



# Yukon Legislative Assembly

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35<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HANSARD

**Tuesday, October 11, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: The Honourable Jeremy Harper

# YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 2022 Fall Sitting

**SPEAKER — Hon. Jeremy Harper, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun**  
**DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Annie Blake, MLA, Vuntut Gwitchin**  
**DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Emily Tredger, MLA, Whitehorse Centre**

### CABINET MINISTERS

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
<b>Hon. Sandy Silver</b>	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
<b>Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee</b>	Riverdale South	Deputy Premier Minister of Health and Social Services; Justice
<b>Hon. Nils Clarke</b>	Riverdale North	Minister of Highways and Public Works; Environment
<b>Hon. John Streicker</b>	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Government House Leader Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Public Service Commission; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation; French Language Services Directorate
<b>Hon. Ranj Pillai</b>	Porter Creek South	Minister of Economic Development; Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
<b>Hon. Richard Mostyn</b>	Whitehorse West	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
<b>Hon. Jeanie McLean</b>	Mountainview	Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate

### OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

#### Yukon Party

<b>Currie Dixon</b>	Leader of the Official Opposition Copperbelt North	<b>Scott Kent</b>	Official Opposition House Leader Copperbelt South
<b>Brad Cathers</b>	Lake Laberge	<b>Patti McLeod</b>	Watson Lake
<b>Yvonne Clarke</b>	Porter Creek Centre	<b>Geraldine Van Bibber</b>	Porter Creek North
<b>Wade Istchenko</b>	Kluane	<b>Stacey Hassard</b>	Pelly-Nisutlin

### THIRD PARTY

#### New Democratic Party

<b>Kate White</b>	Leader of the Third Party Takhini-Kopper King
<b>Emily Tredger</b>	Third Party House Leader Whitehorse Centre
<b>Annie Blake</b>	Vuntut Gwitchin

### LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Clerk of the Assembly	Dan Cable
Deputy Clerk	Linda Kolody
Clerk of Committees	Allison Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms	Karina Watson
Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms	Joseph Mewett
Hansard Administrator	Deana Lemke

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Tuesday, October 11, 2022 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.  
We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

**Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Before proceeding with the Order Paper, the Speaker would like to remind members to address each other by their official titles in the Assembly. This should not include adjectives or modifiers that are not members' official titles. During Question Period on Thursday, the Leader of the Official Opposition used the term "the presumed future Premier" when referring to the Minister of Economic Development and the term "interim Premier" when referring to the Premier. In addition, the Premier used the term "the individual who was trying to be the leader of the party" when referring to the Member for Lake Laberge. This is not the way to refer to other members, and I would ask all members to refer to other members by their titles.

**Withdrawal of motions**

**Speaker:** The Chair wishes to inform the House of changes made to the Order Paper. Motion No. 435, notice of which was given on October 6, 2022 by the Member for Lake Laberge, and Motion No. 441, notice of which was given on October 6, 2022 by the Leader of the Third Party, were not placed on the Notice Paper as they are not in order.

As highlighted by previous Speakers — notably, on October 28, 2020 by Speaker Clarke — Standing Order 29(1) of the Standing Orders of the Yukon Legislative Assembly states: "A motion is used to propose that the Assembly (a) do something; (b) order something to be done; or (c) express an opinion on a matter."

Urging the government to recognize certain facts is neither doing something, ordering something to be done, nor having the Assembly express an opinion on a matter.

**DAILY ROUTINE**

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Speaker:** Under introduction of visitors, the Chair would like to introduce Jason Pedlar, Tara Martin, Jasmine Jobson, Rick Smith, Aidan Bell, Doris Marshall-Greenlaw, Janet Kalbfleisch, who is Jason's spouse, his father, Allan Pedlar, and his father's partner, Ingrid Steehouder.

Are there any further introductions of visitors?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I would ask my colleagues to help me welcome a number of visitors we have here today for the tribute to World Mental Health Day. From the Canadian Mental Health Association, Yukon, we have Kim Solonick, a board

member and director at large; we have Coral Voss, the assistant executive director; and Tiffanie Tasane, the executive director.

We also have, from the Second Opinion Society, Vicki Durrant, who is the executive director, and I am expecting — although maybe not here yet from the Sarah Steele Building — Jason McRobb, who works as a cook supervisor there. Thank you all for being here.

*Applause*

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I would like to welcome a constituent and also l'éditrice de *L' Aurore boréale*, Maryne Dumaine. If we could welcome her, please.

*Applause*

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I would ask my colleagues to help me welcome some guests here today for the tribute to the International Day of the Girl Child. We have: Charlie-Rose Pelletier, who is a community organizer for Les EssentiElles; Maryne Dumaine, president of Les EssentiElles; Krista Mooney, justice coordinator for the Council of Yukon First Nations; McKenzie Gill, justice coordinator for the Council of Yukon First Nations; Liz Peredun, executive director for Yukon Women in Trades and Technology; and Natalie Taylor, executive director for the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle. Welcome.

*Applause*

**Ms. Clarke:** I have the pleasure of introducing Monica Batac in the gallery today, from the Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, or YWITT for short. Monica is here as a research lead. Thank you for coming today on the International Day of the Girl Child. Let us give Yukon Women in Trades and Technology and other Yukon women's organizations a round of applause for their important work.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any tributes?

**TRIBUTES**

**In recognition of World Mental Health Day**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I rise in the House today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government to recognize World Mental Health Day, held annually on October 10 to raise awareness about mental health around the world and to mobilize efforts to support those experiencing mental health issues.

Mental health is about our emotional, psychological, and social well-being, and it is an integral part of every individual. The theme this year, "Making mental health and well-being for all a global priority", is particularly resonant in the Yukon.

Worldwide estimates put the rise in both anxiety and depressive disorders at more than 25 percent during the first year of the pandemic. One of the lessons that COVID has taught us is that we must recognize mental health as a part of healthy people and communities.

Our government recognizes the importance of mental health services and is committed to increasing access to mental wellness and substance use services for all Yukoners. Today, I

would like to acknowledge the ongoing work done by Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services staff at the Department of Health and Social Services and the Council of Yukon First Nations, First Nation governments, the Yukon division of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Blood Ties Four Directions, and so many other community and health partners who all work to serve Yukoners. Whether they live in Whitehorse or in the communities, Yukoners can rely on an interconnected network of mental wellness support workers, counsellors, and mental health nurses to provide care.

In February, and again in September, our government, in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations, hosted a mental wellness summit that brought together leaders, partners, those with lived experience from across the territory, and national and international experts to identify collaborative solutions to support communities. Nearly 1,000 people attended these events.

A month ago, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in wellness department collaborated with partners, such as Mental Wellness and Substance Use and the Roots of Hope life promotion and suicide prevention initiative, to host a week of training and activities during Life Promotion/Suicide Prevention Week in Dawson City. As the Roots of Hope program and its partnerships continue to develop, suicide prevention and life promotion projects and initiatives will extend to other Yukon communities. These public events are just a few of the concrete and most visible steps taken by Yukoners to address mental health issues in the territory.

This work cannot be achieved alone, and we will continue to work in collaboration with other government branches, as well as non-governmental organizations and Yukon First Nations in each community, to ensure an effective and appropriate response. I would like to reiterate my thanks to all the people who work every day to support those in need.

Thank you.

*Applause*

**Ms. McLeod:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize World Mental Health Day, which was yesterday, October 10.

Governments, organizations, and individuals around the world are working to help destigmatize mental illness and raise awareness about the importance of promoting whole-body health and wellness. We don't always take the time to check in with people in our lives to see how they're doing from a mental wellness perspective. Physical health is more apparent. It's easier to see when someone is physically not quite feeling well and might need a little extra support.

People around the world have been dealing with a number of challenges the last couple of years that we could never have imagined — challenges that have led to a variety of negative effects on their well-being. COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions have impacted communities in many ways. Isolation, lockdowns, health-related mandates, loss of income, and much more have been faced by individuals across the Yukon.

Add this to stress, illness, life changes, work and family commitments — all can take a toll on the way our body and mind work. According to Government of Canada data, one in three Canadians will experience some form of mental illness or substance addiction in their lifetime. COVID-19 has compounded those stats, which are already incrementally higher in the north.

Yukon is facing a staggering rise in opioid-related overdoses. We're seeing an increase in substance use and addiction, depression, anxiety, suicides, and an overwhelming list of societal problems as a result.

To all Yukoners, take care of yourself. Take the time to check in on your family, friends, children, and peers. The Yukon division of the Canadian Mental Health Association is a good resource for Yukoners looking for mental wellness programs and services. This incredible organization is committed to promoting positive mental wellness through many initiatives and engagements and offers services and supports for those who need them.

Thank you to all those who work to provide mental wellness services across the territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Applause*

**Ms. Blake:** I rise today on behalf of the Yukon NDP in honour of World Mental Health Day. This year's theme is "Make mental health and well-being for all a global priority."

I know that it resonated with so many Yukoners across the territory. From the ongoing suicide epidemic to the still-present opioid crisis, Yukoners are still struggling and are looking for support from this government. In the past year alone, many communities and First Nation governments have declared their own states of emergencies, including the Town of Faro, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation, and many more.

These emergencies were declared in the absence of supports from the Yukon government. While communities have worked hard through difficult times to support one another, they have called on this government to provide them with the resources, mental health care workers, and other supports that they need.

But we have heard from many communities that they feel this government is leaving them behind. Since these emergencies were declared, what work has this government done in partnership with First Nation governments, municipalities, and communities to provide mental health care supports and services to those who need it? How many counselling and mental health positions are still vacant?

This government has talked about reconciliation and indigenizing health care often in the last year. What work has Yukon government done to change the system and incorporate diverse indigenous ways of knowing and being in their programming, services, and work across the Yukon? It has been a year since many of these emergencies were called, but still communities across the Yukon are still being shaken by crisis after crisis. When these crises are ignored and Yukoners don't

get the help they need when they need it, the effects ripple out for generations.

*Applause*

### In recognition of International Day of the Girl Child

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** It is my honour to rise today on behalf of our Yukon Liberal government to pay tribute to International Day of the Girl Child. 2022 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations recognizing October 11 as a day to celebrate the voices of girls, to advocate for their rights, and to reflect on the challenges that they experience due to their gender.

Globally, we know that women and girls were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to education, employment, and support services were interrupted for them. Addressing gender equality is critical to sustainable development, economic growth, and even addressing climate change. Involving women and girls in decision-making creates stronger communities and helps us address the most complex challenges that we face in our society.

It is a meaningful coincidence that, in Canada, International Day of the Girl Child falls one week after the Sisters in Spirit vigil on October 4. This vigil is a time for our community to come together to mourn the indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people who have been lost to violence. Just like the International Day of the Girl Child, the Sisters in Spirit vigil is a call to action. For indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people, violence is significantly more frequent and more severe. It is a systemic crisis and its urgency needs to be taken seriously.

I was honoured to attend the vigil last week alongside many community members and allies for change as we walked from the monument at Rotary Park to a ceremonial fire at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. Thank you to the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council for organizing this event and to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle and the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society for advocating for equality of women and girls. Creating a future in the Yukon where everyone can live their lives free of violence requires commitment and dedication.

As the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate and the co-chair of the Yukon Advisory Committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, I can say, without a doubt, that we are committed to making this change.

It is in the moments of togetherness, like the important vigil that we did last week, that I can actually say, truly, that I feel the strength and resilience of this community. I can feel the momentum for addressing the rights of girls everywhere.

*Applause*

**Ms. Clarke:** Salamat, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to recognize October 11 as International Day of the Girl Child. This day was adopted by the United Nations in 2011, then by Canada in 2012, to celebrate the voices and achievements of girls around the world and to reflect upon the challenges they continue to face because

of their gender. For 10 years, we have celebrated the positive impacts and change that girls have made in our communities, leading the way for future generations of girls and women and for all of society.

Violence against girls and women remains a concern internationally. Physical violence, bullying, sexual violence, and intimate-partner violence continue to disproportionately affect women and girls. Gender inequality is still seen in many areas of the workforce, and although much has been done to tackle the issue throughout many organizations, governments, businesses, and in the education system, girls still view themselves as disadvantaged in a number of areas.

We are so fortunate here in the Yukon to have some pretty incredible organizations that aim to help level the playing field for girls and women in so many ways. I would like to give special thanks to Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, who believe that gender should not be a barrier to pursuing career opportunities and works to increase the number of women in trades and technology jobs. Their youth programming helps to introduce and encourage young women to get into Yukon skilled trades and technology sectors — sectors primarily known to be male-dominated.

Thank you to Yukon Women in Mining for the work they do advocating for the inclusion and empowerment of women in the mineral exploration and development industry. I would also like to thank our women's organizations and equity-seeking groups who do immeasurable work in our community to assist and advocate for women and for our LGBTQ2S+ community.

Girls have the potential to be who they want to be. When we invest in girls today, we invest in future entrepreneurs, mentors, political leaders, activists, innovators, and mothers.

Salamat.

*[Member spoke in Tagalog. Text unavailable.]*

*Applause*

**Ms. Tredger:** I rise on behalf of the Yukon NDP to pay tribute to the International Day of the Girl Child.

From their communities to their places of learning, from their homes to their relationships, girls face violence, poverty, and discrimination. It's even more stark for indigenous girls and girls of colour, girls who are trans, and girls with disabilities.

Girls deserve a safe world to live in, and it is up to all of us to actively work to create that world, but I hope that we don't stop there. Girls deserve so much more than a world that just keeps them safe; they deserve a world that values them and listens to them, a world that believes their voices matter, a world that creates opportunities for them to learn and grow and thrive, a world that celebrates everything that they are.

So, today I want to celebrate each unique and incredible girl across the Yukon. They are leaders; they are activists; they are athletes and artists and scholars and community builders. To each one of you, thank you for everything that you do and everything that you are. I am so excited to see the world you create.

*Applause*

**Speaker:** Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

## **TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I have for tabling a letter to the Member for Lake Laberge in response to the letter that he tabled on Thursday, and it is dated July 27, 2022.

**Speaker:** Are there any reports of committees?  
Are there any petitions to be presented?

## **PETITIONS**

### **Petition No. 13**

**Ms. Blake:** I have for tabling a petition with over 1,900 signatures that reads as follows:

THAT pharmacare coverage amounts have not increased since 1999 and are now insufficient to meet the basic health needs of Yukon seniors, and that many seniors are choosing to forgo critical services and medical treatments due to affordability;

THEREFORE, the undersigned ask the Yukon Legislative Assembly to urge the Yukon government to implement an increase to pharmacare rates in 2022 to reflect current market prices for health care.

**Speaker:** Are there any further petitions to be presented?  
Are there any bills to be introduced?

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### **Bill No. 17: *Clean Energy Act* — Introduction and First Reading**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I move that Bill No. 17, entitled *Clean Energy Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that Bill No. 17, entitled *Clean Energy Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

*Motion for introduction and first reading of Bill No. 17 agreed to*

**Speaker:** Are there any further bills to be introduced?  
Are there any notices of motions?

## **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

**Ms. White:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:  
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to:

(1) adopt a policy of residential power rates for residential properties; and

(2) in accordance with the *Condominium Act* general regulation 5(1)(b), instruct the Yukon Utilities Board to end the practice of classifying condominiums as commercial customers.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the City of Whitehorse to resolve the ongoing environmental and safety issues at 2 Lodgepole Lane in Whitehorse.

**Ms. Blake:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to recruit and hire more qualified counsellors for permanent full-time positions to provide consistent mental health care services to rural Yukon communities by:

(1) working in partnership with local First Nation health directors to better understand the needs of each community;

(2) creating an emergency protocol to provide immediate supports when communities face crises; and

(3) training all mental wellness counsellors to provide care that is culturally appropriate to the diverse needs of all Yukon First Nations.

**Speaker:** Is there a statement by a minister?

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Faro community services building**

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** When we invest in infrastructure, we invest in the success and in the future of our communities. I rise before this Assembly today to celebrate the opening of the new community services building in Faro. According to the latest Bureau of Statistics update, the Yukon's population continues to grow. This growth is not only in Whitehorse, but in many of our communities, including Faro.

The Town of Faro is growing. It's a thriving place to live, and residents need sustainable, local services, including emergency services. Our Infrastructure Development and Protective Services branches work with communities such as Faro to meet their needs and goals.

It was my pleasure to visit Faro on September 8 to announce the official opening of their new community services building. The 1,229-square-metre facility will house emergency and community services and was designed to meet and exceed minimum energy-efficiency standards by 25 percent. The building is home to Faro's municipal fire department, community emergency medical responders and public works team. It includes seven vehicle bays, staff offices, shared meeting rooms, parts and tools storage, a morgue, and decontamination areas.

This facility was jointly funded by the Yukon government and the Government of Canada. The Government of Yukon contributed nearly \$3 million to this project, and the Government of Canada invested more than \$8 million through the small communities fund of the Investing in Canada plan.

Over the past few years, this dedicated group of emergency responders and the entire community of Faro has dealt with an awful lot. The opening of the new building was a beautiful and exciting milestone.

Our government is committed to building healthy, vibrant communities, and we are working very hard with municipalities and First Nations to meet their infrastructure needs so that we can move the territory forward.

The new community services building will contribute to the safety and well-being of all Faro residents for years to come.

Thank you.

**Mr. Hassard:** It goes without saying that the new Faro fire hall and public works building is a very important piece of community infrastructure. The minister has outlined in his statement the valuable services that will now originate from this building to serve the Faro area.

