the Member probably knows better than I do, what the actual physical status of that building is, whether it would need significant retrofits or repairs, or whether it's something that could just be recommissioned. I'm not certain, but I'll certainly have further conversations with the Member and the Minister to see what, if any, opportunities present themselves in light of the fact that we are moving forward with a continuing care action plan to support people to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the history of this is that there were other communities approximately that size, and some have gone through full long-term care facilities like in Fort Simpson. Others, like Fort Resolution and Deline, were shut down completely, although the unit that's there belongs to the NWT Housing Corporation. I understand that, and I'm satisfied with the response that the Minister has given me on the Great Elders Facility in Fort Resolution. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Anything further from the Minister?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: No, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Nothing further from the Minister. Do we have any further comments on this section? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'll just preface my questions with I'm trying to understand the decision to locate a new long-term care facility in Hay River. Can the Minister or staff tell me: what is the demand going to be from the South Slave for long-term care beds? I think it's probably in the NWT long-term care program review. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, very rapidly yesterday I went through a list of our progress or our intention to move through to accommodate the 258-bed shortfall in the Northwest Territories by 2026. Just for the record, we know that there's a continuing demand that goes beyond 2026, but we're using a 10-year planning horizon at this point to help us start to address the shortages.

What we know is currently the greatest demand is in Yellowknife. Then the area where we had the second-highest level of demand, and one of the more complicated areas, is the Beaufort Delta. Then the next area is the South Slave and Dehcho. This is where the additional pressures are coming.

2026 is coming very fast; it's nine years, so we have a significant amount of work to do in a nine-year window. We want to maximize the number of beds as quickly as possible, recognizing the different degrees and complexities of build across the Northwest Territories.

We also have to factor in cost. We also have to factor in where we can get some economies of scale and some benefits from opportunities that have presented themselves.

The 72 long-term care beds in Yellowknife is an opportunity that has presented itself as a result of the construction of the new Stanton building and the ability for us to actually occupy more space than I think we thought we were originally going to be able to get in the old Stanton. Basically it's the best price point for moving forward with a large number of beds as quickly as possible, and that is the 72 beds at long-term care.

Our next priority, given the acuity, we have people living in medicine units, if you will, in hospital units in Inuvik, which is deeply troubling. When we looked at the Inuvik issue, we realized that we have to do significantly more work there. We have to do permafrost studies and other things to determine current or best locations. We need to understand where we're building. We also have to think about location. There is some desire to put it close to the old hospital, and the reality is that might not be practical.

We've put some money in this budget so we can do that work and do some permafrost study, and do some site location surveys and figure out where the best place is for that to be. We'll come back in the capital plan once we have that information because that will help us develop a costed plan.

We have to make sure that we're addressing the problem at a territorial level and not just as a Yellowknife level, so then we had to look at the next two high-pressure areas, which are Hay River as well as Fort Simpson.

In Fort Simpson we were planning to move forward with a health centre, but in light of the long-term care report and the fact that in Fort Simpson we thought the building was worse off than it was; and it's not. We have some life left in that building, so we want to make sure that when we're moving forward with Simpson we have a plan that's really going to meet the needs of the community, which means a possible combined health centre/long-term care facility much like the one we have in Norman Wells. We want to keep moving forward with that planning.

That leaves us with Hay River. Right now we know that in Hay River, given the demands there, it's about 36 beds, which was what was identified for Hay River. When you look at that, we've got an easy build environment. We think we can get affordable product in there. We think we can get 48 beds in there probably at one of the best price points in the Northwest Territories. That's going to be able to deal with a lot of demand in the South Slave.

We have come up with the order based on all those scenarios and all the information provided. We believe by going 72 in Yellowknife, 48 in Hay River, 48 in Inuvik, and 48 in Simpson with the health centre, we're going to get the best value for money and move forward.

Now, Mr. Beaulieu did ask me a question one time, which was, "Why are you not doing 36 beds in Hay River? Why are you doing 48?" The bottom line is, in our analysis, what we learned is the best model for care is 24-bed pods. We could build 36 beds in Hay River to meet Hay River's 2026 needs, but if we do that, we're going to have to go away from the 24-bed-pod model, which gives us the best price point and the best value for money. Then we're going to have to look at making an expansion in there to take us to 2034. We're a little ahead on numbers in Hay River, but basically it gives us the best price point; it allows us to continue to move forward with 24-bed pods; and it moves us away from the mistake we've made in the past, which was making facilities that are too small where we're not getting best bang for buck. If there is anything else, let me know.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. In the interests of time, I would ask you to tighten up the answers going forward here. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I thought I was long-winded. Sorry, I appreciate the complete answer from the Minister.

Where I was trying to go with this is I want to understand how the decision was made within the South Slave to locate at Hay River versus, say, Fort Smith.

As I understand it, the demand in the South Slave is going to be 45 beds; Hay River, 31; Fort Smith, 14. When I look at the long-term care program review, I see that now there are 28 beds in Fort Smith and there are 25 in Hay River. If this 48-bed facility in Hay River goes ahead, what happens to the people in Fort Smith who need long-term care? Are they going to have to move to Hay River? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize for all the detail, but there are times when the detail is important, so it's important for me to get that information out.

