

Duties of the Chair of the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

Background

On April 25, 2023, the Yukon Legislative Assembly adopted Motion No. 711, thereby establishing the Special Committee on the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. The committee's purpose, as set out in the motion, was to report to the Legislative Assembly its recommendations on terms of reference for the electoral reform citizens' assembly.

The committee's report was presented to the Legislative Assembly on October 31, 2023. On November 7, 2023, the Legislative Assembly adopted Motion Respecting Committee Reports No. 8, concurring in the report and the terms of reference for the Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (YCA).

Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

The Yukon Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform shall be a representative body of Yukoners established to recommend a model for electing Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. The YCA shall examine electoral systems and issue a report by October 31, 2024 recommending whether the current model used for electing Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly should be retained or another model should be adopted.

Role of the Chair

Administration of the YCA

The Chair will facilitate the establishment of the YCA and have administrative responsibility for the YCA. Administrative responsibility for the YCA includes, within the budget and other resources provided for the purpose,

- (a) selecting the staff needed for the YCA to carry out its terms of reference, and
- (b) ensuring that the members of the YCA are provided with the resources they require to carry out their duties.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the YCA members' travel and accommodation expenses for meetings of the YCA are reimbursed and members receive an honorarium per meeting day (Category D honorarium for boards and committees with high impact on government or public of decisions or recommendations made).

Citizens' Assembly Membership

The Chair must supervise the selection process for the membership of the YCA. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics should be enlisted to assist in the selection process.

The membership of the YCA will consist of up to two individuals from each of the 19 electoral districts in the Yukon, selected randomly from the 1,793 respondents who

declared their willingness to participate on the YCA in the census of all Yukon residents aged 16 years and over conducted by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics from January 12 to March 5, 2023. There should be an effort to ensure that Yukon's diversity is reflected in the membership of the YCA.

For purposes of this selection process, the following persons are not eligible:

- (a) a person who is not a Canadian citizen;
- (b) a person not resident in the Yukon;
- (c) a person under the age of 16;
- (d) a judge, justice or court referee;
- (e) a member or officer of the Parliament of Canada or of the Privy Council of Canada;
- (f) a member or officer of the Legislature or of the Executive Council;
- (g) a candidate in the last two federal or territorial elections;
- (h) an official representative or agent of a person identified in paragraph (g);
- (i) an immediate family member of a sitting Member of the Legislative Assembly; and
- (j) a current officer or official representative of a registered territorial political party.

One alternate member per electoral district will be identified in case of attrition from the YCA.

Citizens' Assembly Proceedings

The Chair will chair (preside over) the meetings of the YCA and is not a voting member. The Chair may select deputy chairs to assist the Chair to carry out the duties of the Chair.

The Chair must prepare rules of procedure for the conduct of the business of the YCA and present these rules for adoption by the YCA at its first meeting. These rules must be consistent with

- (a) the duties of the Chair, and
- (b) the terms of reference of the YCA.

Decisions on procedure during the proceedings of the Citizens' Assembly must be made by the chair or a deputy chair in the absence of the chair. Decisions of the Chair may not be appealed, but the Chair, or a deputy chair in the absence of the Chair, may request submissions from members of the YCA before making a decision.

The YCA may consult with Yukoners and provide Yukoners with the opportunity to make submissions to the YCA in writing and orally at public meetings.

The YCA may consult with Yukoners by holding public hearings. The YCA may also choose to hear from experts in the field and build upon on the work conducted by the Yukon Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Electoral Reform.

Decisions of the YCA shall be made by a majority of members present, although consensus is encouraged as a goal.

Decisions on procedure during the proceedings of the YCA must be made by the Chair or a deputy chair in the absence of the Chair.

Reporting to the Legislative Assembly

The Chair will prepare the final report of the YCA with its recommendation for a voting system.

The YCA's decision on voting systems must reflect the importance of balance for rural and urban representation. The YCA's recommended model must be consistent with both the Constitution of Canada and the Canadian parliamentary system (Westminster model of parliament).

If the YCA recommends adopting a model that is different from the current model, it must recommend only one such model and provide a detailed description and explanation of the proposed new electoral system in its final report. The YCA's report may suggest wording for a question to be put to the Yukon public, following consultation with Elections Yukon and the Yukon Bureau of Statistics.

The YCA shall present its final report to the Speaker of the Yukon Legislative Assembly by October 31, 2024. The YCA may also issue interim reports.