I know that my constituents are happy to have this piece of community infrastructure now available. Such buildings are important to all Yukon communities; however, this project is particularly notable in the Yukon for an interesting reason. It was one of the few projects that was tendered and then cancelled for the bids being overbudget. The Yukon government first tendered the contract in 2019, and when those bids came in overbudget, the government pulled the contract and scaled back the project in order to cut costs. The project was then retendered and awarded at a lower cost.

So, as Yukoners know, there have been numerous projects awarded since the Faro fire hall contract was awarded, and many of those project tenders have come back with costs that are higher, sometimes significantly higher, than the allotted budget, and instead of pulling back those tenders and scaling back those projects, the government has gone ahead with projects that were far overbudget.

So, I'm wondering why the decision was made to retender this particular project. Why was the decision made to scale down and retender the Faro municipal building when there are so many overbudget projects that this government has forged ahead with?

It seems to continue a trend with this government in picking winners and losers, and we have heard many times that every community matters, but yet again, it seems that some communities matter more than others.

**Ms. White:** One of the many special things about the Yukon is the volunteering spirit of Yukoners. Nowhere else will you find such a high number of people working together for the well-being of their communities. First responders are one of those groups, stepping up to do dangerous work to ensure the health and safety of folks living in Yukon's rural communities. My gratitude toward these selfless volunteers is immeasurable. The least we can do is ensure that they have what they need to do the job, so I commend the hard work of the Yukon government employees who played a role in ensuring that Faro received a much-needed community services building. Housing multiple services under one roof with top-of-the-line facilities is a fantastic upgrade for those who work full time and for those who volunteer, and once housing is secured, maybe one day it will even be home to a full-time mental health counsellor or a dedicated social worker.

I look forward to a tour of this new facility on my next trip to Faro. I know that when my colleagues and I were in Faro this summer, the issue of mental health support and the need for housing came up often. One could even say that they are linked. As the minister pointed out, Faro is growing. So has the minister sat at the Cabinet table and encouraged his colleagues to look at the housing that the Yukon government currently owns in the community of Faro? I'm not talking about livable units, Mr. Speaker; I'm referencing the three multi-unit

buildings that sit vacant or the other properties that they own that are empty.

When will the Yukon government make an announcement about housing in the community of Faro, a growing community?

It does make me wonder, though, while the minister stands here today patting himself on the back, what he has said to the other citizens of Keno, Destruction Bay, and others who are, in his very words, living on the fringes of our society. Better yet, what has the minister heard from folks in beautiful rural Yukon? Because for someone who preaches consultation, we can be sure that he's also listening.

So, no one should have to go through losing their home or business in a fire, but try to imagine what it is like living in a community where you know that a fire department won't be able to make it in time if there is a fire. And as this is Fire Prevention Week, can the minister tell us where he is at in ensuring that there are adequate resources in other Yukon communities, specifically Keno, Destruction Bay, and Old Crow?

When can communities expect to see the fire prevention in a box program implemented in their community, one that has been promised by this government?

While we're talking about implementation, where is the government on implementing the 104 recommendations from last year's review of fire suppression and rescue resources distribution?

So, while I'm happy for the Town of Faro, I see that a lot more needs to be done across the territory before the celebrations truly start.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** I thank the members opposite for the response to this ministerial statement this afternoon.

It was great seeing the MLA for the region at the barbecue opening up the Faro fire hall. He cooks a mean burger, and I thank him for his participation this summer. It was nice to see him there.

It was also nice to meet with the community and talk to them about their hopes and dreams for the future and also to celebrate the facility itself, which has, I might say, some of the most incredible piping that I have ever seen in any municipal structure in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there are many needs in the territory, and I thank the Leader of the Third Party for her attempt to expand on this ministerial statement this afternoon. We were focused on Faro, and I know that she has a lot of themes and issues she brought up from around the territory, and I'm happy to have more ministerial statements on a lot of these issues in the coming weeks and days, but right now we're talking about Faro and the community fire hall. I can say that we are committed to building strong communities across the territory no matter where they lie and investing in Yukon families and growing the local economy.

Yukon government will continue to invest in a range of infrastructure projects across the territory, Mr. Speaker. This year alone, we're investing \$70 million to continue a range of infrastructure projects across the territory as we continue to address the deficit created by the Yukon Party.

Through the Investing in Canada infrastructure program, Yukon will see \$600 million in funding over the lifespan of the program for public transit, green infrastructure, as well as recreation and social and cultural infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, we are moving forward on unprecedented investments in infrastructure projects across the territory. Shovels are in the ground and projects are being built. Through these investments, we are providing jobs for Yukoners, creating strong sustainable communities, supporting local businesses, and laying the groundwork for continued economic growth.

Through budget 2022-23, our government is investing: more than \$71 million in repairs and improvements to bridges and highways throughout the Yukon; more than \$51 million to modernize our airports and support airlines across the territory; \$27 million for the Dempster fibre project; more than \$25 million for the Dawson recreation centre; nearly \$11 million for the Resource Gateway projects; nearly \$4 million for the White River community centre; up to \$3.7 million for new boat launches and dock replacements across the territory, something the Member for Kluane has spoken about in the past; up to \$500,000 for a water plant in Burwash Landing; and up to \$26 million for a new Teslin Tlingit Council community hub.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the projects that are currently underway. It is unfortunate, of course, that the Yukon Party did not support the budget, nor these projects, especially after they left an infrastructure deficit in the territory following the years of failed leadership.

Our government will continue to work closely with the Government of Canada, Yukon First Nations, local contractors, businesses, and Yukoners to build projects that create jobs, enhance communities, and help grow our economy.

I want to end by thanking all of the Yukon government departments involved in these projects, along with our partners throughout the territory, including Faro, which we worked very, very closely with to bring in the new Faro fire hall for them. I know that they were very appreciative of the work that we did and the care and consideration we gave in working with our community partners in Faro, and we want to ensure that we continue to build a territory that all Yukoners can be proud of.

**Speaker:** This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Department of Education student data breach

**Mr. Dixon:** Mr. Speaker, on September 15, more than 500 Yukon students who had applied for the Yukon grant were notified that the Department of Education had accidentally released their private information, including their names, dates of birth, and social insurance numbers. The vast majority of these students are at the beginning of their adult lives, and in the words of the Department of Education's letter to them, this breach involves a risk of significant harm to their privacy. Dozens of these students and their parents have reached out to us with significant concerns about this incident and the

department's response. One of the first questions they ask is why it took so long to notify those affected.

Can the Minister of Education explain why the department waited until September 15 to write a letter of notification when the breach occurred on August 24, more than three weeks before?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question and for raising this matter on the floor of the Legislative Assembly today.

I think that this was a very serious situation. The Department of Education absolutely takes protecting the privacy of Yukoners' personal information very seriously. When the breach was identified, the department followed the Yukon government privacy breach protocols, as set out by the ATIPP office. We are fortunate to have contained this breach. The recipient of the information cooperated fully and confirmed that they did not see the e-mail and deleted it without opening it. We certainly acknowledge and know that this is a very stressful situation for those who were involved.

I want to reassure students, of course, and their families that the risk of individuals' personal information being used for identity theft has been mitigated, and we have offered credit monitoring as well.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the recipient fully cooperated with the Department of Education, and the e-mail was deleted without it being opened.

**Mr. Dixon:** I appreciate some of the information that the minister has provided, but my question was simple: Why did the department wait more than three weeks to notify students and parents that their data had been compromised? We're talking about names, dates of birth, and social insurance numbers. Those are pretty serious pieces of personal privacy.

So, the question for the minister is simple: Does she think that the more than three-week gap between the incident occurring and these people being notified is an acceptable length of time?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** As I stated off the top, the Department of Education followed the privacy breach protocol that is set out by the ATIPP office. That process identifies timelines and when folks would be notified. Again, we followed the protocol. This situation has been mitigated. The recipient did not open the e-mail and it was deleted without any breach of the young Yukoners' private information.

Again, our Department of Education takes the privacy of Yukoners very seriously, and we're very happy that we were able to mitigate this situation.

**Mr. Dixon:** So, the minister has said that the reason why there was a more than three-week delay between the event happening and parents and students being notified was protocol. Will the minister agree to review the protocol so that this doesn't happen again?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I have stated that this is a privacy protocol that is set out by the ATIPP office. The Department of Education followed that protocol as it is laid out.



**Question re: Department of Education student data breach**

**Mr. Kent:** I have some follow-up questions for the Minister of Education on the privacy breach. I would actually like to ask about the collection and handling of this private information. It has been reported that a departmental official accidentally sent an e-mail with an attached spreadsheet containing all of this private information. Does the minister think that collecting this type of information and storing it in an apparently easy-way-to-access Excel spreadsheet, which can apparently be accidentally e-mailed, meets the threshold of appropriate management of this type of private information?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** The Department of Education takes protecting the privacy of Yukoners' personal information very seriously. As I stated a few moments ago, this situation was mitigated. A mistake happened, and it is essential that we learn from this and will improve our processes going forward. This will include working with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The department is actively reviewing internal training and processes to prevent privacy breaches in the future.

**Mr. Kent:** Something else that we are hearing about from a number of families is the remedy proposed by the Department of Education and the minister.

What has been offered to these 500-plus Yukoners is one year of credit monitoring with a company called Equifax. We have heard from some students that this service isn't available for people under 18, and some of those affected are under that age. Likewise, many are having issues accessing the service at all. So, does the minister think that one year of credit monitoring with a service that the Yukon government has hand-picked is a sufficient remedy?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** The Department of Education takes protecting the privacy of Yukoners' personal information very, very seriously. We have reached out to each individual.

If the member has information about folks who require more support, we are certainly willing to have that discussion with individuals, but again, the situation was mitigated, and the recipient of the e-mail did not open it, and it was deleted before it was opened. This situation, thankfully, for the young people who are involved, has been fully mitigated. We are absolutely prepared to work with individuals if they feel that they need more support around this breach.

**Mr. Kent:** So, as my colleague mentioned, the data breach happened on August 24, and the letters went out to those affected students and their families on September 15.

My question is a simple one: When did the minister find out about the data breach, and did she tell her Cabinet colleagues upon finding out?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** I thank the member for the follow-up questions. Again, our department followed the protocol as laid out by the ATIPP office. I was notified on September 13.

**Question re: Health care services**

**Ms. Blake:** For over a year, the NDP has asked this government to open a public walk-in clinic so that Yukoners can get the health care they need, but instead of opening a

public walk-in clinic, the minister gave some start-up money to a private practice. This money was supposed to make it all better by spring of this year; it didn't. There are still thousands of Yukoners on the wait-list and there is still no walk-in clinic.

It is time for government to stop relying on private businesses to fill critical gaps in our health care system. When will this government open a publicly funded and operated walk-in clinic?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am very pleased to be able to speak to this matter today. Our government clearly supports walk-in clinic services, but as mentioned in the preamble to the question, these are, of course, privately run clinics at the moment. We have been working diligently with physicians and health care professionals in the last number of months to determine how we could best provide these types of services to Yukoners.

Medical professionals, doctors, and family practices are private businesses here in the territory. Short of the suggestion that a government-run Yukon clinic is not supported by our government — but getting services like this for Yukoners absolutely is. We remain committed to continuing to transform Yukon's health care system to a more holistic, collaborative, and people-centred system that will better meet the needs of Yukoners, and that has been the commitment all along with respect to our government.

We initiated the investigation and consultation that resulted in *Putting People First*, which is a key priority for us.

**Ms. Blake:** The minister didn't just promise a walk-in clinic; she also said that a bilingual polyclinic would be open sometime this year. This clinic is supposed to open in less than three months, but Yukoners still have so many questions. How many doctors, nurses, dietitians, counsellors, and other health professionals have been recruited? When will the support staff be hired? When will the space be ready? Will this clinic also have walk-in services?

There is no public information available, and Yukoners are starting to worry that this promise is going to be the same as the walk-in clinic. Will the minister assure Yukoners and tell them when this polyclinic will open its doors?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you again for the question. It is of key importance to our government to convey the information and the commitment that we have made with respect to shifting health care from an acute care system to the one envisioned by *Putting People First*, which, of course, is people-centred, culturally appropriate, and the transformation continues with respect to our implementation of those recommendations.

We are committed to improving the care of our Yukon's francophone population, expanding access to the primary health care services for Yukoners through the constellation health centre. We continue to make progress toward opening the new bilingual health centre in Whitehorse. It has been a recent conversation at many tables, including those involved with Highways and Public Works with respect to the physical space that is needed and being worked on. We expect it to be ready late this year or early in the spring.

The constellation health centre will be the first primary health care clinic of its kind in the Yukon and will serve as a

model of care to build upon in the future. In addition to delivering high-quality health and wellness services in both French and English, it will provide additional services as well.

**Ms. Blake:** Because of this government's inaction, Yukoners will continue to face health care shortages for years to come. Now is the time to plan for our future. From pharmacy to nutrition, nursing and medical school to social work, there are many youth across the Yukon who want to become health care workers but face financial barriers. This government could provide funding tied to practising in the Yukon for five years after graduation. This would create a stronger public health care system in the long run.

Will the government commit to funding all health care-related studies to address the long-term health care shortage?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** This is a relatively complex question and a simple one all at the same time.

Our government is absolutely committed to implementing the recommendations from *Putting People First* to transforming significantly the health care system here in the territory and how we manage to provide services for Yukoners in all communities. Recruitment is definitely a challenge nationally and internationally. It's certainly one of the fallouts from the pandemic, but we are absolutely committed to transforming the health care system, implementing *Putting People First*, and dealing with all of the things that are mentioned in the question — nursing staff, providing educational opportunities for physicians and other medical professionals, increasing, improving the health care system here in the territory for Yukoners.

#### **Question re: Skagway marine services**

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Last week, the borough of Skagway council met to discuss the fate of the port of Skagway. One of the agenda items was the ore dock and the ore-loading facility, which is an important strategic asset for the Yukon's mining industry.

According to the Municipality of Skagway council meeting package, the Government of Yukon is providing funding to cover a portion of the cost of the engineering and design of the new marine services platform for the port.

Can the minister confirm if this is true, and if so, how much funding is the Government of Yukon providing to Skagway, and what are the planned outcomes of this investment?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** I will confirm, but I believe that the number that we allocated is about \$250,000 Canadian. The outcome is potential options for the rebuild and modernization of the dock, which would be the outcome, and inevitably will then lead to design work that will be the next phase of this undertaking.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** As we all know, the port of Skagway is critical for the Yukon's economy. Beyond the tens of thousands of tourists who enter through Skagway, the port is also an important entry point for fuel and other goods, as well as a point of export for Yukon minerals.

Has the minister done any consultation with the industry on the design of the marine service platform that the Yukon

government is funding to ensure that it actually meets the needs of Yukon companies?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Yes, in collaboration with the industry, there have been a number of different groups — the Yukon Chamber of Mines — and we have also talked to members from the Yukon Mining Alliance as well as from the producers group. We have hosted multiple meetings over the last two to three years where all players were in the room together. It is a balance between understanding what the industry feels is the best infrastructure to move their concentrate and balancing that with the understanding of what the folks in Skagway feel. There are definitely some historic liabilities that are there from the operation of the Faro mine. That certainly weighs heavily on the residents.

As the member opposite stated, the tourism industry continues to expand, so it is again a balance between ensuring that the tourism industry can grow in the way the community wants it to grow and, at the same time, integrate in the importance of us moving and exporting concentrate and, at the same time, moving commodities such as fuel in. So, it is a balance.

I certainly look forward to the supplementary budget debate, and we can expand on this. I would love to put in an hour or two just talking about what the challenges are and really giving Yukoners a clear understanding about the importance of this project and how we are looking to approach it.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** According to the Skagway Borough council documents, the funding that the Yukon government is providing to Skagway is to advance the marine services platform from 30-percent design to 60 percent.

Can the minister tell us if this is the only funding that the Yukon government is providing, or is the minister considering providing additional funding for either planning or capital development?

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** At this point, we are taking a look at the data that we have pulled together. The top firm that we have found in North America, called Mercator, is essentially the key group to go to when you are looking at business models around port development in North America. That is whom we have engaged with. We have a draft report. I certainly have no problem with tabling the final report here in the Assembly. That will give us an idea of what the pathway forward is.

There is definitely going to be a capital expenditure that will be needed in Skagway. The conversation is around: What is the community of Skagway looking at, who are the business partners, what are major companies that are looking to invest in the Yukon, and could they future-proof their potential investment by coming to the table? Do we look at this like a transmission line where we build it out? But then, as people come on board and use it to move concentrate, there is a fee involved. Do we look at the model that Minto had where, at that point, Minto put substantial money into the capital?

All those ideas are on the table. We are moving this as quickly as possible but doing it with proper due diligence and making sure that Yukon taxpayer money, and how we use it, is first and foremost.

Again, I look forward to further conversations over the next two months on this very important topic.

**Question re: Federal firearms buyback program implementation**

**Mr. Cathers:** Yukon RCMP have publicly made it clear on several occasions how strained their resources are in dealing with an increase in crime. This summer, they reported that organized crime is becoming entrenched with at least five organized crime networks operating here consisting of more than 250 individuals. Their resources have not grown enough to meet the increase in population, much less this surge in organized crime. This is a serious problem.

Meanwhile, the federal Liberal government has asked provinces and territories to help it confiscate thousands of lawfully acquired firearms from licensed owners through its so-called “buyback program”. Three provinces have already refused that request.

Will the territorial government join those provinces in standing up to the federal government and telling them that they will not allow our resources for the police to be diverted from going after organized crime toward to the ill-conceived, politically motivated confiscation of firearms from licensed owners?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** The question of RCMP resources is clearly an issue — as part of that question — as is an assumption that the resources will be deferred to deal with an issue of the firearms buyback program.