The bottom line is, if you look at the Fort Smith numbers, they are significantly lower than the Hay River numbers. If we went ahead and moved the small number of beds in Fort Smith, we would be reliving the same mistake we've made before, which is building facilities that are too small to gain real economies of scale, and it's going to cost us more money in the long run. Building 24-bed pods gives us the ability to get significant economies of scale, have a staffing model that makes more sense and is more logical, and gives us better bang for buck. I do remind the Member, however, that this is a 10-year window horizon we're looking in, but the problem goes beyond 2026 into 2034.

I would suggest, and I believe it would be appropriate, that in our next phase of planning we would be looking at communities like Fort Smith and those other communities where we aren't moving forward immediately. You know, in Norman Wells we've just built a new facility, and this is indicative of the problem we had, the day we opened we were four beds short. We need to have planning horizons; we need to plan appropriately; and we need to take advantage of economies of scale and models that give us best bang for buck. The model that we presented gives us best bang for buck. It does leave us open for Fort Smith in the next phase.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I get that the Minister is very knowledgeable about this and he's committed that we're going to get some long-term care beds; that's great. I'm just trying to understand better the decision to locate the facility in Hay River versus Fort Smith.

I understand that there's some kind of data that talks about a price point of 24 beds and 48. If he can provide, and it doesn't have to be here, some more detailed analysis of these price points and how we can start to build smaller facilities to meet the needs in our smaller communities, and we've heard that in this House over the last couple of days, I'd be interested in seeing that, and maybe that has to happen in the next 10-year phase.

If he can provide some data, some information, about these different price points and models and when we're going to get to the smaller communities so that people can age in their own communities, if he could provide that, and if it has to be offline that's fine, that would be great. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I've already committed to committee in an in-camera briefing that we had that we would provide them with our document that clearly articulates our plan moving forward with colour photos and all the charts and graphs that you want.

I just want to caution the Member: there is no intention at this point in time to make long-term care facilities in our smaller communities. I think I've articulated a number of times why, when it comes to a long-term care facility where you have level 3/4 patients with high needs who require 24/7 care, there is not really the capacity to safely do it in smaller communities, which is why we're working with the Housing Corporation to have independent living units in smaller communities around the Northwest Territories.

There will be a plan to accommodate the 2034 needs. We will always be reassessing those numbers to make sure we're on track and get the benefits of the support mechanisms we're putting in to help people age in their communities and their homes. I have made a commitment to make that available to committee members. Once we get it all put together in a readable format, I'll be sharing that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly, your time is up. I see nothing further on this activity summary, so I will call it. Health and Social Services, community health

programs, infrastructure investment, \$11,645,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please return to page 32, the departmental total. Health and Social Services, total capital estimates, \$44,087,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you to the Minister. Thank you to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Committee, we have agreed to next consider the NWT Housing Corporation. I will let committee know this is an information item only; nothing in this section is voteable, but I will still allow discussion.

Minister, do you have any witnesses you would like to bring into the Chamber?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I do.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Mr. Tom Williams; he's the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. On my right is Mr. Jim Martin; he is the vice-president of finance and infrastructure services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Cochrane, and welcome to the witnesses. The NWT Housing Corporation can be found on page 71 of the capital estimates. Any general comments on the NWT Housing Corporation from committee? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have a general question, and the question is this: a number of the housing authorities had surpluses over the last number of years and there was some work going on for the Housing Corporation to work with these authorities to spend their surpluses, and I would like an update on whether an agreement has been reached on how those surpluses can be spent and what the parameters are around that. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have been working diligently with the local housing organizations to address the surpluses. In my personal opinion, I don't think it's appropriate that Housing has surpluses when we have such dire need for housing within the Northwest Territories.

To date, the only one that we actually came to a firm agreement on was with the Yellowknife Housing Association, who had a surplus of \$600,000, and they will be working in partnership with us to develop single units within the community, and we are still working with the other ones. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I hear the Minister saying is that it is acceptable for the housing authorities to use their surpluses on construction. Do I have that correctly? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, at this point it is okay for them to use them on construction as long as they are within our business plan and as long as they're still meeting the needs within the population. They can't build and just do some kind of initiative on their own; it has to fit within the model of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: I thought I was on board, but then in the second half I kind of fell apart. They can use it on construction to address the waiting lists that they have in their communities. Would that be a permissible use of the surplus? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, they can use their surpluses to replace public housing units or to do major M and I to units that are in their communities. Or if they have a new project, then they would have to work in partnership with us to get the okay to do that.

For example, they couldn't say that we're going to build a complex that is going to address the highest income earners within the Northwest Territories; they would have to fit within the mandate of the

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Would you please clarify M and I?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. M and I means modernization and improvement, so it's basically repairing of units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Where I'm going with this is that the availability of units is an issue in some of the communities which may also have surpluses. What I understand is they can't build any additional units to address the needs on their waiting lists, but they can replace existing units or repair them. Is that the situation? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct; they cannot build additional units unless they are on our radar to be done. In every community we have a number of housing units that actually are unfit to put more money into, and so therefore within most every community we have needs for additional builds, but they would not be increasing the stock number, they would be replacing units that are on the books that need to be replaced. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concern is that, we'll take Yellowknife Housing Authority as an example, they have an extensive waiting list. There are not enough units. They need more units. As I understand it, most of those units are in buildings, also.

How would that work in Yellowknife, where mostly people are in buildings and not in independent units? How could they replace or repair units in those circumstances or spend in ways that meets the needs of their waiting list, which is primarily single people? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, in the tax market communities there is a little bit of a luxury that those communities do have, such as Yellowknife, because there is a market rental so other agencies or people within the communities that actually provide housing period. Within the communities, such as Yellowknife, as the

MLA said, currently we lease a lot of units with private landlords, so the building of an eight-plex for the 2018-2019 fiscal year would still accommodate the need because we would free up more of the normal market housing and still be able to address the public housing need within the community. It isn't increasing our stock; it's just opening up the market more and allowing more vacant units to be able to be accessible to the public in general. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How is the Housing Corporation helping the Housing Authority to address the need for units that are for single people in Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the case of the Yellowknife Housing Authority, they came to us with a proposal. We actually agreed to partner with them in that proposal, and so the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be putting in financial contribution towards building the units for singles within this community of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is this the eight-plex that the Minister just referred to? I am not sure what units are going to be built, how many, or that kind of detail. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is correct. It is the eight-plex that we are talking about. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister. Those are all my questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next I have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I would like to start with page 72, where it looks like the spending by the Housing Corporation might be in decline. Maybe I can start with that. Has the spending on capital by the Housing Corporation declined now over a series of years? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. The Minister has indicated that Mr. Martin will field this. Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of funding for the capital plan for the Housing Corporation, in the last couple of years, the Housing Corporation was in receipt of budget 2016 federal funding under the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement. This provided incremental funding for the Housing Corporation to supplement our capital plan. The funding for 2018-2019 for capital investment has yet to be confirmed, as we continue to work with the federal government in reviewing the various funding pots. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Sorry, I was waiting for the microphone to come on. Let us get this clear, then. We are not cutting back our funding because the feds are coming back in again? Is that what I am hearing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Housing Corporation has historically set aside a base capital allocation of \$15 million, and has continued to do that consistently for a number of years. This \$15 million is funded through various sources of funding that we receive as revenues for the corporation, including GNWT contributions. When we do receive the additional federal funding for capital investment, that enables us to supplement that \$15 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that answer. How long has the Housing Corporation's capital been capped at \$15 million? Thank you.

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

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to point out in terms of the financials being presented in 2017-2018, that column there does include carry-overs and deferred projects from the previous year as well. That is what it brought up to the \$40 million for investment. What we have in there is our \$15 million base and the additional projects that were funded in the previous 2016-2017 year that are being completed in 2017-2018. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That answered one of the other questions I was going to have. How long has this \$15 million allocation for capital within the Housing Corporation been pegged or capped at \$15 million? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$15 million has been the same for many years, in all honesty. The reality, though, is that the capital is one small piece of the financial allocations that we provide. We provide \$15 million, but in total we spend \$132 million. A lot of our actual work is done in the operating and maintenance in the mains that come in later. A lot of the work that we do in communities is actually retrofitting; so upgrading and renovating units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I recognize this is some sort of balancing act between maintaining your units and trying to build new ones, but if we have got the capital for new ones or even maintenance and so on capped for a long time, that is probably not where we should be in terms of housing.

When I look at the list of projects on pages 73 through 75, I do not think there is actually any new construction. We have a list of, like, 35 projects here, and they are all retrofits or replacements. There is not one new unit being constructed by the Housing Corporation in this year. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The list of projects where they do say "replacement" are actually new builds. We have within this proposed fiscal year coming up, we have a total of 21 public house replacements. There will be 21 new housing units on the ground where the units that are currently there are not usable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That is helpful, but we are not actually expanding our housing stock in any way. When it says here "replacement," we are replacing a unit that is not as derelict in the community. We are not actually expanding our

housing stock in any ways. Is that the case? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right across Canada, most jurisdictions actually have a halt on because of the declining CMHC funding that was announced many years ago, as well. All jurisdictions have been negotiating with the federal government to reverse that decision so that we can get funded for the operating and maintenance of units.

Within those negotiations, the federal government has agreed to put a halt on it temporarily, but that is not a permanent decision by them. That is why I am looking at different initiatives to move more people into home ownership. Through the lease-to-own, we will be able to increase the stock so that we can actually put more public housing units. By moving people out, it is an internal shuffle where we will be able to actually increase the amount of housing that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation provides.

However, we do have to live within our means, because we need to be able to pay for the operating and maintenance of these units if and when the federal government says they are coming right out and they are not giving any money for operating and maintenance in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I have two or three comments here. That is good news that CMHC has halted its declining capital infusion. That is very good news, but that is not an excuse for us not to be spending more money on our housing, period.

Lastly, I know that our Cabinet spends a lot of time talking about federal projects, federal funding. Most of it is around big capital projects such as dams and roads, and I want at least as much emphasis on the social side. The Minister knows my views on this very well, and I have expressed them in the House. You have to be expending at least as much effort on the social infrastructure needs of this territory as the physical and resource development side of infrastructure.