I can indicate that the Department of Justice and this government work to ensure the provision of a professional, accountable, and appropriately funded territorial policing service that is responsive to the priorities of Yukoners and worthy of public trust.

I have met several times over the summer with the important members of M Division, the chief superintendent and other inspectors, and had discussions with respect to RCMP resources. It is a key priority for our government. We fund significant and ongoing investments in police resources through the *Territorial Police Service Agreement* with the RCMP, and we are continuing to have conversations about what they need to do the important work of enforcement here in our territory.

**Mr. Cathers:** Months ago, I wrote to the Minister of Justice with a list of specific suggestions, many based on recommendations by the National Police Federation, which is the union representing RCMP members. I have to remind the minister that it's not just us who are saying that the Liberal gun confiscation plan diverts police resources from tackling organized crime; RCMP members said that. The National Police Federation said that the so-called “buyback program” — and I quote: “... diverts extremely important personnel, resources, and funding away from addressing the more immediate and growing threat of criminal use of illegal firearms.”

The territorial government has a choice to make: Will they listen to RCMP members and Yukoners calling for police resources to be used for going after organized crime and other

serious criminal activity, or will they take orders from the Trudeau Liberals and divert police resources toward confiscating licensed firearms owners' lawfully acquired property?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** There are a lot of assumptions in that question, and I think that what Yukoners need to know is that those assumptions are just that. This year, our government approved a policing budget increase of over 20 percent compared to last year, and this increase renewed our staffing commitment to the Historical Case Unit here in M Division, while adding two officers to the crime reduction unit — conversations that continue with the RCMP about what might be needed next year to make sure that we are providing the appropriate funding for our policing service to work responsibly with the priorities of Yukoners and work with communities to increase public trust.

What I can indicate with respect to the program mentioned is that I met last week with Minister Mendicino and had a conversation about the federal approach here, and actually tomorrow, the public meetings will take place in Nova Scotia with respect to the provincial, territorial, and federal governments on justice issues. I will attend those meetings as best as possible from here, and certainly this is a topic on that agenda.

**Mr. Cathers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the minister chooses to dismiss what RCMP members said as just “assumptions”. As the minister mentioned, provincial and territorial ministers of Justice are meeting with their federal counterpart. It is an opportunity for her to call for an evidence-based approach in dealing with crime, rather than the Trudeau government's politically motivated approach that RCMP members say diverts resources from where they are needed most. In their year-end review, Yukon RCMP reported a 90-percent increase in drug trafficking, a 25-percent increase in robbery, and a 43-percent increase in violent and relationship offences.

RCMP report that organized crime here is becoming entrenched with at least five organized crime networks and severity including human trafficking and weapons trafficking. Diverting resources for going after organized crime will make the Yukon less safe.

Will the government listen to the RCMP and stand up for Yukoners by urging the federal government to cancel its gun confiscation plan, and will the minister finally agree to refuse to allow territorial funding to be used to go after licensed firearms owners and their lawfully acquired property?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am disappointed in the tone of the question because it does mislead people about —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Point of order**

**Speaker:** The Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** For the minister to accuse another member — in this case, myself — of misleading is typically understood as being contrary to Standing Order 19(h).

**Speaker:** Mr. Streicker, on the point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, 19(h) states that the member charges another member with uttering a deliberate falsehood. I don't think that is what the minister did; she referred to the language as misleading.

### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** There is no point of order. It is a dispute between members.  
Please continue.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I will just say this in a more positive way.

Our Department of Justice and our government work to ensure the provision of professional, accountable, and appropriately funded territorial police service that is responsible for the priorities of Yukoners, not the priorities of anyone else — the priorities of Yukoners — and is worthy of their public trust.

Our government funds significant and ongoing investments in police resources through a territorial police service agreement. This year, our government approved the policing budget increase of over 20 percent compared to last year. There will be no diversion to a program that is not yet in existence. This increase will help staffing and is committed to the Historical Case Unit and also adds two officers to the crime reduction unit that responds to the types of crimes that were noted in the questions here today.

I can remind Yukoners that, in response to the recommendations of the 2010 *Sharing Common Ground*, our activity with RCMP and response to this community is a top priority.

### Question re: Department of Education student data breach

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I have some follow-up questions for the Minister of Education on the privacy breach that we talked about earlier in Question Period.

The minister referenced a protocol that has been followed. Is that protocol publicly available? And if so, where can we find it? If it is not publicly available, will she agree to table it on the floor of this House?

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Protecting the personal information of Yukoners is important to our government. The *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* contains provisions that outline what personal information may be collected, how it is managed, who has access, and how privacy breaches must be reported.

The Department of Highways and Public Works has created privacy training, a breach-reporting process, and privacy impact assessments to foster awareness and understanding of personal information and its protection in the public service.

The department has also created corporate privacy advice and oversight resource for departments and has ensured that all government departments have a designated privacy officer.

So, Mr. Speaker, the policy and procedures are in place and I'm sure that this matter is in the process of being reviewed.

**Mr. Kent:** My question is about the protocol that the minister mentioned earlier in Question Period today and whether or not it's publicly available. I'm sure that those 500-plus families that were affected by this privacy breach would like to see that protocol if it's not, and if it is, we would like to find out where we can find it.

The Department of Education itself has admitted that this privacy breach represents a risk of significant harm to those young Yukoners affected. So, the minister had alluded to earlier that she had instructed the department to work with the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review its practices and offer proposals for improvements.

Can the minister detail these steps and tell us what other steps have been taken to ensure this type of breach never occurs again?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Again, the Department of Education takes protecting Yukoners' private information very seriously. We just heard from the minister responsible for that part of our government. Definitely, a mistake happened. It is essential that we learn from this and improve our processes going forward. This will include and does include working with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the department is actively reviewing internal training and processes to prevent privacy breaches in the future.

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask a third time about the protocol that the minister referenced earlier on in Question Period, whether or not that protocol is publicly available and where we can find it. If it's not, will she agree to table that protocol? As I've mentioned, many of the families that we have talked to — and I'm sure all of the families affected — would like to take a look at that protocol as far as the timelines and other aspects.

So, Mr. Speaker, many of the students and parents who were affected by this data breach have asked whether or not anyone has been held accountable for the breach. Can the minister tell us if anyone has been held responsible for this breach and whether or not there has been any repercussions or discipline as a result?

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Mr. Speaker, again, this was a serious situation and we have taken it very seriously. I think that the member knows quite well that matters involving human resources are not to be spoken of on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I am not going to be doing that today.

We certainly are working with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The department is actively reviewing our internal training and processes to prevent this type of breach in the future. I would be happy to bring back further information as requested.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

### Notice of opposition private members' business

**Mr. Kent:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the items standing in the name of the Official Opposition to be called on Wednesday, October 12, 2022. They are Motion No. 436, standing in the

name of the Member for Lake Laberge, and Motion No. 437, standing in the name of the Member for Watson Lake.

**Ms. Tredger:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.2(3), I would like to identify the item standing in the name of the Third Party to be called on Wednesday, October 12, 2022. It is Bill No. 305, standing in the name of the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

**Speaker:** We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

#### Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 430

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 430 regarding the appointment of the Ombudsman.

**Speaker:** The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 430 regarding the appointment of the Ombudsman.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agree.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

#### Motion No. 430

**Clerk:** Motion No. 430, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT the Yukon Legislative Assembly, pursuant to sections 2 and 3 of the *Ombudsman Act*, recommends that the Commissioner in Executive Council appoint Jason Pedlar as the Ombudsman of Yukon for a term of five years, effective October 14, 2022.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** I will speak very briefly here. First of all, I would like to thank our outgoing Ombudsman for her dedication for many years to this Legislative Assembly. I would like to thank the Members' Services Board for bringing forward their recommendation for Mr. Pedlar to be appointed as our new Ombudsman, and I look forward to the vote here in the Legislature today.

**Mr. Cathers:** As the Official Opposition representative on the all-party committee that dealt with the replacement of the Ombudsman, I would like to speak briefly. First of all, I will begin by thanking the outgoing Ombudsman, Diane McLeod-McKay, for her service. As noted, I served as our representative in this process. It was a competitive application process with good applicants, and Mr. Pedlar, of course, was chosen as the successful candidate and our new Ombudsman. I would like to congratulate him for that, and I look forward to his continued service to Yukoners. Again, congratulations.

**Ms. White:** I would like to echo the thoughts of both of my colleagues. I also had the pleasure to sit on that hiring committee, and I am delighted that not only has Mr. Pedlar put his name forward after being here for a number of years, but I am sure that he will steer our Information and Privacy Commission ship in a good direction. We thank him for that, and we look forward to the next coming years.

**Speaker:** Before putting the question, the Chair must draw members' attention to section 2 of the *Ombudsman Act*, which says, "The Commissioner in Executive Council shall, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly made by at least two-thirds of the members of the Legislative Assembly, appoint as an officer of the Legislative Assembly an Ombudsman to exercise the powers and perform the duties set out in this Act."

In order to ensure that the requirements of section 2 of the *Ombudsman Act* are met, the Chair will now call for a recorded division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** The bells will ring.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**Ms. Tredger:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried by the required support of two-thirds of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and that Jason Pedlar has now been recommended for appointment as Ombudsman by this House for a term of five years, effective October 14, 2022.

*Motion No. 430 agreed to*

### Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 431

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 431 regarding the appointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

**Speaker:** The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 431 regarding the appointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

### Motion No. 431

**Clerk:** Motion No. 431, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT, pursuant to section 18 of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, the Yukon Legislative Assembly reappoint David Phillip Jones, QC as a member of the Conflict of Interest Commission for a three-year period, effective November 1, 2022.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** This is really a reappointment for Mr. Jones, who has been doing this for many years for us as Members of the Legislative Assembly, and I thank the Members' Services Board for their motion. I know that Mr. Jones has always been diligent in his work, and I'm happy to hear this recommendation and happy that we are here for this vote today in the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Cathers:** As one of our members on Members' Services Board, I rise briefly in support of this. As the Government House Leader correctly noted, Members' Services Board has recommended the reappointment of the conflicts commissioner, who has served for many years in that capacity, and we will, of course, be supporting that motion here today.

**Ms. White:** We too, as the Yukon NDP, are in support of this motion. I will point out that Mr. Jones has been the conflicts commissioner for the entire duration of my time in this Chamber, so he is entering his 12<sup>th</sup> year, or more, as our conflicts commissioner, and we look forward to another three years with him.

**Speaker:** Before putting the question, the Chair must draw members' attention to section 18(4) of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act*, which says: "In order to take effect, a resolution of the Legislative Assembly for the appointment or removal of a Member of the commission must be supported in a recorded vote by at least two-thirds of the Members present for the vote."

In order to ensure that the requirements of section 18(4) of the *Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* are met, the Chair will now call for a recorded division.

### Division

**Speaker:** The bells will ring.

### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Silver:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Pillai:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** Agree.

**Mr. Dixon:** Agree.

**Mr. Kent:** Agree.

**Ms. Clarke:** Agree.

**Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Ms. McLeod:** Agree.

**Ms. Van Bibber:** Agree.

**Mr. Hassard:** Agree.

**Mr. Istchenko:** Agree.

**Ms. White:** Agree.

**Ms. Blake:** Agree.

**Ms. Tredger:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 18 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried by the required support of two-thirds of the Members of the Legislative Assembly present for the vote and that David Philip Jones, QC has been now reappointed as Conflict of Interest Commissioner for a three-year period, effective November 1, 2022.

*Motion No. 431 agreed to*

### Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 427

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 427 regarding participation by members who have COVID, or suspect that they have COVID, by video conference.

**Speaker:** The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 427 regarding participation by members who have COVID, or suspect that they have COVID, by video conference.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

### Motion No. 427

**Clerk:** Motion No. 427, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT, for the duration of the 2022 Fall Sitting, any Member of the Legislative Assembly who is unable to attend the sitting of the House in person due to COVID-19 symptoms, illness, or protocols may participate in the sitting of the House by video conference, notwithstanding Standing Order 8, or any other Standing Order, and by video conference shall:

(1) be recognized to speak in debate, notwithstanding Standing Order 17;

(2) be permitted to vote, notwithstanding Standing Order 25;

(3) be permitted to participate in counts in Committee of the Whole, notwithstanding Standing Order 44 and Standing Order 41(1);

(4) contribute to constituting quorum in the Legislative Assembly under Standing Order 3 and the *Yukon Act*; and

(5) be considered to have attended the sitting of the Legislative Assembly with no deduction of indemnity required under section 39(5) of the *Legislative Assembly Act*.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, this motion and the next two that we're hoping to bring are the motions that we've been bringing for several sessions now of this Legislative Assembly, and so I won't debate them. I'm hoping that we can just pass them quickly and move on to other House business.

**Speaker:** Does any other member wish to be heard?

*Motion No. 427 agreed to*

### **Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 428**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 428 regarding sitting by video conference.

**Speaker:** The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 428 regarding sitting by video conference.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

### **Motion No. 428**

**Clerk:** Motion No. 428, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT, for the duration of the 2022 Fall Sitting, if the Legislative Assembly stands adjourned for an indefinite period of time, the Government House Leader and at least one of the other House Leaders together may request that the Legislative Assembly meet virtually by video conference with all the Members of the Legislative Assembly being able to participate

remotely, notwithstanding any certain Standing Order regarding members' physical presence in the Chamber.

Is there any debate on the motion?

*Motion No. 428 agreed to*

### **Unanimous consent to move without one clear day's notice Motion No. 429**

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, I request the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 429 regarding pairing of members.

**Speaker:** The Government House Leader has, pursuant to Standing Order 14.3, requested the unanimous consent of the House to move, without one clear day's notice, Motion No. 429 regarding pairing of members.

Is there unanimous consent?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** Unanimous consent has been granted.

### **Motion No. 429**

**Clerk:** Motion No. 429, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Streicker.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

THAT, for the duration of the 2022 Fall Sitting:

(1) the Clerk shall keep a daily list of paired members in which any member of the government and any member of the opposition party may have their names entered together by noon on that date to indicate that they will not take part in any recorded division in the Legislative Assembly held on that date; and

(2) following each such division held, the name of any member entered on the list of paired members for that date shall be printed in Hansard and the Votes and Proceedings.

Is there any debate on the motion?

*Motion No. 429 agreed to*

## **GOVERNMENT BILLS**

### **Bill No. 206: Second Appropriation Act 2022-23 — Second Reading — adjourned debate**

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 206, standing in the name of the Hon. Premier; adjourned debate, Mr. Dixon.

**Mr. Dixon:** I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 206 at second reading today.

Before I begin remarks specifically on the bill, I would like to briefly share some thoughts on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as this is my first opportunity to speak openly in the House in this Sitting.

I certainly enjoyed and appreciated the tribute that was paid on the opening day of this Sitting, which included remarks from the Premier, the Leader of the Third Party, and, on our side, the MLA for Porter Creek North, who, of course, happens to have a somewhat unique relationship with the Crown, given her time as Commissioner of Yukon.

I did want to add a few words of my own following that tribute. Like many, I felt a deep sense of loss with the passing

of Queen Elizabeth, who was, among many other titles, the Queen of Canada. I know that many in the public, and even in the House occasionally, often incorrectly cite her title as the Queen of England or various other titles, but her most important role for us as Canadians was as the Queen of Canada, our head of state.

The personification of the Crown sits as the very foundation of our constitutional democracy. Like the vast majority of Canadians, she had been the only Queen that I had ever known, and her presence, however distant physically, had always been a reassuring one.

In many ways, her presence represented stability and tradition. Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, and Dwight Eisenhower all held office when she became Queen. For someone of my age, those names are all of a different era — historic figures no doubt, but from an age that seems so very long ago. The idea that Prime Minister Trudeau served under the same Queen as Louis St. Laurent has always been quite staggering to me. But the longevity of that presence has been hugely reassuring, not just to me, but to Yukoners, Canadians, members of the Commonwealth, and citizens around the world.

I have remarked elsewhere that, of late, we have seen tremendous upheaval, change, and disruptions in our institutions. In the face of that, the Queen represented stability, safety and consistency, and a link to the past that serves as a reminder of the importance of the institution of the Crown.

As I have gotten a bit older myself, I have gone from someone who was probably lightly inclined toward monarchical reform, perhaps even quasi-republicanism, to where I sit now, which is someone who is ardently monarchist. I have arrived at this position in no small part because of Queen Elizabeth herself and her personification of the Crown.

I've certainly grown to appreciate the stability that the Crown represents in our constitutional system, and I have certainly come to develop somewhat of a conservative disposition that favours the protection of our institutions like the Crown that are the foundation of our democracy. In my view, duty and service were undoubtedly the watchwords of her historic reign. Her commitment to the values she represented set an example for generations of Canadians and citizens of the Commonwealth around the world.

She was a natural leader, and her presence was humbling to even the most iconic and gregarious political leaders. Despite this, her deep commitment to the Crown and its values, and her sincere Christian faith, made her gracious but never condescending. It made her elegant but not opulent. Without doubt, it made her stately but not overbearing. Queen Elizabeth will be greatly missed. I do wish her heir, now styled "King Charles III", the strength to carry on in those noble footsteps.

God Save the King.

All that being said, I do want to remark that despite being a fairly strong monarchist myself, I did not feel that the decision the Government of Yukon took to issue a statutory holiday was the correct one. I'm not convinced that a stat holiday almost specifically for government workers was the right course of action. I appreciate that other jurisdictions took this path as well, but I found the arguments of jurisdictions like NWT,

Saskatchewan, and Ontario more compelling. I would have preferred seeing the Yukon follow those jurisdictions.

Further, I did want to note my disappointment at the missed opportunity for Yukon to institute Platinum Jubilee medals to mark the Queen's 70 years on the Canadian throne. I won't rehash those arguments further from the previous Sitting, but I will simply point to those arguments and let those stand on this matter.

Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan all instituted medals that recognize citizens who have made a significant contribution to Canada, and I very much regret that the Yukon did not follow suit.

Now, having said all that, let me turn toward matters at hand, which, of course, is the supplementary budget before us today.

First of all, I think that it is impossible to consider this supplementary budget without first reflecting on the context within which it was tabled. The so-called elephant in the room — as one member of the media said to me last week during our pre-session interviews — was the Premier's announcement that he is resigning as Premier, pending a leadership election within the Liberal Party. This means that, within the next while, the Yukon will have a new Premier and the current Premier will step away from territorial politics.

It was a fairly significant announcement and one that has real ramifications for the business of the Legislature, the public service, and, of course, Yukoners in general.

So, I was a bit surprised, to say the least, that the Premier did not mention a word of this in his second reading speech last week. He took time to offer the royal family his sympathies, but did not mention his early-September announcement of his coming resignation. The speech that he read last week seemed to be a standard, fairly wooden supplementary budget speech that was probably written entirely by communications staff in the Department of Finance, which completely ignored the most significant political development in the territory since the last election — the Premier's pending resignation.

Unfortunately, this fits within a pattern of poor communication, which has veered from seemingly disorganized to outright irresponsible. It has been now well over a month since the Premier hastily called a press conference, the day after Queen Elizabeth died. Since then, we have not learned anything more about what Yukoners should expect through this process. We don't have the date of the Premier's resignation or when the new Premier will take over. We don't know the process by which the next leader will be chosen. Will it be by convention? Will it be a typical ballot process? We just don't know — perhaps something else.

In fact, the almost total silence from the Premier and the party on these matters is quite surprising. If this was a normal party leadership election, it would be one thing, but this is bigger than that, Mr. Speaker. This is about who is going to be the next Premier, and with that should come a higher level of responsibility and a higher level of communication with the public and the public service. Likewise, when the Premier made this announcement on the day after the Queen's death, when



many other governments were in a media communications blackout, he also failed to spell out any rules that might be imposed on his Cabinet regarding the leadership election.

This prompted the Leader of the Third Party and me to eventually issue a joint statement on the matter. We jointly took the position that sitting Cabinet ministers should step away from their portfolios to ensure that ministers cannot use their positions, or the resources of their departments, to campaign for leader. This is standard practice everywhere else in Canada.

In fact, we have two perfect examples right next door in Alberta and BC that are in one case underway and in one case is recently concluded.

Following our comments about this, the former Clerk of the Yukon Legislative Assembly offered his thoughts to the CBC in an interview on September 12, and here's what he said — and I quote: "There's a sort of an expectation in Canadian politics that, when a Cabinet minister is running for the party leadership, they resign their Cabinet portfolios for a couple of reasons — one, because you don't want the perception to be out there that they're using their Cabinet position to enhance their leadership prospects. The other thing is that once a person is involved in a leadership campaign, the time and effort that they are putting into the leadership campaign is time and effort that they are not putting into being a Cabinet minister. So, the expectation is that they would resign their Cabinet responsibilities."

Since that time, the Premier has indicated that he will not be imposing any rules of any kind on sitting Cabinet ministers who run to replace him. He said that it's not technically against the law, so he will leave it to them and hope that they all behave responsibly.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, when we consider the timing of the announcement, the failure to set a time, the failure of the party to establish rules, the failure of the Premier to communicate with Yukoners on all of this, the entirety of how this was handled by the Premier has been profoundly irresponsible.

It is within this self-generated climate of instability and uncertainty that we see this current supplementary budget tabled, which presents the next problem. At some point, we as legislators, the public service, and Yukoners in general will need to start asking questions about the future of the Yukon — how to address the health human resources crisis, how to pay for the Canada Winter Games, how to help our economy recover from the pandemic — and the reality is that the current Premier won't be able to answer those questions in any meaningful way because he won't be around to make those decisions; he already has one foot out the door.

This is why I previously described this situation as untenable. Unfortunately for us, the only way this will be resolved in any way will be for the current Premier to exercise some sort of leadership and provide Yukoners with some clarity. However, it remains to be seen whether the current Premier is capable of that.

That brings me to how we will be proceeding through this supplementary budget. As always, we will proceed through second reading and then get into general debate. However, given that there are only four departments with appropriations

in the supplementary budget, that means that we will need to ask questions of other departments during general debate. These include some significant issues and large departments — Health and Social Services, Education, and Highways and Public Works, just to name a few.

Recognizing the situation, I hope that the Premier will allow ministers of those departments without appropriations in this supplementary to stand up and answer questions directed to them over the course of general debate. I know that, in the past, this has not always been the case.

With that, I will conclude. I have a number of more specific questions and concerns that I will raise in Committee of the Whole in general debate. I certainly look forward to getting into general debate to ask those questions that I have referenced and ask some of the questions that, unfortunately, the current Premier will be unable to answer. I hope to learn more from his ministers as opposed to simply having the Premier read briefing notes for the duration of general debate. With that, I look forward to getting into Committee of the Whole.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** I am pleased to rise this afternoon to respond to Bill No. 206, also known as the first supplementary estimate for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Before talking about our business, I would like to say a few words about the ongoing war in Ukraine. I unequivocally condemn Russia's recent brutal missile strikes on civilian targets in Kyiv, Lviv, and other areas in the country, including far from the eastern front. One of the missiles hit a playground in downtown Kyiv. These retaliatory attacks come as Ukrainian forces have had some notable successes in their counteroffensive against the Russian invaders, including attacking the Kerch bridge, which Russia used to solidify its hold on the illegally annexed Crimea.

As we begin the Fall Sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, it is an important time to remind ourselves that we are so incredibly fortunate to be living in peace in Canada and in the Yukon and to be free from the wanton brutality and mass murder that Ukrainian citizens are currently suffering.

As the air raid sirens continue, I salute the bravery and resiliency of the Ukrainian people as they face this illegal and barbarous invasion. I say to them: "Slava Ukraini."

Mr. Speaker, I will move to the balance of my comments. Thank you for the House's indulgence.

The importance of camping for many Yukoners is immeasurable. Living in the Yukon, our enjoyment of our vast and beautiful wilderness constitutes a huge part of the lives of many Yukoners. I do not have the finalized data for the 2022 camping season, which closed on September 30, but I can say with pride that the 2021 season set a new record for campground use by Yukon residents at more than 36,000 campsite visits. I am, of course, hopeful — we are all hopeful — that we can set a new record this year. This was the second year of the new longer camping season that we introduced through the *Yukon Parks Strategy*.

We are also working on new park regulations. This past summer, we engaged the public, First Nation governments, indigenous groups, environmental non-governmental

organizations, and stakeholder organizations to help develop modern park and campground regulations.

The proposed park regulations are intended to achieve three major outcomes: (1) to ensure public safety and to improve the quality of visitor experiences, (2) to protect natural and heritage values, and (3) to provide efficient operation and administration.

As our park system continues to grow and evolve, we too must adapt by modernizing our legislative tools to align them with user expectations and to allow for proper management and enforcement.

I would like to specifically touch on how we have improved the Yukon government campground infrastructure this year. New playgrounds were installed at the Pine Lake, Yukon River, and Klondike River campgrounds. The boat launch at Tagish River bridge was replaced, with additional boat launch replacements currently underway at the Twin Lakes, Frenchman Lake, Nunatuk, and Ethel Lake campgrounds, which are scheduled to be completed for the spring of 2023.

For those who enjoy mountain biking, in partnership with Carcross/Tagish First Nation's notable Singletrack to Success program, a new trail at Conrad campground was completed. This initiative is boosting the local economy by way of providing the Carcross area with yet another additional high-quality mountain bike trail.

As well, a new general use trail was designated at the Twin Lakes campground, and we have also completed a new interpretive trail at the Tombstone Territorial Park and a new pedestrian bridge was installed at the Fox Lake campground in September to access walk-in tenting sites.

As well, a retaining wall is being constructed at Five Mile Lake campground just outside of Mayo along the day use area to improve beach access, scheduled to be completed in mid-October. Campground expansion and site redesign are being explored at many campgrounds, including Conrad, Wolf Creek, Pine Lake, Ethel Lake, and Little Salmon.

Speaking of the Pine Lake campground, a couple of weeks ago, I was in Kluane country, first for the announcement of the construction of a new and modern, efficient school in Burwash Landing with Chief Dickson, the Minister of Education, and elders, as well as the youth of the Kluane First Nation the following day, which was an inspiring ceremony.

The following day, Mr. Speaker, I was in Haines Junction for the ribbon-cutting on the completion of the Trans Canada Trail section from Haines Junction to Pine Lake. I was joined by Mayor Tomlin, as well as the Member for Kluane and a number of community members. What a fantastic and beautiful day that was.

Our Liberal government was pleased to have helped the Village of Haines Junction to access almost \$1 million of its allotment of the Canada community building fund to complete this multi-year project to upgrade the Pine Lake trail system. Also, this year, the Department of Environment and the Department of Highways and Public Works worked together to co-contribute the sum of approximately \$340,000 in order to

complete this project in this year. I'm certainly very glad to be able to assist to get this project across the finish line this year.

We know that this beautiful area is deeply appreciated by local residents of Haines Junction and well-used by Yukoners and visitors from around the world to the territory, whether for fishing, hiking, participating in the annual bike relay, or countless other outdoor activities. For those staying at the campground who might want to zip in to Haines Junction, they can now do that safely without even starting a vehicle. Whether it is walking, biking, e-biking, scootering, or however they choose to self-propel themselves, a fine meal at Frosty Freeze or any of the other fine establishments in Haines Junction awaits them.

Mr. Speaker, improving trail infrastructure will also help reduce carbon emissions, as fewer vehicles will be on the road during the busy camping season with this convenient and safer option. Considering varied and innovative approaches to reduce our carbon emissions is a large part of what I do in both of my portfolios on a daily basis. Climate change is a defining issue of our time, and the window for meaningful action is short.

In the Yukon, the combination of warming temperatures and higher levels of precipitation have contributed to extreme weather events over the past decade. *Our Clean Future* is the territory's roadmap to solve our portion of the climate emergency. The 10-year strategy was developed in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, transboundary indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities and reflects input from Yukoners, non-governmental and community organizations, industry, and private businesses.

It sets out our collective vision, goals, and values, along with our strategic objectives over the next 10 years to address our changing climate. In that regard, I am pleased to share that the Yukon Climate Leadership Council has provided its final report to the Yukon government.

This report looks at new pathways to reduce the territory's greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030, as compared to 2010 levels. The council has also looked at areas related to education and awareness, leadership, and capacity building to support emissions reduction. We look forward to seeing how the council's recommendations fit with the *Our Clean Future* framework, as we work with our partners to make further progress in meeting the territory's 45-percent emissions reduction target.

We know that investing in renewable fuel sources, such as solar and biomass, are some of the keys to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. We know that investing in renewable fuel sources, such as solar and biomass, are part of that path. We are excited to be moving forward this year with two biomass and two large solar offset projects, which will offset 780 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. For biomass, we are installing a new biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse, and we are also expanding the biomass heating system at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. These two systems alone will reduce emissions by 500 tonnes each year.

With respect to solar projects, we have awarded contracts to build two large solar array systems at the Klondike and the

Ogilvie grader stations on the Dempster Highway, which will offset more than 100,000 litres of diesel fuel each year and reduce emissions by 280 tonnes.

In addition, we are also moving forward with two additional solar energy projects at the Tuchitua and the Blanchard grader stations, which will be tendered soon.

This is just the start of where our government can go with renewable energy projects. Additional feasibility studies are also underway to identify future projects, and I'm excited for what the future will bring. As we heard today, we are also tabling a bill to create a clean energy act during the 2022 Fall Sitting. This bill will propose to legislate greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and public reporting mechanisms to ensure long-term climate action accountability and transparency.

The *Clean Energy Act* will ensure a continuation of work across political life cycles, focusing on achieving essential climate action to meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Our Liberal government stands on the right side of history as we face climate change, and it is imperative that we codify this for the Yukon for now and for the future. The proposed act is another tool in the Government of Yukon's efforts to reduce our emissions.

Another part of the *Clean Energy Act* are targets for the sale of zero-emission vehicles. I'm proud to say that the Department of Highways and Public Works is leading by example by adding zero-emission vehicles to the fleet and promoting sustainable and suitable vehicle options that will meet requirements while embracing new vehicle technology. One of the targets of *Our Clean Future* is to develop and implement a system to prioritize and purchase zero-emission vehicles for all new Government of Yukon fleet acquisitions where available and suitable. The department, in the future, will also be tendering for electric trucks, vans, and SUVs to replace gasoline vehicles wherever appropriate. This will significantly exceed the targets set in *Our Clean Future*. These tenders showcase our government's climate leadership by signaling the direction for emission reductions and clean transportation options.

From the roads we move to the air. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a bit about the work we are doing on the airports and aerodromes of the territory. The Yukon has 23 registered aerodromes and five certified airports. We all know that air service is crucial in the north. It is essential for connecting our communities, building our economy, and linking the Yukon with the rest of the world. This is why our government has invested significant resources to maintain and improve this category of infrastructure, which includes upgrades to equipment and facilities.

In the 2021-22 fiscal year, we spent \$19.4 million on aviation-related capital projects. In fiscal year 2022-23, we are forecasting to spend approximately \$56 million on aviation capital projects.

A good example in the communities is the \$2.7-million runway lighting upgrades at the Mayo airport to ensure that Yukon's newest certified airport continues to provide a

transportation link for important services such as medevac, charter, and commercial flights.

I recently had a good visit in Mayo and had some productive conversations with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun and the Village of Mayo where we discussed a number of the infrastructure issues of mutual concern and potential benefit.

Another example is our investment in the Watson Lake airport in fiscal year 2021-22 to resurface the runway and portions of the taxiway.

Speaking of Watson Lake, our government worked closely with Liard First Nation, the Town of Watson Lake, and the RCMP on priorities around road infrastructure in the area. It was a pleasure to be in Watson Lake in May to meet with stakeholders. This summer, new pedestrian crosswalks were added to the intersection of the Alaska Highway and Robert Campbell Highway and in front of the Watson Lake Secondary School. Lighting infrastructure is also in progress to be installed on the Robert Campbell Highway up to Two Mile Village.

Back to airports, last but certainly not least, we are investing significantly to upgrade the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport. We are currently working on the upgrade of the parallel runway, reconstruction of the apron concrete panels, and finishing the resurfacing work on select taxiways. We expect this work to be done by this fall. We will then be tendering on the main airport runway project for next year's construction season.

This Liberal government continues to make strategic investments to keep our aerodromes and airports safe and open for business. As we all know, ongoing maintenance of our airport infrastructure — all infrastructure, really — roads, bridges, culverts — is a formidable task in the Yukon, particularly as we face generally challenging Yukon winter conditions in addition to the developing impacts of climate change and its implications on our infrastructure.

We have also inherited a Yukon Party significant infrastructure deficit and a lack of major upgrades in many sectors, but particularly in the aviation sector, which we are now aggressively fixing. These past years have not been easy for many industries, and for the aviation industry, the COVID-19 pandemic caused demand to instantly plummet. Our government recognizes that air carriers provide critical and essential services, and with federal government assistance, we have distributed nearly \$12 million to support the industry through this unprecedented turbulence.

We administered this funding to ensure that essential services and medevac operations continued uninterrupted. Again, recognizing that the aviation industry plays a key role in the territory's economy and quality of life of Yukoners, we are working to promote interline agreements between the different air carriers so as to provide a smoother travel experience, convenient schedules, and seamless travel for those travelling to and from the Yukon.

We are advocating for these agreements, as they will allow airlines to operate at a higher capacity and reduce the number of empty seats on flights. This will increase profitability, support stability in the local market, and, employing a climate-change lens, has the potential to meaningfully reduce

greenhouse gas emissions per passenger. Indeed, fostering a stable and sustainable aviation sector is a high priority for our government.

Our Liberal government worked hard to build relationships to put the territory on a path of prosperity and success. In this context, I would like to share some of the work by the Department of Environment that I had the great privilege to witness this last summer on the Yukon North Slope. Our Fish and Wildlife branch has been undertaking wildlife research on the Yukon North Slope for many decades in collaboration with the Aklavik Hunters & Trappers Committee and the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope). We have forged strong relationships, working together with the Inuvialuit co-management boards and communities to maintain healthy wildlife populations and rich habitat on the Yukon North Slope — for example, habitats for the Porcupine caribou herd that are a vital subsistence food source for the Inuvialuit and other northern indigenous people.

An example of collaboration is our collective approach to the management of Qikiqtaruk, also known as Herschel Island Territorial Park. Qikiqtaruk is a world-class park receiving many visitors and researchers from around the world each summer. Our joint management of the park provides opportunities for traditional use, employment for Inuvialuit, worldwide visitation, and insight into the direct impacts of a changing climate. I had the honour and privilege of flying over Herschel Island this summer. I did not have the opportunity to land, as the landing strip was soggy; it was flooded at the time.

It was also a great privilege to be able to witness that and also to meet with the Northwest Territories' Deputy Premier, Diane Archie, Aklavik community members, members of the Inuvialuit Game Council, the mayor of Inuvik, Grand Chief Kyikavichik of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, and others.

Continuing with the Department of Environment, I have spoken a lot about capital investments today, but I would like to say a few words about the legislation that our government will be tabling this fall session.

I would like now to tell the House about the proposed animal protection and control act. We are developing this new legislation to provide broader protection and animal welfare. It will support enforcement when uncontrolled animals threaten people, property, or the environment. This new act will reflect the values of Yukoners and meet our duty to provide humane care and responsible control of companion animals and livestock. It will also address concerns identified by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and renewable resources councils by providing tools to prevent feral animals from damaging the environment. Our government has been working toward revising this legislation for several years.