I continue to support the Minister going to Ottawa to get more money for housing as opposed to roads. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do not expect a response.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I will allow the Minister to respond if she likes. There are 40 seconds left on the clock.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am on it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I am going to talk about something that is not in here right now, and it is the scheduled five market rent units that are supposed to be coming into Fort Simpson. I received an e-mail that it may be changing. Can the Minister advise me what is happening with those units? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are working with the contractor to try to get the units into the communities. At this point, that is what I can say. We are trying to work as hard as we can to actually get the units into the communities as soon as we can. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I heard something a little bit different. I heard that those units may not be used in my riding, and somebody else may be building something else. Is this what is going to be happening, and what will be happening to those units if they are not coming into Fort Simpson? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Martin.

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

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now, in the NWT Housing Corporation's capital plan, we have included the delivery of 12 units, market units, to Fort Simpson, and two of those market units are going to be fully installed and ready for occupancy by October of this year. The remaining 10 units, as the Minister alluded to, these units are now under review. We are currently working with the contractor in terms of timelines for those remaining 10 units. That is basically where those 10 units are at at this time. Further updates will follow.

In terms of the Housing Corporation's work with private industry, we also wanted to take an opportunity to update in this area, as well. The Housing Corporation has a rental housing in rural and remote areas program. Under this program, the Housing Corporation has approved the allocation of

\$300,000 in 2017-2018 to support private developers in Fort Simpson to deliver additional units to help address the need for market units in that community. The expectation is that the private developers will move out right away with the delivery of three duplexes for the community. The balance of the duplexes, whether they are new construction or renovation of existing units, additional delivery will follow. We do not have exact timelines for those as of yet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank Mr. Martin for that. I actually thank the Minister and the department for meeting with the local contractor. I think that has been a very positive move. I give credit where credit is due, and I would like to thank you guys for working with him. I guess I am trying to understand. These other housing units, there are five other ones, basically two duplexes that are together, the units are together. Are they going to be coming into Fort Simpson, or are we going to be able to allocate these units to another community that is in higher need? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are still under contract to deliver those units to Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that answer. Just in regards to Fort Liard, again I have to give credit to the department. They are removing units. They have given a contract to Beaver Enterprises, for which I thank them very much, that they are removing that. However, when are these units going to be replaced in the capital planning? Because I do not see any replacements of those units in here presently. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, the Housing Corporation has \$105,000 set aside for major maintenance and improvement work. However, based on a current assessment of the condition of the units in Fort Liard, the methodology that the Housing Corporation follows in terms of prioritizing investment amongst our existing housing units, Fort Liard at present has not been prioritized for investment for 2018-2019 in relative terms to the other communities. However, it is certainly

something that we do assess on a yearly basis. For units that are in Fort Liard that do meet the investment criteria, we would certainly consider those units at that time.

Just to point out a couple of other notes here, right now, the units in Fort Liard have an average unit condition rating of 92 per cent, so they are still in fairly good shape from a unit condition rating assessment perspective. In the last five years, the Housing Corporation has delivered two new PH units, PH replacement units, for the community of Fort Liard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will try to be quick. There are a whole bunch of units that were taken away. There were units that were in very poor condition that were removed by Beaver Enterprises, and the Housing Corporation worked with them to get it done. When we say 92 per cent, are we including those units in the process, or is it the ones that presently exist? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We manage each community within a certain allocated inventory, so the units that were actually demolished would have been replaced, probably prior to the demolition or at the same time. Therefore, the actual housing units within that community would remain stable. There would be the exact same amount as previous. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that clarification. I will go count the houses, and then I will subtract them on my next tour. In regards to tiny homes, I have heard this numerous times. I have been in my communities, and, when I am seeing third-generation people are living in the homes, from grandparents to grandkids, I have had young people look at me and ask about tiny homes and what we are going to be doing with that. Can the Minister confirm that the Housing Corporation is looking into this? Then my other question, because I only have 30 seconds left here, is: will she make a commitment to work with the community of Fort Liard to have a meeting to discuss this? There is a contractor wishing to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we are not averse to tiny homes. In fact,

we have a home that is being designed in Aklavik, actually, in a partnership with the Aboriginal government. They are looking at a one-bedroom design that is only 300 square feet but still meets the national building code. We are looking at partnerships with communities if they want to move into that. I am very respectful of communities, and so, hopefully, municipal governments or Aboriginal governments would come to us if they are looking at a tiny home concept, and it would be a partnership model versus the Housing Corporation going in and just putting a whole bunch of tiny homes all over. I think it is better to work in conjunction with the communities on that. I would be more than willing to meet with any community, in fact, including Fort Liard. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Cochrane. Time has expired. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Housing Corporation initiated a celebrated deal of having northern businesses construct a number of housing units, and I would like to ask the Minister how the progress is going on that work. I believe it was around 50 units that were selected to be built here in the North, by northern contractors. What is the status of that work? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation does try to support northern businesses taking care of northern housing, and so we are working with the contractor still, to this date, to push those units forward. We actually were supposed to meet with him today, but I believe that will now be tomorrow because of staffing. It was to build 45 units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of those 45 units, how many have been completed? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seven are at the state of partially completed, that there are just a few last touches to do, and then there is a number of them that are actually at various stages of construction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for that response. Is the Housing

Corporation pursuing other capital projects with Northern contractors along the same lines as this deal? Is that feasible for the foreseeable future as we continue to build public housing units? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. All new builds are now with northern manufacturers or northern builders. No new builds are being done from the south. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and that's good news, and I hope that policy continues as we move forward. There are a number of Kam Lake businesses that are quite skilled in this field, and it's good to see work flowing directly to northern manufacturers and northern businesses; it creates growth and jobs in our communities. I'd like to thank the Minister again for taking the Housing Corporation in this direction and investing in the NWT. Nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you for the compliment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Seeing no one further on the list for comments, Mr. O'Reilly, we are doing one round here but I'll give you another shot. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. It's a simple question, I guess, for the Minister: when she goes to Ottawa, do we have a proposal, a plan, for housing that she can give to Ministers to say this is what we need and we've got a plan to fill it?