In 2018, we engaged Yukoners through a public survey, received over 900 responses, and held 10 community meetings. In the fall of 2019, we re-engaged with First Nations, communities, the agricultural industry, veterinarians, animal rescue operators, mushers, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and other stakeholders who work with animals. Our government believes in responsible decision-making. We have carefully considered valuable input received from Yukoners to

inform the drafting of this new legislation. I am excited to present this modern, progressive legislation in the House in the coming days.

Returning to Highways and Public Works, I would like to talk a little bit about our road infrastructure. Over the course of the summer and fall, I have had the opportunity to travel to many Yukon communities, and I have been impressed by the sheer amount of work that is going on throughout the territory, particularly on the north Klondike Highway. By the end of the fiscal year 2022-23, the construction of approximately 46 kilometres of road will be complete. Through the federal government's national trade corridors fund, the Department of Highways and Public Works is upgrading critical sections of the north Klondike Highway over a 10-year period. A total of 209 kilometres between Carmacks and the Dempster Highway intersection will be completely reconstructed during that time frame.

Speaking of Carmacks, I very recently had the pleasure to meet with Chief Tom and the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation Council, as well as the Mayor of Carmacks, Lee Bodie. In Carmacks, we are building a new road and bridge, which will allow industrial vehicles to bypass the community of Carmacks, creating a safer flow of traffic for residents. This project will also improve access to mining activities, while enabling the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation to benefit from contracting, education, and training associated with the project.

Construction of the road and bridge has begun. The contractor is scheduled to finish approximately 80 percent of the roadwork and 60 percent of the bridge work this construction season. The remaining work will be completed next year.

On Yukon highways, HPW has made some significant headway in brushing, improving lane markings, removing hazards in the right-of-way, and installing —

**Deputy Speaker (Ms. Blake):** Order, please. Out of time.

**Hon. Mr. Clarke:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments.

**Ms. White:** We have heard a bit of discussion in the Chamber so far about the cost-of-living crisis that we are in, and the Minister of Highways and Public Works just used the term “unprecedented turbulence”. Maybe he wasn't talking about the current situation, but I would say that many Yukoners right now are feeling an unprecedented turbulence.

Every day, we have people coming into our offices, and they are telling us about the impossible choices they are having to make. I've referenced before in the media the senior with mobility issues who, as we were getting ready for winter, had to make the decision as to whether or not they were going to keep their cable package or if they were going to keep that money aside for food.

The reason I bring this up is that this senior doesn't have the ability to really leave the house in the wintertime. They can't go on their own; they have to go with supports. So, although many of us will take it for granted, cable was really their access to the outside world, and that has been cut. They

are no longer going to be able to watch what is happening in the outside world, because they are so concerned about their groceries. I have to say, I can't imagine how lonely winter is going to be at this point in time.

We've had discussions today, just talking about the young people whose privacy was breached through the Department of Education. I can tell you that the same young people are saying right now that it's getting harder and harder to save for that post-secondary education — the education they are told they need in order to make it in the world.

We've heard a lot from families who are trying to make decisions right now between cutting their kids' after-school programs or not, and it is because they just don't have the money they need. They can't figure out where to get it from, and they're trying to make the most responsible decisions that they can.

Today, we saw a petition tabled, which was signed by nearly 2,000 Yukoners, talking about pharmacare and talking about the cost of pharmaceutical prescriptions. The reason why this is so important is that, on a regular basis, we hear from people who are having to ration out those critical medications, because without the additional medical insurance that we are so privileged in this House to have, they just can't figure out where to cut costs to make sure that they can cover that. Nearly 2,000 people in the territory have said that we need to look at how Yukon covers the cost of prescription medication.

These stories that I'm sure each and every one of us have heard in one way or the other — maybe the story varies or maybe the teller is different, but the point is that, right now, these are stories that are being lived right across the Yukon. Whether we talk about all the way down in Watson Lake or we talk about as far up as Old Crow, all the way toward Beaver Creek, Dawson City, Faro, and points in between, everybody has a story right now about what they are trying to do to survive this unprecedented turbulence.

When we add these stories up, we know that recently the Liberals have offered up help. There have been a whole plethora of programs announced, but we know right now that it sounds like a dime when Yukoners really need a dollar. You might now think that this budget that we're getting ready to debate would be an opportunity to discuss these programs, but that's not the case.

A budget is an opportunity to direct where you think money should go and who it should support, and a supplementary budget is an opportunity near the end of the fiscal year to course-correct, if you need to, to offer additional support if it's needed. So, we saw a flurry of commitments made prior to the release of this supplementary budget. Again, I said that we might have thought these would be included in the supplementary budget so we could have a conversation about them and maybe suggest changes or ways to strengthen them, but they aren't.

So, not up for debate is the one-time payment for social assistance recipients. It's important to point that out because this government is still refusing to review the base rate for social assistance, and they have been for the last six years. People are falling deeper and deeper into poverty. You would

have maybe thought that up for debate would be the one-time payment to seniors, but it's not. We're not going to debate that, and I bring this up because so many seniors right now need more than a one-time payment. So many of them are sitting on Yukon Housing Corporation wait-lists because rents have gone unregulated, or they're trying to figure out how the pioneer utility grant is going to change. There have been changes, but it's important to note that if you're a single person who earns \$60,000 a year, or you're a couple who earns a collective \$60,000 a year, you're treated differently. The couple receives more money toward their utilities than a single person does. It's an interesting one, because I ask you: Is my house less warm if I'm there by myself than if there are two of us there?

I guess the government can answer those questions.

You know, we don't get a chance to debate the rebate for the fuel wood that has come forward. The interesting thing is that this rebate is only good for folks who purchase their firewood from suppliers, but it doesn't help those going to collect the wood themselves, because those folks are still paying higher gas rates and they're still having to drive farther. Although this rebate came out and it sounds great, what it's really doing is failing to fix the core issue, which is access to supply. If you can't access firewood, then it's going to be really hard to heat your house. So, what we saw was the Liberals offering band-aid solutions when really what we're asking them is to be brave and bold enough to review these programs and to make sure that what we do is we take the people who are the most adversely affected right now by that cost of living — those increases — and make sure that they can survive.

So, with this budget, we know that the government is forecasting a \$33-million surplus; \$33 million could go a really long way to support the Yukoners who need it the most. I'm not saying to spend all of it — I'm not that naïve — but I am saying that some of that money could definitely be spent. Part of the surplus could — and in my mind, should — be given back to Yukoners.

Recently, as the NDP, we proposed a real inflation-relief program that could be set up to ease some of that financial pressure that Yukoners are facing. We proposed a \$500 payment with a sliding scale for households earning up to \$100,000 a year. Then what we said is that we would be committed to looking at this program in six months, and if the situation wasn't better for people, then we would do it again. So, between \$500 and \$250, depending on the household income. We believe that this money could go a long way in helping people who are struggling to pay the bills right now.

Another measure that we proposed is to immediately increase the base amount of the child benefit to reflect today's cost of living and then to index it to inflation because, in the Yukon, the child benefit is not indexed to inflation, and worse, it hasn't been increased since 2015. Although this is a federal program, Yukon has the ability to make these changes, but we aren't. We're not making those changes. So, this means that families have been receiving the same amount for years while the cost of everything continues to rise. In this Assembly, we often hear about how kids are the future of the territory, and of course we agree, but if we truly believe that kids are the future

of the territory, then we should make sure that they have the best possible start in life.

If increasing the child benefit by \$172 helps that, then why hasn't the government done that? Why haven't they made changes since 2015? Keeping in mind, of course, that the government has been the government since 2016.

We also believe that our most vulnerable Yukoners should also not just get a one-time payout, but they should have an adjustment to social assistance that reflects the cost of living. I have been in this Chamber, I would say, for 11 years today, but I didn't come in on the day I was elected, but I'm going into my 12<sup>th</sup> year. Today — I don't know if I say that I boldly enter the 12<sup>th</sup> year, but I was elected 11 years ago today, and there hasn't been one single legislative Sitting where the NDP has not called for a review of social assistance rates — 11 years.

My colleague, Jan Stick, when she was the Health and Social Services critic, she asked for that. In 2016, I became the Health and Social Services critic, and I asked for that. Now, of course, the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, as the Health and Social Services critic, is asking for a review of social assistance rates. It has not been done since 2007. So, the base amount of social assistance has not been reviewed since 2007, and I have been here since 2011, and I have asked two separate majority governments to do it. Now I'm asking a minority to do it, because we know that social assistance rates are falling far from capturing the financial reality of living in the Yukon today.

It would be fantastic if I could say that things have changed and changed so much that people on social assistance are living large and maybe we should roll it back, but that's not the case. So, since 2007, there have been no changes.

The total cost of these supportive programs would be well within the projected surplus of this government's budget, and I hope — I mean, I'm looking forward to someone coming back and saying that I was wrong with my \$7.2-million calculations. That will be fine. I'm looking forward to it being costed; that would be great. I mean, an office of six compared to the entire public service — it would be really good to have that come back. I'm hoping that when it comes back, it comes back with the understanding that what we're asking is on behalf of Yukoners.

It was really interesting. There was the first-day scrum, and there was the question about what changes you have seen with inflation. What have you had to do? What have you had to change? I kind of veered off course there, and then I really gave my head a shake, and I was like, actually, I'm really fortunate. The privilege of my position dictates that I am very fortunate. I am so incredibly fortunate, but not every Yukoner is in this position.

Not everybody has their salary tied to inflation automatically. Not everybody has access to private health insurance. Not everybody has the same programs or access that we do. Not everybody earns the money that we do. My privilege is that I have to worry less than my neighbours, but it doesn't mean that I don't worry for my neighbours.

When we brought forward these programs, it was with these stories that we have heard from people coming in and telling us these stories. That's why we brought forward these programs. We are not talking about band-aid measures or about

improving public images; what we are really talking about is helping Yukoners get by this winter and do better in the future.

A government that can't be bothered to help people in their time of need is a government that has lost its way.

While we do get to debate a previous announcement of an electricity rebate — not the most recent announcement, but the previous announcement for the same program — we still question the government's refusal to make a private corporation, which has over-earned millions of dollars from Yukoners, give all of that money back to those same Yukoners. More than that, why do they not insist that the problem be fixed that allowed it to happen in the first place? It's called a "general rate application". It's a full review.

Today, we had a ministerial statement on a new community services building in Faro, which is fantastic, but there was no mention of the government's plan to support unincorporated communities without fire departments. What happened to this government's commitment to implementing recommendations from last year's review of fire suppression and rescue resources distribution? As a matter of fact, which of those 104 recommendations does this government support? One hundred and four recommendations: we don't know where we are going with them right now. I shouldn't say that. I'm sure someone in the department knows, but as the general population, we're not sure where we are going with those 104 recommendations, so that would be good to know. I look forward to knowing.

What about the fire suppression in a box that has been highlighted by this government as a solution? You know, for those on the fringes of society? I would say that any solution right now would be great, but when will communities see these solutions on the ground?

Keno was so desperate for something to happen that they bought themselves a fire truck. That is a lot. They pooled their money together to buy a fire truck. People can have opinions as to whether it is good or bad, but that's not the point. The point is that, out of desperation, the community of Keno, which lost two important buildings to them, bought a fire truck in response to the lack of government support. They were willing to go with the fire suppression in a box, but they were waiting, and nothing was happening.

You know, the Minister of Highways and Public Works talked about his visit to Carmacks, and I am sure that he would have heard from the First Nation then about the importance of a swimming pool, how important it is for kids to learn how to swim in a community by a river, how it is not just about recreation, but it is actually life-saving. You know, when we were at that meeting with representatives of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and they were telling us stories about being on the swimming team and what that meant, there is the reality that swimming is more than something that should just happen in Whitehorse and it is more than something that should just happen seasonally.

It is interesting, because when we went to the community of Ross River — I was there at just about the end of summer, and at that point in time, they had been promised — they had been promised — that the pool was just about going to be open,

just about going to be open. By that point in time, they had already missed most of the season. I can tell you that, in my personal experience, I went to Ross River to do a bike instruction with kids, and you know, it just so happens that, when it's plus-28 out, you can't really compete with a swimming pool, and I could see kids until the pool opened, but then they would switch; they would go back to the pool.

You know, one of the things that we heard when we were in Faro is the importance of having an all-season outhouse. I think in 2012 was the first time I talked about an outhouse publicly, and I thought that was going to be the weirdest thing ever, but it turns out that, you know, talking about bathroom facilities as an elected person is pretty normal.

So, the community of Faro and the community of Ross River — when you leave those communities, there is not access to a public bathroom until you get to Carmacks. And they said, "What about elders? What about older folks? What about people who really need a safe place to go? They can't just go beside the vehicle in a snow bank. So, what about an all-season outhouse?" They had some ideas about where it could go — not going into the campground, because obviously the campground is closed and inaccessible, but like one at a pullout. They would really like to see an all-season outhouse. It seems like that would definitely fit within the \$33 million that we're talking about having as a surplus.

I talk about — I have talked — because despite the fact that I ride bicycles all the time, I only started riding my bike to work last year. So, I refer to myself as a "born-again commuter", but I can say that, for example, the Minister of Highways and Public Works was just up, and he was talking about active transportation and his opportunity with the environment file. It is interesting, because the most unsafe part of the Millennium Trail — which is like, I would say, the superhighway of active transportation in the City of Whitehorse — the most unsafe part of the Millennium Trail actually is owned by the Yukon government. If anyone wants to know, they can go take a look at the wooden deck outside of the tourism information building, and they can see the non-slip paint that was painted — and I really appreciate that it got painted this year in summertime, but it is almost gone.

The non-slip paint that is actually very slippery in the wintertime got applied earlier in the season, which is fantastic, but it is still slippery. It is still really slippery. The safest way to deal with that problem — I send a letter every season — is actually replacing the decking — getting rid of the wooden decking that is very slippery and putting in bitumen, just like the rest of the trail. That would be fantastic.

There are interesting things. We could talk about the reconstruction of the Alaska Highway. People in my neighbourhood in Takhini North would like to see an underpass between the neighbourhood and the ski trails. One was put in, in a neighbourhood that was far less close to activity things than my neighbourhood, but I'm hopeful. They would like to see sound suppression, because despite what anyone says, when the house was built in the 1950s by the army and despite that the highway was always going to be there, there are issues. There

are issues now. The highway in the 1950s is substantially different from the highway in the 2020s.

There is a condo complex in my neighbourhood just off the highway. It gets flooded out every spring. Every single spring it gets flooded out, and it's an easy solution. The Yukon government could work on the drainage around that building; they could do it, and then they wouldn't get flooded again. That would be fantastic, but it hasn't happened yet. It hasn't happened yet, but we have seen a forestry building that has allowed water to flood out neighbours in behind. A really big congratulations and thank you to the folks at Property Management who have been making sure that they have been suctioning that water away from the back of that lot and not flooding out their neighbours. I really appreciate that.

So, there are all sorts of things across the territory where there are examples of things that government can do to make lives better for people. What I really want to do is see those actions being taken. Whether we are talking about reviewing social assistance rates or removing slippery decking, there is an opportunity — building outhouses between Carmacks and Faro — to make lives better for Yukoners, and that is what I would like to see.

**Hon. Mr. Mostyn:** It is a pleasure to be on my feet this afternoon responding to the supplementary estimates for 2022-23, Bill No. 206. I have been around the communities a lot this summer talking to people in Whitehorse West and throughout the Yukon. This afternoon, for a few minutes, I will talk about my riding and constituents and perhaps eggs, but as I moved around the territory this summer, I've been thinking a lot about the conversation I had with Peter Jenkins in Anchorage a few years ago. Actually, it really wasn't a few years ago; on reflection, it was actually decades ago. Let's be honest, Mr. Speaker, when I was talking to Peter, many of the opposition — not all, but some of them — hadn't even entered high school yet.

I was at Anchorage for a tourism launch — direct flights from Whitehorse. And on this evening, Peter, Karen, and I were in a restaurant overlooking the city. Peter turned to me and said, "Richard, do you know what Alaska's state bird is?" I admitted I did not; I was a young man who didn't know where he was going. But he turned around in his seat, gestured to the skyline the restaurant overlooked, and said, "It's the crane." Peter then went on to express his admiration for the amount of building construction happening in the state at the time.

Travelling around the territory this summer, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if Peter might be thinking the same thing if he was driving, as I was. There's a lot going on in the territory these days, and there are cranes on our skyline as we move the territory forward. We have almost full employment. Wages are up. Contractors have told me they can take employees through a full apprenticeship based on the work in progress and chronicled in our five-year capital plan. Through the pandemic and beyond it, we saw incredible economic growth, in no small part due to my colleagues' nation-leading business supports during COVID.

I can tell you things are a lot different in Ontario. I was there for the opening of the Canada Summer Games this summer. I can tell you stores and restaurants are permanently closed and papered-over windows are common on downtown main streets. We'll talk about housing and lot development this afternoon, but much of the pressure we're seeing there is caused by our population growing at unprecedented levels. Now, a problem is a problem, to be sure, but issues caused by white-hot economic and population growth are far better than those that come with an economy that's in recession, as we saw less than 10 years ago under the Yukon Party.

All right. So, where are we with this supplementary budget? We're proposing to spend about \$26 million more than what we first thought we would a few months ago. This is all to run the government, not to build new capital projects. As the Premier noted last week, that spending will draw down the predicted surplus \$6.5 million to \$33 million.

So, how can we spend \$26 million more than predicted and only draw down the surplus \$6.5 million? Well, because we saw revenue increase \$18 million more than we predicted in the spring. Where is the lion's share of this spending going? Most of it has fallen on the shoulders of Community Services. A huge chunk of the spending this summer is coming as a result of man-made climate change.

As I have said before in my previous role of Minister of Highways and Public Works, climate change is real, it is expensive, and I have the receipts to prove it. As part of this bill, the department is seeking \$20.2 million to address ongoing emergency needs that we have seen in response to climate change. We're now seeing extreme weather events that challenge what we have come to know and expect when it comes to fires and flooding in the Yukon. These events have become more common.

Unfortunately, it has been an intense summer for Community Services. It will come as no surprise that many resources were put into another record year of flooding, as well as dealing with forest fires during the early part of the summer. I'll start with flooding.

It was a worse year than the Southern Lakes flood of 2021, although few people on the streets would probably think that, and here's why: Many of the flood defences remained in place from the previous year in Marsh Lake, so that, coupled with the moderately lower levels of water, we had less severe high-water events in that region. Unfortunately, this year, the rest of the territory saw record levels of snowpack and water levels, which led to flooding in nine communities in 2022, many of them record floods. Particularly hard hit were Upper Liard, Teslin, and Carmacks. For our relatively small team in Community Services, getting supplies and support to communities throughout the Yukon was an incredible logistical challenge. Thankfully, our civil servants were well-prepared with materials being pre-positioned earlier in the spring for the expected flooding events. Protective Services also invested in two sandbag machines, and these were used continually throughout the Yukon in June and July.

We also saw some municipalities, like Teslin, really handle their flood response extremely well, and that actually freed up

resources for Community Services to go to some other communities that had even more struggles.

I also want to put on the record that we're grateful to Yukon First Nations Wildfire for their significant contributions to the flood and fire responses this past spring and summer. We have a great partnership with them, and it's only getting stronger over time.

At the moment in the supplementary budget, \$3.8 million is earmarked for flood-related expenses, particularly for response efforts needed in Teslin, Carmacks, Ross River, and Upper Liard. There may be some financial assistance from the federal government, but how much and when remains to be seen.

Now, no sooner had the team at Community Services achieved some respite from the flood emergency throughout the territory than an unprecedented weather event led to more than 21,000 lightning strikes across the territory. The lightning caused 20 new fires a day at its peak, and there were 136 fire starts in late June and early July. This wasn't a record fire year — it was certainly higher than average — but the thing that was most challenging for Community Services was that many of the fires occurred near communities, infrastructure, and other high-value targets.

I applaud the handling of evacuation alerts. Road and bridge closures and other events this summer were extremely challenging for the team. We had support from BC and Alberta as well. I applaud the residents, firefighters and first responders, communities, and public servants across the territory who navigated this difficult season so well.

From preparation to mitigation to cleanup, this work is critical to ensuring that our communities and their residents continue to be protected from the ongoing risks and challenges of climate change, including increased flooding and this more challenging fire activity.

What we are seeing is a change in our summers. I encourage all travellers moving through this incredible territory to be self-sufficient, as many are in the winter. Carry food, water, and gear that may be helpful if you are stranded while travelling to your destination. As I said, we do this in the winter routinely, but now we have to start looking at this in the summertime. I encouraged this during the summer this year, and I am doing it again. Keep a kit at home, and when you are travelling, make sure you have the gear you need to be self-sufficient for a few days.

Now, as I said, the fires were close to our communities and infrastructure this summer. Fighting these fires was costly.

So, \$16 million of the new spending that we are asking for in this supplementary budget is required to cover wildland fire costs associated with this more active fire season this summer. This includes costs associated with clean-up efforts happening this fall.

Now, as I've said, climate change is contributing to these events.

Our government declared a climate emergency in 2019 and released *Our Clean Future* in 2020. It's a nation-leading, 10-year strategy to deal with climate change, energy, and building a green economy. The priorities and goals of the incredible plan



were developed in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, transboundary indigenous groups, and Yukon municipalities. The strategy reflects input from Yukoners, non-governmental and community organizations, industry and private businesses, and First Nations and municipal governments. It is truly a Yukon strategy for tackling climate change, and it is helping to move our territory forward as we navigate the complexities and real-world impacts of climate change.

At all levels of government, we must plan for extreme weather events by creating communities resilient to wildfire and climate change and by investing in infrastructure that protects us from climate disasters.

This means increasingly managing forest fuels and creating wildfire-resilient communities through firesmarted areas and fuel breaks. This is why we are also including \$400,000 to enhance First Nation FireSmart projects with areas that have already been identified. In flood-prone communities, it will be important to consider infrastructure improvements, permanent dikes and breakwaters, and raising roads and highways to an adequate height to protect them against rising water. Some of that work has already been started by Highways and Community Services, but more work needs to be done. We are going to continue to do that work over the coming months and years.

As we think about the future, we must take into account the changes to our climate, landscape, and environment as we plan for our communities and our infrastructure. This is why we continue to move the ball forward on tackling climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and building resilient communities. Two of these major efforts include: regionalization of landfills and the Better Buildings program. Regionalization includes the closure of unregulated transfer stations. That is moving forward in concert with our municipal partners. As you all know, many people feel very strongly about this and we have heard them, but at the end of the day, we need to protect our environment and better manage the waste that we are producing. As my good colleague from the beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and I have often said, we are creating more garbage than ever before, and we really do need to manage it better.

We have heard that the Yukon Party is vehemently against closing rural unregulated dumping stations. The environment has never been on their list of priorities. They have demonstrated this through their efforts to mine the Peel and, more recently, undermine carbon pricing, even though they campaigned for it during their last election. The New Democratic Party is also opposed to the closure of transfer stations. I am a little bit more surprised about that since they generally are climate and environmental champions. For them to demand continued unregulated dumping of all sorts of nasty substances in these unregulated dump sites is, to me, frankly surprising.

The Better Buildings program is also moving ahead. As stated before, this program will enable homeowners and commercial property owners to access low-interest financing to undertake energy retrofits. The program is in its final stages of development as we work to establish municipal and client

agreements. I have been speaking with municipalities across the territory on my community tour. Those are proceeding and we hope to have news on that in the coming weeks. As I understand it, the Climate Change and Energy Solutions Centre is excited in gearing up to deliver this program to Yukoners very soon.

As I said, people want to move to the territory. There is a lot of pressure to create more housing — of course, we have heard that, and we're continuing to advance that file, particularly in Whistle Bend, which has about another five to seven years' worth of development. We made a promise to get out 1,000 lots over our term in office, and this remains our target. This fall and coming winter, we're working toward tendering at least two new phases, a lift station, landscaping projects, and stormwater work, which will be completed next year.

We are moving into high gear on this file. I recently undertook a tour of Whitehorse. I know the city council also took a tour recently. It's amazing how many new developments are happening across Whitehorse and throughout rural Yukon as well. Just this year, we're confident we'll see 200 lots developed in Whistle Bend by the end of the year, and in the meeting that I had with city and First Nation officials this morning, with my good colleague, the housing minister, we learned that more than 288 building permits have been issued this fall, up from 187 last year and 150 the previous year. So, we are making progress on this file.

It's also important to note that the shift does not happen on a whim. It has taken a herculean effort on the part of Community Services, the Yukon Housing Corporation, and Energy, Mines and Resources to advance this file, and it has been consistent over many years. These things don't happen overnight. We have been working on these issues, on these files, for years now, and we're starting to see the fruits of that labour.

I know that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources would agree that we owe our teams a ton of gratitude, and that hard work has not gone unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of going to the Summer Games this summer and participate in the opening ceremonies. It was incredible to see our athletes and the enthusiasm of the teams across the country, but I think that there is particular enthusiasm in Yukon, which literally glowed under the lights of that opening ceremony in Niagara. It's important that we went, because we wanted to see and gear up for our bid to host the 2027 Canada Winter Games.

This story continues to be written, as we work with Ottawa, but I remain hopeful that the games will be hosted here in Whitehorse in 2027. This will be a huge benefit for the Yukon, for Yukon youth, the City of Whitehorse, the Yukon's business community, Yukon University, and the territory as a whole — our First Nations. The benefits from hosting this event will be extraordinary for the territory, much as they were in 2007, when we became the first jurisdiction north of 60 to host the event.

We are going to see not only new infrastructure, but new housing, as well, tied to this bid — an unprecedented housing investment. So, it is going to be great for the city and the territory, and I want to thank the City of Whitehorse for recently

voting this move forward with near-unanimous consent. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that most of the council is united in support of this event, which garners national recognition and provides so many spinoff benefits to our community.

I also want to thank the many, many people who have worked to get the bid that we submitted together, especially Piers McDonald, head of the Canada Games bid committee. There has been a ton of people working on this file for more than a year, and Piers has led that team, and I really can't thank them all enough. They have done just an incredible job.

I have two files, Mr. Speaker, including the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board. I want to highlight the new *Workers' Compensation Act*, which came into force on July 1. To ensure successful implementation, the board updated policies, held stakeholder information sessions, and updated forms and information on its website. I will also note that this new act came forward without raising rates on a whole swath of businesses, which could have happened had votes in the House last spring gone differently.

I want to thank our civil servants out there for all that they do, day in and day out, to make these things happen.

Yesterday was Thanksgiving, and I was out walking in my neighbourhood in Whitehorse West, talking to constituents and sharing some eggs, because I have backyard chickens, and the new team is producing exceptionally well these days — producing so many eggs that I can't actually eat them all. As I walked the neighbourhood, I spoke to folks about heat pumps, solar power, and fast-arriving new grandchildren. They spoke about housing affordability with me and the rental market. They spoke about the wind and the weird weather that we have been having in the last couple of weeks, and prepping our yards for winter. Over the summer, they spoke to me about minority government, mental health, supply chain issues, the environment, firesmarting and the Arctic framework, midwifery, equality, and many, many other issues besides.

I'm honoured to represent that constituency, and I thank my constituents for their continued support, ideas, and frequently, more often than not, inspiration. They're an incredible group of people, and I am — this has been a highlight of a career I've had — my life's career, and this is a highlight of my working life.

So, I want to assure everybody today — as I do in my neighbourhood and on my community tours — that this side of the House is firmly focused on building a strong future for Yukoners, and we're going to continue that work as long as we possibly can. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time of the House this afternoon, and I will conclude my remarks.

**Hon. Ms. McLean:** It is my pleasure to speak to our government's 2022-23 supplementary budget.

I rise today as the MLA for Mountainview, as well as Minister of Education and the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. As I stand here on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, I'm filled with gratitude but also focus and commitment to continuing to move the territory forward.

Mr. Speaker, a tremendous amount of work has taken place since we were here in the Assembly last spring. Before I share the details of that work and what it means to Yukoners, I'll take some time to reflect on a ceremony that took place recently with me and department officials and our spiritual leader, Phil Gatensby. This ceremony was to set the intention for beautiful glass feathers that will be gifted to each of the eight schools transitioning to the Yukon First Nation School Board. We took the time to come together and share with one another the intentions we wanted these feathers to represent. The ceremony was personal; it was emotional and directed to Yukon children who will come up through the school system and those who will support them. Mr. Speaker, I share this story to acknowledge the spirit and human connection of the work that is done within these walls and throughout the territory. It was an honour for me to connect in that way and know the intention that was set with these feathers will be felt for generations to come.

Together with our partners, we are reimagining Yukon's school system. It took many decades for Yukon's education system to become what it is today, and our government is committed to doing the hard work and the right work to undertake the system transformation that is needed to continue to work and move things forward for the benefit of all students in the Yukon. The department is making system-wide changes that advance reconciliation and decolonization of education.

We are focused on the important work of recovering from the pandemic and responding to the Auditor General of Canada's report — the review of kindergarten to grade 12 education in the Yukon and the 2021 review of inclusive and special education. We cannot undertake this transformational work without our partners and their trust — the trust of educators, students, and families who are at the heart of the work we are doing. We need to strike a balance of between taking actionable progress and taking the time needed to build trusting relationships.

We must do things differently if we want to see different results. We are managing all of this important work within our existing budget resources.

We recognize that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been the same for all students. We are committed to providing supports for recovery, because the health and well-being of Yukoners is the foundation of a bright future for our territory.

We have developed and shared a two-year pandemic recovery plan that educators are using to support their learners. The plan focuses on key priorities, including inclusive and special education, mental health and wellness, numeracy, literacy, and core competencies. We continue to assess student learning and are closely monitoring the impacts of the pandemic on learners' outcomes. Our budget includes \$400,000 for mental health supports in schools for the 2022-23 budget in recognition of these increased mental health and wellness needs for students.

We will continue to work with the school councils, First Nation governments, and partners to determine how best to coordinate student supports and access to service, provide

additional training for school counsellors, enhance student outreach and awareness, and offer training and supports to school staff in developmentally responsive approaches to mental health and awareness of mental wellness needs.

Together with the Chiefs Committee on Education, on February 14 of this year, we established the new First Nation School Board. The Government of Yukon, Chiefs Committee on Education, and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate share the common goal of providing high-quality and culturally appropriate education based on an indigenous worldview for all Yukon students.

The First Nation School Board now governs eight schools across the Yukon, with 655 students enrolled in these schools. This is a historic step for Yukon First Nations and their citizens. The First Nation School Board trustee election will occur in November 2022. Yukon residents with an ancestral Yukon First Nation language, along with parents of children attending a First Nation School Board-governed school, are eligible to run and vote. The First Nation School Board is enabling Yukon First Nations to reclaim greater responsibility for the administration and management of education programs for students in their communities.

On September 20, I joined the community of Haines Junction, Dakwakada, in coming together to mark a new era of education for the St. Elias Community School and First Nation School Board. This was the first of many ceremonies, as a number of schools begin the transition to the First Nation School Board. It was an incredibly moving day that included a feast, dancing, and singing. It was done in the way of a potlatch. Students told stories in the language of Southern Tutchone, and there was a smudge around the entire school. This is where the first of the eight glass feathers were gifted as a symbol of that transition to the First Nation School Board.

As part of our ongoing commitment to advancement of meaningful reconciliation through action, we recently announced funding for a new public school in Burwash Landing. Through these investments, we aim to honour the long-standing request of Kluane First Nation and the school community and to demonstrate our government's commitment to move in this new way through their house of learning in Burwash Landing, where most of the school-aged children live.

It was a privilege for me to be in the community of Burwash to make this announcement alongside my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Public Works. We heard from elders, and we heard from schoolchildren dressed in their regalia, who sang songs with us. After the announcement, Chief Bob Dickson took time to tour us around and show us where the building will be built, and it is right along beautiful Kluane Lake.

The Kluane First Nation requested a school to be built in Burwash Landing more than 100 years ago. Our government is proud to respond to this long-standing request, and it was an honour for me to stand alongside Chief Dickson in his community to announce that it is finally coming to fruition.

We are working with our partners and stakeholders to reimagine and create schools that are safe, inclusive, and to build on students' strengths and ensure that every child feels

connected and supported to thrive. A key initiative that I recently announced, which is launching this fall, is ready-to-learn schools, based on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model. Ready-to-learn schools is a program that supports schools effecting positive change and well-being for all students and staff. The program is grounded in the understanding that children can only learn when they feel safe and calm. This model trains teachers and staff to be developmentally responsive, to recognize that a child's chronological age may not match their emotional, cognitive, or social age. Most importantly, it helps educators to understand how trauma and toxic stress impacts brain development, functioning, and learning.

This initiative empowers our teachers and school staff to understand, honour, support, and guide our children so that they are ready to learn as they travel along their own unique path through education.

A key priority and a continuing key driver of our budget is early learning and child care. Investing in children is a priority for our government — a key way to improve learners' outcomes and a core element of our work to make life more affordable for Yukon families. This program saves Yukon families up to \$700 per child per month. This is an absolute game changer for Yukon families.

We heard loudly in various engagements on universal childcare that, in addition to affordability and accessibility for families, we needed to address quality. We have made great strides to address the quality by: increasing wages for educators to some of the highest wages now in Canada; introducing funding for operators to access comprehensive benefits; investing in continuing education of educators; and increasing our funding for program and cultural supports to enhance early learning programs.

We are investing heavily in professional learning and development opportunities. We know the importance of children's early years and the effect those early years have on the rest of their lives. It is in these early years that our youngest learners develop vital physical, cognitive, and social skills needed to set them on a path to future health and success. I want to thank all of the people who have been involved in this important work. The Yukon is now recognized as a national leader in early learning and childcare. That is great news for Yukon families and is something that all Yukoners can be proud of.

There is nothing more important than the well-being, safety, and protection of students when they are in our care. The Department of Education has developed a student protection policy preventing and responding to harm by adults, and related procedures, in response to action 6 of the safer schools action plan and its commitment to safeguard students while in the care of adults while engaged in school activities. The policy and related procedures outline how staff are to fulfill their responsibility to prevent, respond, and report alleged or suspected harm or inappropriate behaviour by adults in order to foster safe and caring school environments. Implementation of the policy and related procedures took place with all school-based staff at the end of September.

I am also pleased to reflect on the supplementary budget from my role as the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. The work of the directorate keeps equity at the heart of what we do. The work continues to strengthen the depth of our work to reflect equity of all genders and sexual orientation. The government continues to move the Yukon forward with the implementation of the LGBTQ2S+ action plan.

With over 100 action items, the action plan paves a path forward to end discrimination and improve inclusivity, both within Government of Yukon services and within the territory as a whole. The themes of the action plan are health care, education, youth, community and culture, inclusive governance, Yukon government as a workplace, public facilities, gender data, and tourism and culture. As well, it is notable that we released our plan last July. Canada has now released a LGBTQ2S+ action plan. Again, a Yukon that leads, I think, is really evident in so much of the work that we have the pleasure of being involved in.