This sort of harkens back to the motion that was passed in this House calling on the corporation to develop a plan to reduce our core housing needs by 2 per cent per year. What can the Minister give to a federal minister to show what our needs are, what our plan is to deal with housing, other than a long list of sorry statistics? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have a partnership with all three territories, so we have provided to the federal Minister a tri-territorial proposal. We have been successful in actually advocating for the needs of

the Northwest Territories and the other two territories, which is shown by the commitment for \$300 million over 10 years that is already designated for the territories.

There have been other pots that are going to be designated just for the Northwest Territories, so we have secured quite a bit, and we've also written a letter. The National Housing Strategy, we've met with the federal Ministers at the FPT meeting, which is federal-provincial-territorial meetings. We've met with them; they gave us a deadline to get in letters to them specifically for our provinces and territories. We have submitted a letter on behalf of the Northwest Territories on its own, aside from the tri-territorial that we are working on. We are working hard to try to make sure that the National Housing Strategy addresses the needs of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. This isn't a mid-term review.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: It isn't?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I said it isn't the mid-term review. You don't get to talk about your qualifications. Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the efforts of the Minister, and as I recall, of the \$300 million that was given to the three territories, our portion was rather miniscule; all we got was \$30 million.

If the Minister could share a portion of the tri-territorial submission, the letter that was given, that would help convince me that we've actually got a plan or something to give to the federal Ministers to show what we need in terms of social infrastructure investment. We seem to have all of these projects and proposals off the shelf that we can give for roads, whether it's Slave Geological Province, whether it's the Mackenzie Valley Highway, connecting the hydro grid to Saskatchewan, but we don't seem to have anything for housing.

If you can share those submissions with the Regular MLAs, and where's the plan for housing that we can give to the federal government? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Within the last letter that we wrote specific for the Northwest Territories, we did identify that we would need around \$100 million to be comparable to the money that was received by the Government of Nunavut. I will take the request back to Cabinet and after Cabinet's decision I will make a decision on whether we can provide the letters and the

territorial working relationship with standing committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know I'm pushing the envelope here. Lastly, then, the motion that was passed in the House to develop basically an action plan to reduce our housing core needs, when are we going to see that action plan? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are just doing the final touches, putting the pretty pictures on, and it will be tabled during this session. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. During the planning on retrofits, upgrading, the list of units identified, is it a practice of the department to upgrade with additional features to include energy efficient appliances and techniques, for example? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. All of the new builds actually meet the Energy Guide 80, which is a high standard of energy efficiency. We also partner with CMHC, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, on any energy efficiency initiatives that they have and we work closely with the Arctic Energy Alliance as well to see if there are areas that we can either support them or use their programs to support residents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My last question is: are there any pilot-type projects under way or being planned? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister. The Minister has indicated that Mr. Williams will field this. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, certainly energy efficiency in our retrofits for all our houses, new houses and retrofit houses is a priority for the corporation with the high costs of energy in the North. Part of our strategic renewal, we're going to have some new programs, some new initiatives that will have an emphasis on energy efficiency for homeowners. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Williams. Seeing nothing further from committee, I will call this. I will remind committee this is an information item only, it's not voteable, but for posterity I will call the department. NWT Housing Corporation, total capital estimates, \$23,762,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree this concludes our consideration of the NWT Housing Corporation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you to the Minister and to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you, committee. We have agreed to next consider the Department of Finance, which begins on page 26 of the capital estimates. Minister, do you have witnesses you wish to bring in to the Chamber?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the House. Minister, would you please introduce your witness for the record.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with me I have Mr. David Stewart, who is the deputy minister of the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will open up the floor to general comments from committee. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Earlier in my general comments on the overall capital budget, I suggested that there be a part of the capital budget where compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy is actually discussed and the calculations are provided so we understand what the envelope is for capital spending. The Minister, as I recall, committed to provide that to Regular MLAs sometime during the business plans. That's like in November. Could the Minister maybe expedite that a little bit? Presumably they've already done all this work. Is there some way we could get it sooner than the business plans? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in the spirit of cooperation and transparency, I will endeavour to get that

information to the Members before the business plans. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's great and, of course, I'm going to say the sooner the better, but I'll leave it to the Minister and his staff to prepare it. We've got it before us so the work has already been done internally, presumably.