I would also like to highlight the important work that is happening at the directorate to implement Yukon's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and two-spirit-plus strategy. The Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to release our response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and we continue to work hard to make the necessary changes. The strategy contains 31 actions in four main paths: strengthening connections and supports; education and economic empowerment; community safety and justice; and community dialogue and action. I have pledged our commitment to end violence against indigenous women and to work together to implement *Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ Strategy*.

Since the strategy was released, I have worked hard with the advisory committee to create an implementation plan — the path that will provide guidance to the strategy. We have worked really hard together to also identify priority areas. In May, we had our first accountability forum. We released at that time the priorities that we think that our partners need to focus on first. There will be much more to come on this in the next short time over this fall. I really want to thank all of the partners for continuing to show up and do the hard work, because there have been times when it has been very difficult and very triggering for us as indigenous women to continue to forge this path forward. We know that many victims of gender-based violence experience barriers to accessing services.

The sexualized assault response team has broken down some of these barriers. We are now actively planning approaches to expand the SART services to communities beyond Whitehorse. The expansion of SART services into the communities and enhanced training for support workers for indigenous culture and values were two key priorities identified at the Yukon Forum, which my colleagues and I participated in last week. The Minister of Health and Social Services and of Justice and I are leading this work together. We are working in partnership with Yukon First Nations to advance important work around reconciliation.

As I wrap up my address today on Bill No. 206, the supplementary estimates, I reflect upon the time I took this past summer to connect with constituents at various events and meetings. It was great to again be able to gather in large groups. A notable event for me this summer was a Kwanlin Dün First Nation community fun day. It was such a nice opportunity to come together. Hundreds of citizens came together alongside the RCMP and Kwanlin Dün First Nation. I was able to connect with people there, listen to the stories, share meals, and take in some performances by Yukon artists. It was really great to hear the children laughing again and enjoying our beautiful Yukon summer that we had.

Recently, I hosted another MLA event — this time a pancake breakfast at Elijah Smith school, with musical performances by Matthew Lien and Bria Rose McLean. With over 100 people in attendance, it was another great way to connect with constituents and hear how people are doing, find out what's important to them, and share the good work that our government is doing on their behalf and how we are building a strong future for Yukoners.

We know that safety is an important issue in my riding. I continue to work with the Mountainview community safety and wellness committee, which is a working group. This group has held meetings over the summer, with participation from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the RCMP, our community associations and the City of Whitehorse. The working group will continue to prioritize community safety, and I look forward to more of these important discussions.

Finally, all of what I spoke about today has been made possible with the dedicated support of many groups and individuals. I would like to thank all of our school staff and all the folks doing the really good work behind the scenes. I thank all my colleagues for the support that they continue to give and, of course, my family for standing by me and supporting me in this important role. Thank you.

**Ms. Tredger:** I am pleased to be rising to respond to the budget today. Of course, as other people have mentioned, there are many, many things that we would like to discuss in the Yukon Territory's broader budget, and most of those aren't being appropriated in this supplementary budget, so this is my opportunity to speak to some of the broader issues that I see in this budget.

I want to start by talking about housing, because we say it over and over and over again — we say we're in a housing crisis; we talk about the number of people who are homeless; we talk about the number of people struggling to pay their rent; we talk about the number of people who can't find homes.

We talk a lot about numbers, so I want to start by telling a story. I think it's really important that, as we sit here in the Legislature, we remember what's actually happening for people outside of this room. So, I want you to imagine that you're a senior — that you're in your 80s and you just got out of hospital. It has been a scary time and you're feeling pretty happy to go home. You're really excited to be sleeping in your own bed for a change.

In that bed — that bed that's your home, that's your place of safety — you start to feel bugs crawling on you. You start to feel them biting you. You start to find them in the sheets, on your couch, in your baseboards. Imagining that makes my skin crawl. Standing here in the light, I cannot imagine being awake at two in the morning, wondering if every twitch of every breath of air — has something come to bite me or is it just a puff of air? So, now imagine that you call your landlord for help, and you're optimistic because your landlord isn't just a commercial landlord; it's the Yukon government. Their mandate is to provide housing for you as a senior — to protect you — and they give you a list of things to do. They tell you: "Yes, we'll fumigate. But first you need to clean your baseboards. You need to vacuum your house. You need to wash everything in your house." Imagine being an 86-year-old who has just come out of the hospital and trying to imagine vacuuming your baseboard and hauling your couch away from the wall. It's a pretty daunting task. It's a pretty daunting task for someone in a precarious medical situation.

Then imagine being told, "Well, we can get someone to help you, but you're going to have to pay for it." You're going to have to pay to get that extra help to go back to a basic level of safety in your home.

Imagine, when you talk to people in that department, them telling you, "It is just like mosquitoes. It is annoying; it is a nuisance." I find that pretty hard to imagine, but that is what is happening. Those are the stories I am hearing. Those are stories that I have heard recently. Those are stories that I have heard today; that is what is happening.

I was really interested to see a ruling that came out of Ottawa about bedbugs and landlords and landlord obligations. A quote from the ruling — and I quote: "There is no level of bedbug infestation that is acceptable and can be allowed to continue indefinitely ... while the landlord pursues only the cheapest available treatment and does nothing to prevent the spread of bedbugs to and from other units." "It is also simply logical: when one method or approach is not working, it is time to try another method."

How long have we been talking about bedbugs in this Legislature? I have been talking about it since my first day here. I am pretty sure that it has been talked about for a long time, and I certainly hope so because it has been going on for a very, very long time. I know that it is not an easy problem to solve, but it is time for new methods and new approaches.

Where is the money for that in this budget? I don't see it.

It is also — I know that it has been talked about for a long time, but Safe at Home included it as one of their 10 calls to action on homelessness. Those were 10 actions that could happen now. They came out — I think that it has been a couple of months now. They could happen before winter hits. We are lucky that we are having a long fall, but winter is coming, and for anyone who is facing homelessness, it is getting scarier and scarier.

So, I was really disappointed in this budget not to see new money that is going to help implement those 10 calls to action. I think that we often hear the idea from this government that: "We are doing our best; we are doing our best with the housing

crisis." But we know that they are not because these are 10 calls to action from experts — people on the ground, people who are experts in this material — and those haven't happened.

Speaking of their calls to action, let's talk about evictions. We have talked a lot about evictions without cause, so I won't take up more time talking about it now, although that is, I think, number one on their list. Let's talk about evictions in Yukon Housing Corporation units. Imagine, again, being someone who has faced housing insecurity for a long time, and you are finally in a unit, you are finally stable — you think this is it. Maybe you have gotten a little behind — maybe it has been \$30 or \$50 that you missed on your rent last month — and you get a notice of eviction on your door. Now, my understanding is that the department is pretty willing to work with people on these. They don't want to evict people; they want to be flexible. But my question is: Is that told to the tenants?

Do they get that in their notice of eviction? Are they told: We want to work with you? We want to provide housing for you? I would have liked to ask the minister, but I know I won't get that opportunity in the Budget Address, so I will mention it here.

I want to talk a little bit more about housing supply. In the last Sitting, we were told that the Yukon Housing units on Jeckell would be open in the spring, which it turned out meant late July. I have been driving back and forth, watching the progress and seeing the lights come on. I am not actually sure if there are people in there now. I hope that is the case. I hope that people are there and, if not, that it is very soon. We need people in those units.

I wonder what the next big project is. I, of course, have been disappointed to see that Macaulay Lodge is being sold off, rather than used for Yukon Housing units. I know that there was an expression of interest in May, I believe. I would love to hear an update on that. That's a really essential piece of land that could provide a lot of housing. I was very disappointed when I read the expression of interest and how affordability was not mentioned once.

I have been talking about housing, because it is so important. We all know that. It is the basis of everything. If you don't have a home, how can you be healthy? How can you be engaged in your community? How can you make your life better if you don't have a place to live? I also want to talk about our broader home — our collective earth — the Earth. As we have said so many times, we are in a climate crisis. We saw that this summer. In case anyone was doubting, I think that the fires, the floods, and the landslides would be enough to convince everyone — I really hope.

I was incredibly excited about when the Climate Leadership Council came out with their report not too long ago. This is a commitment that was made in the CASA to the NDP, because we looked at *Our Clean Future* and we said, that gets us about halfway to 30 percent. How are we going to get ourselves to 45-percent reductions? There is clearly not a plan, and we need one. I was so proud of the Yukoners who came together, the experts — and when I say "experts", I mean that in a very broad way. There were people with expertise from lived experience, with technical knowledge, and with social

knowledge, and they all came together and came out with this report.

I was so excited and proud of this report. Reports aren't always easy to read. We do a lot of it, and I think we forget sometimes just how complicated they can be. This was a pretty readable report, in my opinion, and it had so many great ideas. I heard the Minister of Environment talk about his excitement about this report, but what's the next step? We need an implementation plan.

Now, I didn't expect to see funding to implement those recommendations in this supplementary budget, because it did just come out recently. I think that's fair enough, but is there funding for the creation of an implementation plan? That's something we would have seen coming. Or can it be managed within the department's resources? Do we have a deadline for when we expect an implementation plan or a formal response to the report? I think there's two really important pieces to responding to that report. One, they actually provided recommendations to get us further than 45-percent reductions. So, we need to pick some of those. Which ones are we going to do? Which ones are we going to prioritize?

They also included a number of recommendations that don't have specific greenhouse gas reductions associated with them, but are broader concepts, like leadership and capacity. I am hoping that this government will create a formal response to those recommendations. Are they going to implement them? If not, why not? If they are, then how?

Speaking of responses to panels on climate change — because I think the reports are starting to pile up and what we need is action — the Youth Panel on Climate Change — in the spring, the Minister of Environment told me that there's a commitment to work through these recommendations and to respond. In that conversation, I had said, "Well, I've already seen a letter from the Premier to the Youth Panel, but is there going to be a further response?" He said yes. I haven't heard about it. Is it coming? I hope so, because those youth worked incredibly hard, and they haven't had — their recommendations have not yet had their fair consideration in response. So, I look forward to that.

What about the wetlands policy? It's supposed to be out in 2022 — was the plan. So, the clock is ticking. I've talked a lot with various ministers in this House about the degradation of carbon sinks. So, when we're talking about climate change, there's the greenhouse gases we produce, but every time we dig up a wetland, for example, or disturb peat, we get carbon released into the atmosphere, and that counts too. That also contributes to climate change. Generally, I've been told that estimating the effects of that — like how much carbon is released — is really hard. So, is there money to do it? Where is the money to figure that out and to figure out how it's being released, how much is being released? And most importantly of all, how are we going to stop it? How are we going to take the steps to make sure that carbon stays in the ground, instead of pushing climate change forward faster and faster and faster?

I was looking through the capital plan today. The money for green energy starts to drop off after — I think it's 2025 — mostly because of the number of major energy projects wrap up

— we hope. The Atlin hydro and the grid-scale battery projects are due to wrap up at that time. I hope that will be the case.

Something that the Climate Leadership Council said really stuck with me. They talked about a wartime effort, because we are in a crisis, as if we were in a war. More recently, what comes to mind is a pandemic-time effort. The amount of effort — we move mountains to protect people at a time of crisis. We are still in a time of crisis. We still need to move mountains to make it happen, and I don't see it in this budget. In every budget and supplementary budget that comes, I hope we start seeing that wartime effort, that recognition of "We're in a crisis". We can't just say it; we have to act like we're in a crisis. I don't see it in this budget.

I posed a number of questions today. I hope, during this Sitting, we will have time to discuss some of them, but most of all, I hope for a shift to move the mountains we need to move to fight climate change.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** It's a pleasure to be back in the Legislature. I wanted to begin just by saying welcome to all MLAs to the House. As we stand collectively to speak about the supplementary budget, I think the main theme is: How are we moving the Yukon forward? Forward out of COVID, forward in response to the climate crisis, forward dealing with housing, forward dealing with inflation? — all those incredibly important questions.

I am always challenged by the Legislature, because the way this House works — we're set up to be a government and opposition. In that role, of course, there is criticism. I believe in how that is, but I also recognize that it's very important that we find ways to disagree with each other respectfully, because frankly, when I work with other governments, or the public for that matter, there is always way more respect in those places. So, how do we find a way here in the Legislature to work with different perspectives, different visions, for where the Yukon should go and to still be respectful?

So, let me start, just for a moment, with acknowledging some of the colleagues across the way. I saw the Leader of the Official Opposition up at the Discovery Days ball tournament, sporting a very impressive mustache for the games.

I spent a lot of my summer with the Member for Lake Laberge and the Leader of the Third Party, talking to Yukoners about electoral reform and travelling around the territory and working side-by-side — again, with different perspectives often, but at all times working for the better of the Yukon — how do we move the Yukon forward?

I saw my colleague, the Member for Copperbelt South, just last week at the Golden Horn School for the school council annual general meeting. It is good to see colleagues doing their work around the territory.

On my own side of the Assembly, I worked this summer with my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, around issues like the bilingual health centre, and I appreciated getting that opportunity. I worked very closely with the Minister of Environment around the Climate Leadership Council, and I will speak to that a bit more, but just really about: How we do move even more assertively on addressing climate

change? I worked with my colleagues, the Minister of Yukon Housing and the Minister of Community Services, looking at land development around the territory and really trying to support the development of housing. I have worked — of course, we have crossed paths often — but just last week with the Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate — I saw her at National Truth and Reconciliation Day, spending the full day at Kwanlin Dün. It was a really great day; it was quite an impressive day.

So, what my impression is, is that we are working to improve life for Yukoners and move things forward. Let me, just for a moment, Mr. Speaker, turn and talk about work within my own riding. I always call it “beautiful Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes”. I am sure that every one of our ridings is beautiful to each of us. One of my favourite volunteer things that I do every couple of years is to get together with the community of Tagish to clean up the brush and fallen trees in the little Tagish cemetery. There were 15 or 20 of us there. Most of the folks are north of 60, if I can say that politely, and running chainsaws and equipment. They are all doing this work. It’s just a very nice time to connect.

There are so many things that happened this past summer. Of course, I can’t list them all, but what I felt this past summer was us opening up again. I remember, even at the Special Olympics gala dinner, feeling a little nervous with all the people who were there in the room. It felt like — well, okay, because it has been COVID for a long time, we had to get used to being around each other. I had a couple of celebrations of life — a few of them, actually — because they didn’t happen during COVID and this was a chance for people to gather.

Of course, I did a lot of travelling as minister in and out of the territory. Just generally, it was great to see people, to talk to them, to go to their homes, and to talk about the issues that they are facing. It was really nice to be together again. Not that all of those conversations are easy. For example, the Southern Lakes hit its third-highest level ever, but that was low compared to many of the other communities around the Yukon where floods were experienced. We were lucky, because the defenses that so many — including the residents of Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes and Yukoners who came out and volunteered — put up last year in 2021 helped so that the third-highest flood wasn’t as bad as it could have been any other year. Now what has happened is that we were on our way down and our lake levels were dropping, but suddenly they are back up. It makes people nervous, because there is a lot of groundwater out there.

This past weekend, I am sure that everyone experienced the crazy winds around southern Yukon. Thank you to all of the folks who went to get power back on and to our volunteer firefighters who dealt with burning trees on power lines. It was a lot of work. I think this all — the floods and the fires — are climate-related.

I think that with the conversations that I have had with Yukoners around the territory and in my own riding, there have been several issues that are incredibly important, including recovering from COVID, the cost of living and affordability, housing, climate change — these are all incredibly important

questions. Let me try to get to a few of these in my conversation today.

First of all, with respect to firewood, I want to say that I know there are many Yukoners who are concerned about getting firewood this winter, and I know that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources has been working to address this firewood shortage, and it is a top priority for them. I thank them for that work. I also want to thank harvesters and suppliers who are working overtime to make sure Yukoners get their wood. This is very hard work, and I appreciate all that’s being done by the industry to fill firewood orders as quickly as possible.

I can say that the Forest Management branch has been working closely with operators to ensure that more local firewood will start moving into the Yukon market soon. I am glad to see operations like Quill Creek back up and active again. I know that, despite having a significant volume of fuel wood under active permits, we still have heard from industry that some of that wood is not economically viable. So, we are working, doing quite a few things, to get more supply in place, as well as trying to bring down the cost for Yukoners — homeowners — who heat with firewood because of the inflationary cost, but we are working at finding more alternative areas to license for harvesters. We are working with them to pick those areas. We are building and upgrading roads into firewood permit areas. We are connecting harvesters with suppliers. We are also identifying suppliers who are taking new wood orders and connecting them with Yukoners who are looking. We have been meeting with the Government of British Columbia to support operators in accessing permits.

Again, as I have said in the past, typically, there are areas along the north end of the Stewart-Cassiar Highway that some of our harvesters use, which is in BC, so we are working with BC to try to support those permits.

We are working on a Haines Junction firebreak for the Quill Creek area, which will allow for harvesting beyond the time of year that is there now. We are identifying sources of previously harvested wood that could be moved to market, so there are a lot of things that the branch is doing. I’m happy to talk more about that over the course of this Sitting.

I also want to talk about electricity. We have put in place a rebate for Yukoners. We talked about that this past spring, and we’ve decided to extend that. I will say that, throughout this time, I have worked with ATCO energy, as well, because they have earned more money than was anticipated, and we will continue to work with them. They have something in front of the Yukon Utilities Board right now, but I have been in dialogue and correspondence with them to encourage them to go much further.

Other things that I can talk about — I do want to talk a little bit about the recent slides that we’ve seen. I want to thank the folks in Highways and Public Works. I know that the Yukon Geological Survey has been working with them to try to identify risk areas and how to assess that risk and to ensure that people are safe. So, just a shout-out to all of that work.