Can I get a commitment out of the Minister that, in future infrastructure acquisition plans or capital budgets, that will become a regular component of the document with future capital budgets? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we could probably provide that during the review of the capital plan. I'm not sure about putting in the actual document, but we will provide it to committee during the actual business plan and then make a decision as to whether we put it into the document.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'm getting half of what I want. This is an important policy. We passed it in the House, as I seem to recall, so showing some accountability to the public that we actually live by this policy would be helpful in the future capital budgets, but I'm going to leave it to the Minister. Maybe we can work that out with the next one. It looks like he wants to say something so I'm happy to get his comments. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can't give him all he wants right away. We'll give him half of what he wants for now, and when we are discussing the terms of the business plans, or capital plans, and that is what I should have said before instead of business plans, then we can make the determination there as to whether we included it into the capital planning document. I am sure we will get some feedback from committee, and we will take that into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. I know that we have moved the finance

department along because they do provide that information now in the public accounts, but that is a retrospective look at how we have actually done with the Fiscal Responsibility Act. I think that it would be good financial practice and good public policy to actually include it in future capital plans. We are having the debate and discussion, and that is good, so we have moved the department along a little bit.

I do have one other particular question about something that is not in the capital budget. It goes back to the Minister's statement earlier today in the House about completion of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Project. Some Members might recall, there was in previous capital budgets, and maybe it was in the O and M, some allocation for something called the Western Geomatic Centre. That was to help us capitalize on the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line, but that was delayed by Cabinet, this Western Geomatic Centre. I do not seem to find anything, maybe I am looking in the wrong part of the budget, but there does not seem to be anything in the budget about that Western Geomatic Centre to help us capitalize on this Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line. Does Cabinet ever intend to bring that Western Geomatic Centre back into the capital budget in some way? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is right, correct. We actually delayed it for a little while, and I think it is within one of the other department's O and M budget, but I will confirm that, and as we go through the business plan I will see if it is the plan of the department to bring it back through the business planning process and back into the O and M budget. The Member is correct. It was delayed for a while. The intention was, I think, to reinstate it. I will follow up, and then we will have an opportunity to go through the business plan, but if I can get some information before that, I will share it with the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the commitment by the Minister, and I will encourage him to get that included in the business plans. I do not know if it is ECE or through the Aurora Research Institute or some other department. We have got the line finished. Let us invest the money to make sure that we fully benefit, and that the region fully benefits from this, and I do not have to tell that to the Minister because it is his riding. Thanks, Mr. Chair. That is all I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Did you want to comment, Minister McLeod? No? Okay. Moving on. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to talk a bit about the Family Support Centre in Hay River. It is an organization that provides shelter and assistance to women and children who are escaping family violence. The reason I bring it up during this department is because they are in need of a new facility, and that facility would involve federal funding, and the Department of Finance would be the department who would assist the facility and go after that funding.

Many of the Ministers and myself have toured this facility. The facility they were in until recently, it has a lot of issues, and it is actually slated for demolition. They have gotten a plan in place to build the new facility. They have applied to the federal government for funding to demolish, and then prepare the site, and they have moved into a temporary site provided by the Town of Hay River. The temporary site provides a third fewer beds than the shelter used to, and right now, they are sort of in limbo. They are in a temporary site. They need a new facility. They have been doing a lot of work themselves. They are getting a plan together. They are raising funds, and essentially what they need is a 25 per cent contribution coming from their own fundraising from the GNWT, whoever it might be, and they need that so that they can approach the feds and get the other 75 per cent of the contribution.

I know this has been brought to the Minister's attention, and I was wondering: has the department looked into this, and have they reached out to the family support centre? Have they reached out to the federal government, and would they be willing to contribute this so that we have a functioning family support centre in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe we are exploring some of the federal funding pots and trying to get some of the criteria for there to see if the project would fit under any one of those programs. I believe it does, but I will confirm that. If it does fit under one of their programs, there is usually a cost shared. I think it is 75 per cent federal dollars and 25 per cent territorial contribution, but I can assure the Member and all Members of this House that, if we get some indication of some funding from the federal government, this territorial government would be willing to put in our 25 per cent. Thank you.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister. I appreciate that. Hay River appreciates that. That is a big commitment on the part of the government. I know they are hoping to move forward with this facility by the spring. When can we expect some information back from the Department of Finance on this? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: No concrete timeline right now, but it kind of depends on the federal pots. I will confirm with my colleagues to see if we have reached out to them yet to see if this particular project fits under one of those. There is no solid timeline right now. We have opportunities to meet with our federal colleagues and we will continue to raise the issue. Part of our problem is, the federal government rolls out all these particular pots of money. We have to follow up with them to see what the criteria is. I mean, they make these announcements without some of the criteria attached to them, so we have to wait until they come up with the criteria, but we feel that this project would probably fit under one of the federal government funding pots. As soon as we make any progress on this, or we have reached out and had conversations with federal counterparts, or our officials have conversations with their officials, I will keep the Member and all the Members updated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister. I think I got what I need from that, and so now, no further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Any closing comments to that, Minister McLeod?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Not really. We will just continue to move forward and try and access money, and continue to work with the federal government to actually try and access all pots of this money. One of the reasons we have gone through the exercise, we have gone through in the last couple of years, is to put ourselves in a position where they come to us and say, we have 75 cents on the dollar. Are you able to match it? I would like to be able to tell them that we are, and I think we have positioned ourselves very well to make our contributions to any capital projects, or any funding from the federal government. Thank you.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Do we have any further general comments on the Department of

Finance? Seeing none, we will move to consideration of the activity summaries. The first is on page 27, with the related information item on page 28. Comments or questions? Seeing none, I will call the activity. Finance, directorate, infrastructure investments, \$255,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. The next activity is on page 30, Office of the Comptroller General. Comments or questions? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the integration of health authorities into SAM, is this the last integration for the Department of Health and Social Services authorities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my understanding is this is the last of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services authorities. The Hay River Social Services Authority and Tlcho Community Services Agency are independent of this, so it does not include them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Beaulieu. Anything further on this? If not, I will call this activity. Finance, Office of the Comptroller General, infrastructure investments, \$7,130,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please return to page 26, Finance, total capital estimates, \$7,385,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of the Department of Finance?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you to the Minister and your witness. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witness from the Chamber. Committee, we have agreed to next consider the Department of Justice, which begins on page 49 of the capital estimates. We will defer consideration of the departmental total until after consideration of the activities, but I will open up the floor to any general comments after

I see if the Minister has any witnesses he would like to bring into the Chamber. Minister?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I would like to bring in witnesses, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left is Mandi Bolstad, director of corporate services, and to my right, Martin Goldney, the deputy minister of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Opening comments on the Department of Justice? I see no opening comments from committee. We will begin consideration of the activities. The first activity is on page 51, corrections. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am sure the Minister can guess where I am going to go with this. We have two capital items here: North Slave Correctional Centre Zone 2, building security control system renovations; and North Slave Correctional Centre, building, security control system integration. Let's hear more about that. Can the Minister provide some detail about why these are required and if they are related to the security improvements that are required due to the incident report from last year? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are two major projects we are talking about in this area of security. One is to install fencing in response to the incident, the escape that took place in August of 2016, and the other is to mark the property line of the facility.

With respect to the critical incident response, if I can use that term, that is to secure the yard used for inmate programs. Again, it was obvious that security had to be enhanced after the escape in 2016, and my understanding is that, since that time, this portion of the facility has not been used. A budget was approved for this work, and we tendered the project. However, the bids received were far in excess of the allocated budget. At that point, what was done was that a revised approach to securing the yard is now being undertaken.

The other project was the perimeter fence. As I mentioned earlier today, the project closed on August 29th. The work is being conducted even as we speak and is expected to be completed by mid-October. This was a fence demarcating the facility boundary from the Homes North housing

development. It was a 6-foot-high fence, 220 metres along the west side of the property. As we mentioned, we did go out for tenders, tenders were received, and the work is proceeding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Minister for that detailed response. Unless I am not seeing this clearly, are these fence projects in this capital budget? The two items I spoke to were a security control system integration and building security control system renovations. Are the fences this control system renovations item, or are they the security integration? Am I missing something? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair, I wonder if I might defer that question to Ms. Bolstad. Thank you.

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

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The two capital projects that the Member mentioned are actually enhancements to our security system at the facility that were planned as part of our conversion from an analogue-based system to a digital-based system. They are unrelated to the inmate escape. They have been planned for several years and have phased in over 2017-2018, 2018-2019. The upgrades are to the camera and voice components as well as the door controls. Those are the two differences. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the official from the Department of Justice for that helpful clarification. With this fencing issue that has yet to be resolved, that the tender was not successful, what is the plan to deal with that? Is it to put more money into it so we can get it done, or is it to scale it down into something different? Can the Minister provide some more clarity about what this is going to look and where we will see it? Obviously, it is not in this budget, but where will this House consider that capital project, and how much is it going to cost? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair, I think we are looking at somewhat of a scaled-down project,

but if I might defer to the deputy minister for details? Thank you.

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

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The project is still within the budget and the funds that we have identified. The fact that the tenders came in well in excess of what was expected frankly forced us to go back and look at other options. I am a little constrained in getting into too much detail about some of the security features of the facility in a public setting.

However, perhaps generally what I can say is one of the difficulties with the first design is it would have involved much more extensive need for a concrete footing and placement. When we were frankly disappointed with the results of the previous tender, we asked our experts to reconsider other options. We had some structural engineers come in and look at options that could get the same result without requiring some of the more expensive components of the original plan and original design. I am happy to report that an option was identified with the benefit of that expert review with the engineers.

The other nice benefit is the new plan, because it has changed somewhat, does not run into the same issues around a construction window, with the absence of some of the footings that were there previously, so we do anticipate this tender going out as early as Monday or Tuesday and are hoping that we will get a favourable response. That would still allow construction to happen within this year and be completed over the late fall and early winter. Thank you.

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

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. I have no further comments or questions on this section. I will call it. On page 51, Justice, corrections, infrastructure investments, \$3,889,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. On to page 53, court services, with an additional information item on page 54. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that we are again paying to upgrade the Yellowknife courthouse. This is a leased building, and, over the years, I think we have spent a great deal of money reconfiguring and modifying this building, which is a

shared judicial facility and an office building for the Department of Justice. That can be at cross purposes. Court facilities have higher security demands than, say, an office building, and oftentimes it is difficult for those two neighbouring purposes to share that space and adequately address the security needs of the building. I know this from personal experience. Furthermore, it is an office building that has been modified into a courthouse, so, again, there are a number of technical and security concerns.

I wonder if the Minister has a perspective on whether or not we should continue to invest millions of dollars in a building we do not own or whether or not we should move to a purpose-built facility, a more modest facility than is currently on the books, so we can actually own this building, have it purpose built, have it safe and secured, and separate the judiciary away from the Department of Justice, which is something the judiciary has wanted for quite some time. Does the Minister have a plan to work on a project like that and actually get some not only judicial separation but a more effective structure for financing this important facility for the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair. This is now a 40-year-old building. It was initially built as a courthouse, but my understanding is that it always included office space housing the Department of Justice.

I realize that philosophically that creates some problems in that there should, of course, be a clear division between various branches of government and the judiciary. There have been efforts over the years to promote, if I can put it that way, a standalone courthouse, which would clearly be a good thing. I think we can all say that.

The problem is, as I understand, that years ago when this was looked at, the price was very high. You are quite correct that a lot of money has been put into the building over the years, and those leasehold improvements, as I understand it, have been paid for by the government. I believe our current lease is coming up in a few years.

I think at this point I can tell you that we will be discussing with the Department of Infrastructure this whole issue of our courthouse needs going forward into the future. I do realize that the building is no longer -- it's adequate, but it's probably not the best. This is a live issue with us and we will be discussing it with Infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That seems to be very good news. Can the Minister confirm when the lease is up? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: My understanding is that the lease is up in 2021, but there's an option for a five-year extension to 2026, I assume. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Working with the Department of Infrastructure, as the Minister put it, is that work going to start now? Are we thinking post-2021 or is this still going to be a 10-year process of waiting the lease out? Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I think the plan is, Mr. Chair, to start those discussions fairly soon with the Department of Infrastructure, perhaps in the next six months, by 2018.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm satisfied with that response. Nothing further.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think it's been almost a year and a half now that we have the proud distinction of being the only jurisdiction in Canada without a court library and without any public access to it. The money in this portion of the justice budget for the courthouse structural upgrade, is any of that for this legendary public resource centre? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will give some brief outline about the resource centre/library, and then if I may defer to my deputy minister here.

Now, the old library on the first floor is still open to lawyers and others by appointment. I think they've only had one non-lawyer, one or two at most, seeking to get into the library. It's not as though there's nothing there. We are making plans for a resource centre.

Perhaps at this point I could turn the matter over to Mr. Goldney and he could provide some further information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister mentioned, the previous space that was occupied by the library is now serving essentially as a scaled-down resource centre. Members of the bar, as the Minister mentioned, have access and continued 24/7 access with a fob. For members of the public, there's a notice there. Court staff can provide them access upon request, and so they wouldn't have to wait. They would just have to make that request. As the Minister has noted, there's been one person since we've closed the library doors and restricted access who has made such a request.

The plans were always to scale down the physical space itself, and it was tied to the renovations of the courthouse. That budget is there. The challenge that we ran into is that, when we were looking at changes in the lobby of the courthouse, it was quickly identified that there were some structural concerns and upgrades required before we could make the space to provide a more scaled-down physical space for that resource centre. That did, and does, require consideration of further investment, which is part of this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. When can we expect this resource centre to actually open its doors to the public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As mentioned, the current library, of course, is open to the public. Opening a new resource centre will depend on the nature and type of renovations that we decide to do, if any. As has been mentioned, the issue of renovations appears much more complicated than we had originally anticipated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure that was actually an answer. Are we talking about 2019, 2020, 2023, that people are going to have to wait to see what this resource centre is going to look like and have access to it without having to call somebody and arrange for someone to come down and open up a door? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair. The money for the new resource centre, as I understand it, is part of the 2018-2019 budget, but I think the point is that there won't be a period of time where there will be nothing. If we do move to a new resource centre, we're hoping it will be a seamless transition from the old library. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think I've heard the words "seamless transition" from the Minister before in a different context, so I'm not sure I want to go there.

Can the Minister commit to provide a bit more of a plan for what this resource centre is going to look like, when it might be open, and what actually happened with the materials and with the court library? Can he give us a written update? I don't want to prolong this, but can he commit to give us a written update and a plan for the resource centre? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister, the Member is asking for a written update. How do you respond?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, we can provide a written update.

I just want to point out, however, that it's not as though any of the materials in the old library have been disposed of to this point. The full collection is there. It's not being updated as it once was, admittedly, but the old collection is still there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, in giving us that written update, if you can talk about the transition from the court library to the resource centre as well, that would be great. Any idea when we might be able to get that update? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I believe we could get that update quite soon. The complication, as I said, was that the renovations that initially seemed to be fairly straightforward are going to be more complicated, but I will provide the update as requested. Thank you.

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

seeing nothing further from committee. I will call this section. Justice, court services, infrastructure investments, \$800,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. The next activity is on page 55, legal aid services. I see no comments or questions from committee. Justice, legal aid services, infrastructure investments, \$203,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please return to page 49. I will call the department. Justice, total capital estimates, \$4,892,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that we have concluded consideration of the Department of Justice?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you to the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Noting the time, I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Hay River North?

Report of the Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 416-18(2), Capital Estimates, 2018-2019, and would like to report progress; and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do I have a seconder? Member for Nahendeh. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Kay): Mr. Speaker, the orders of the day for Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer

2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 36-18(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to October 3, 2017
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Environmental Protection Act
 - Committee Report 12-18(2), Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning Report on the Progress Review of the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019
 - Minister's Statement 186-18(2), Update on the A New Day Program
 - Tabled Document 416-18(2), GNWT Capital Estimates 2018-2019
 - Tabled Document 419-18(2), Proposed Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019 (Revised)

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Madam Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, September 28, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned 6:01 p.m.