There is a lot that has been happening, and again, it’s because we have been getting very extreme weather. We had a heavy, heavy snow year around the whole of the territory,

which saturates the soils. We then had a lot of rain. It's not everywhere in the Yukon, but certainly up in the Dawson region, there was a lot of rain. We had slides here in Whitehorse. We had slides up in Dawson. Along the Alaska Highway, we've been seeing permafrost slumping. So, there are all sorts of issues that are at work, and I think it's important that we work to stay on top of that.

Now, one of the ways that we're doing that is at the root cause, which is around climate change. Now, even though we will work very hard to reduce our emissions, the thing to understand is that, especially here in the north, change is already going to happen, because the climate is slow to warm; it is slow to cool. So, no matter whether we take a wartime footing or not — and I think we are taking an aggressive stance here in the Yukon — it will still take time to reduce those emissions, and in the meantime, we will see many impacts and we will have to adapt, which is why I think that it is great that the Department of Environment came out with its major adaptation strategy — again, a piece of *Our Clean Future*.

I too would like to thank the Yukon Climate Leadership Council for their amazing work. It really is great. They did a lot of hard work, and they have given us some great suggestions. However, those suggestions — the first thing that we do with them is we put them through the modelling process that we have already done with all of the other actions. That is the first step that is required. We spoke about this with the council themselves and asked them if they could work with us on that. It is really important to understand that, when you put forward an action over here and another one over here, if they overlap, then you don't get the same emissions reduction, and you have to do that analysis.

I have asked our departments that are looking at these to look for which of the actions they would think are what I would call “no regrets” actions, so that no matter whether you do them, they are a smart investment and that we should get going on those right away, but that they do this diligence work on the modelling and that we work with the Climate Leadership Council. So, I think that there is work underway right now to try to assess those actions and to see their viability and which ones are going to give us the best bang for the buck.

Of course, we would also need to do some costing on some of them, or on many of them, because it is the diligence that is required. I have asked the department to do that, and I do think that there should be a strategy around what steps to take as a result of the recommendations. And as far as I am aware, that was already budgeted and anticipated within this budget, so it is not coming here on the supplementary budget, but it is work that is underway.

I will make one comment. Yesterday in Question Period, a question arose around the growth of the public service. I checked back to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics to see which number they had published. The Premier was correct. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Official Opposition was not current. The number that the Bureau of Statistics put out is not Yukon government public servants; it is all public servants within the Yukon. The number that was published was 11,000. I think that roughly half of that, or less, would be our permanent

and term employees here in the Yukon government, but it includes, for example, federal government workers here in the Yukon. It includes First Nation governments; it includes municipal governments; it includes the hospitals; it includes the university — all of those people who are employed in the public service.

So, I disagree with the characterization. Within our budgets, we always talk about the growth in the public service. We publish that information, and I am always wanting, as the Premier asked Thursday, that if the opposition suggests that we should stop growing government, I would like them to point out which areas they think we should reduce the staffing in. It's important to note that, whether it's our highways or whether it is our mental wellness workers — what is that area that they believe we should have fewer people in? Because you can't have it both ways.

Before I leave that subject, I will note that I think it was this past spring when the Leader of the Official Opposition talked about growth of the Yukon's public service and noted that it began under Premier Fentie and continued under his term with Premier Pasloski. He was expressing concerns about that growth, but he noted that it goes back a long way. At the same time, we should acknowledge that the Yukon is growing. While it grows, and if it grows as a territory, we will need more teachers for our schools. We will need more nurses for our health care centres. It is just natural that there is growth within the public service, but how much is the right amount?

I want to talk a little bit about a few numbers. I listened to some of the suggestions. Actually, I would like to say thank you to the NDP, because today they have decided to talk about budget issues. I have not heard the Official Opposition, the Yukon Party, talk about budget issues at all yet today. I don't think that they are going to, but okay, that is their prerogative. When I listened, for example, to the Third Party official House Leader, she talked about how we need to be investing in climate change and we need to be serious about it, and I just want to note that —

**Speaker:** Twenty seconds.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will wrap up my comments just to say that I think it's very important that we invest in *Our Clean Future*, and we are investing \$80 million this year.

So, while the Leader of the Official Opposition talked about the Queen and talked about —

**Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Blake:** When the budget was tabled this past spring, I spoke about the many Yukoners who have come to me to share their concerns about gaps in government services and the barriers they are facing. I continued to hear these experiences and stories, especially during my visits across the territory this summer. I spoke with citizens, as well as representatives of Teslin Tlingit Council, Ross River Dena Council, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, and more.



I also continued my visits to Old Crow, connecting with residents of the community and members of Vuntut Gwitchin. As well, I had the opportunity to learn about what is working and how government can help people by attending the Gwich'in Tribal Council's general assembly in Fort McPherson, NWT. All of these conversations made one thing very clear to me: From Faro to Teslin, Ross River to Mayo, Whitehorse and Old Crow, and so many more places, Yukoners are struggling. It's getting more difficult to put food in the fridge and wood in the stove. In Old Crow, we've continued to see challenges with the water delivery and septic pump-out services.

Many families and communities are grieving losses from the opioid and mental health crisis, as we've witnessed the number of young people whom we've lost. Rural communities are experiencing and living with compound grief. Many are not able to access the mental and primary health care they need when they need it, especially in times of crisis. Youth are feeling left behind by this government, with no support to get the training they want and no help to process the losses in their communities, while struggling to keep their attendance in school and managing the responsibilities these youth carry in their young lives.

Unfortunately, this supplementary budget does not adequately reflect any of these experiences and needs. There is no new funding for mental health or substance use, even though the minister has declared a mental health and substance use emergency.

Many communities across the territory have declared states of emergency before the Yukon government, and they are still experiencing these crises with little government support.

Yes, there were two mental wellness summits, and the ideas shared at both mental wellness summits were valuable and innovative, but this budget shows us that this government is not committed to enacting those ideas anytime soon, yet Yukoners will continue to fall through the gaps of government systems. Each community has its own unique needs, and they have expressed them to this government multiple times, but this supplementary budget is ignoring them. This government speaks often about the importance of preventive health care, but they haven't made it a reality for Yukoners. Right now, very few Yukoners have access to primary and non-urgent health care.

The *Putting People First* report said that primary care should follow Yukoners from birth until death, but without any plans in place from this government, they are telling Yukoners that they should give up on ever getting primary care. The only dedicated health care money is to address the surgery backlog. Acute care needs to be addressed, but where are the funds applied to preventive care?

The thousands of Yukoners on the family doctor wait-lists aren't getting any solutions or relief in this budget. There is no commitment to a public walk-in clinic, which could easily provide much-needed holistic care to many Yukoners.

There is still no clear strategy on recruiting health care workers, including physicians, nurse practitioners, paramedics, and other health care practitioners.

Right now, Yukoners are relying on emergency services to fill the gaps in nursing in communities, leaving the system and workers stretched thin and burnt out with no support.

In my riding of Vuntut Gwitchin, we rely heavily on the medevac system to get access to emergency care. There are solutions out there. The NWT has committed to training paramedics so that their emergency services are stronger for citizens who need urgent help.

On top of lack of health care services, many Yukoners are struggling to keep up with the rising costs. The most impacted are those who are living in poverty already. I have spoken many times on the need to increase supports for folks who are on social assistance. Right now, the system continues to trap people in poverty. People are going hungry and cold because they don't have the support they need. A one-time payment is not even close to enough to help people.

Elders have reached out to me to tell me that they are having to choose between medication and access to food. Families in extended family care agreements are struggling to care for the children they have committed to raising and supporting. Children are our future, and this government is leaving them behind. Many youth have come to me expressing that they want support to further their education and get the right training to work full time in a career that they find fulfilling, but they aren't getting the help they need. Part of the help includes education. Investment in language and culture has been highlighted as a priority by Yukon First Nations. There is a definite need for secure, long-term funding for language programs to be developed and expanded into the homes of families and caregivers. Our elders have always said that language and culture go hand in hand, as this is what shapes who we are as Yukon First Nation people, but there is no money dedicated to that in this budget.

We are seeing a shift in the way that education is being delivered in the territory with the creation of the Yukon First Nation School Board. This is an exciting change, as we know how the history and trauma of the Yukon's education system has impacted many Yukoners through residential schools. Investment in this change to our education system is critical — not just to our children today, but for their families and their children in the decades to come. This is a long-term investment in the Yukon's future, but it isn't present in this budget.

Justice services have also been overlooked by this government. I continue to hear from people who are justice-involved who are not getting the support they need, both while they are incarcerated and when they leave corrections. There is a lack of programming, parole support, and transition support.

Yukoners who struggle with alcohol abuse are still being placed in the Correctional Centre instead of in an appropriate sobering space with health supports.

Essential infrastructure is also missing from this budget. Communities have highlighted that safe, accessible roads — like repairing the Dempster Highway — are not just about transport, but a critical part of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls calls to action.

We only need to take a look to the NWT and their strong commitment to fulfilling the calls to action and every aspect of

government, including their roads, but repairs to the Dempster are not in this budget.

It is not just roads. Water and sewage services are also major needs that are not being supported by this government. Communities like Old Crow are working hard to innovate and provide these critical services to residents. They need support, but this budget does not include any funding to train folks so that these services can continue. This infrastructure also needs to be invested in as our climate worsens.

Many Yukon First Nations have highlighted the current state of salmon as a priority. Salmon not only feeds us, it is an important element of our cultural teachings and traditional practices across generations. Salmon is critical to our wellness and so many parts of lives, but this government hasn't devoted any funds to addressing the low salmon population.

The protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge continues to be a priority for the Gwich'in Nation. The lifeline of our nation and who we are as a people is dependent on the survival of the Porcupine caribou herd. We are witnessing the fast and devastating effects of climate change on the changing cycles of our lands, our fish, our birds, and migrating animals. As First Nation people, our livelihood follows the natural cycles of the seasons and all the natural resources that our lands provide. I spend much of my time in this role learning, reading, and listening to those who came before me. This includes reading reports that were published one, five, 10, and even 20 years ago. It is disappointing to learn how many of these important reports, recommendations, and calls to action have been repeatedly ignored and left to collect dust by this government.

There are so many more issues that Yukoners continue to share with me. I often say that I don't just represent Old Crow; I represent all Yukoners across the territory in this role. That is why I am sharing the concerns from people and communities from the north to the south of our territory. No matter where I have visited, I have heard about gaps in support and people who need the help. It is the government's responsibility to fill those gaps and meet people where they are at. The solutions are in front of us. They are being enacted by First Nation governments, municipalities, community organizations, advocates, parents, nurses, counsellors, and so many others. This government can make life better for people — not just now, but for generations to come. It only takes willpower.

Mahsi'.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. McPhee:** I am happy to rise today. I'm sorry that members opposite — most of the members of the Official Opposition are not speaking to Bill No. 206 today. It contains millions of dollars of previously unplanned expenditures to respond to the needs of Yukoners. This is certainly their opportunity to talk to Yukoners about what they think is important.

I also note that many of the comments today are about how nothing is being done. I guess that's a narrative that the

opposition is trying to write. It is simply not accurate. We too have visited every community and sat with individuals who support us and individuals who don't necessarily vote for us, but they are keen to come to a table to talk about what they see as the needs for their community. We have met in every community since May — the last part of the Sitting. I urge members opposite to share information about the Yukoners who they say are talking to them and have concerns about certain things, because we answer requests like that every single day. We are keen to make sure we have access to and support for Yukoners who are having concerns.

I really appreciate the opportunity to note some of the priorities of our government, some of which are contained in this supplementary budget. My two departments — the ones that I have the honour of representing — do not have funds in this supplementary budget, but that doesn't mean that there aren't millions of dollars allocated to the two budgets for Health and Social Services and for Justice that are being spent and focused on the priorities.

Mr. Speaker, as Deputy Premier, Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, and Minister of Health and Social Services here in the Yukon Territory, I am so very proud of the continued work that our government is doing to provide ongoing support for all those in this wonderful territory and to move it forward.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my family and friends for their endless support and understanding. Being a member of the government is demanding. It is unrelenting, and it is a challenging role that takes a toll on many relationships. Friends and family, thank you. I appreciate your endless support, and it is truly impossible to repay you, so I work to pay it forward and to respond to the needs of Yukoners every day.

I am honoured to be here and also to be the MLA for Riverdale South. Thank you to the people of Riverdale South who put their faith in me to continue to represent them and to bring forward their concerns and help to resolve those issues and bring forward those issues that are of greatest interest and importance to them.

I also want to thank all of our neighbours and friends — hundreds of them — who showed up at the block party we held in September on the beautiful grass next to Mercier school. It was a joint event with the MLA for Riverdale North. We had a great time, a great barbecue, and we were entertained by Cows Go Moo, which is a fantastic, young rock and roll band of Yukoners who formed during COVID and will continue, we hope. One of them is 11 years old; the others are 12 and 13, supported by their schools, different schools they go to, and supported by their parents. It was just a fantastic afternoon, and I know that we will hear more from Cows Go Moo.

Although the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Justice, as I have said, don't have any items in this year's supplementary budget, I am honoured to take the opportunity to highlight some of the great work that the departments are doing and continue to do to serve Yukoners.

We must remember that we all serve Yukoners. We must focus the work of departments and remember that every decision should be characterized by how can we best serve Yukoners. To achieve that shift in thinking, we have changed

our senior management at the Department of Health and Social Services and, in particular, have two new deputy ministers: Michael Hale and Ed van Randen. While both Deputy Minister Hale and Deputy Minister van Randen are new to this role in the Department of Health and Social Services, both bring extraordinary experience from their private sector and public sector careers, and they are using that every day to help make the lives of Yukoners better.

Health and Social Services is a department that reaches each and every individual and family across the territory. Each and every person in the territory, at some point, deals with the department and its many services. Our deputy minister is working with a talented senior management team, and Health and Social Services is always turning their minds to what is in the best interest of Yukoners so that everyone has a positive experience with the services they need. Do we hit the mark every time? No. Do we need to fix things and respond? Absolutely. Is this team doing that? Absolutely. I would like to thank that amazing team for their continued dedication and hard work.

The past few years have been challenging, especially for those who work in Health and Social Services, as the COVID pandemic has challenged Yukoners' physical, mental, and emotional well-being. From working on the front lines to developing policy work, the work that the department does is so diverse, but everything they do on a daily basis is connected and is deeply important to keeping Yukoners healthy and well. I can't truly even begin to understand what front-line workers have been through these last few years, but I can tell you that we know just a little bit about it, having been on a different front line. I must thank every one of them for the work that they have done and are still doing to keep Yukoners healthy.

The actions we are taking to make Health and Social Services better for all Yukoners include those who work within the system, and it's a priority for me and for this government to make sure that they too are healthy individuals. We are committed to moving forward with the recommendations in *Putting People First*, and I had the opportunity to say that a little bit earlier today when answering some questions. As Yukoners may remember, a comprehensive review was done in 2018 to share the experiences of Yukoners in the current health and social system. I want everyone to know that we have heard what has been shared. We are working to create a culture of client-centred care and have an appetite for innovation. We have heard about the challenges that Yukoners and their families have faced in the current siloed system and the systemic racism that has occurred. It is something that we have addressed in the new Yukon Medical Association agreement.

It is recognized and named there as something that must be addressed. The health and social services system could be so much better for Yukoners, and it needs to be transformed, and we have a path forward to improve the quality of care. Putting people first means we are putting the needs of Yukoners front and centre.

Imagine a future where every single Yukoner is linked to a primary care team so they can get high-quality care where and when they need it. Imagine a system where an in-home

assessment could be done for a senior or an elderly parent with a geriatric issue. Imagine a system where there would be digital access to a patient's medical appointments, and imagine creating a health authority to set this process in place.

The health authority is the next foundational step of *Putting People First*, and we are working diligently for that next step. It will be the beginning stages to establish health and wellness Yukon.

In January of 2022, our government declared a substance use health emergency, following an increase in the overdose-related deaths in the territory. The success of the work in the name of the substance use health emergency, the way in which we can change the experiences of our addicted and most vulnerable people, is through partnerships. We are working closely with partners and with Yukon First Nation governments to advance a range of harm-reduction initiative. To focus on harm reduction in response to the public health emergency, there will be a focus on care, a focus on treatment, and a focus on after-care.

The Department of Health and Social Services has started several initiatives, including the creation of a substance use health emergency project executive committee. Some of the initiatives that committee is working on include a new territory-wide public awareness education campaign, focusing on toxic drug supply present in the Yukon, expanding drug testing and safe supply to rural communities and increasing availability in Whitehorse, increasing on-the-land treatment options in the territory, providing training for all mental wellness, substance use, social workers, counsellors, and nurses in acceptance and commitment therapy — an evidence-based model to support clients facing mental wellness and substance use issues. This is a partnership with Health Canada's substance use and addictions program.

We are launching the Car867 program, which is a partnership between the mental wellness/substance use and the RCMP, where a mental health nurse and a trained RCMP officer will respond to appropriate mental health and wellness 911 check calls and many more. Some of the initiatives that have already been actioned include extending the hours of the outreach van and changed hours of the supervised consumption site. We have completed the inhalation room in the supervised consumption site in May 2022.

Blood Ties Four Directions has moved all of their core programming to the supervised consumption site, so that now it is a truly integrated supervised consumption site with harm reduction, counselling, nursing, and other drop-in programs. Blood Ties Four Directions, the CTFN, and Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services partnered to provide door-to-door harm reduction supplies, Naloxone, and opioid information in Carcross and Tagish. In July, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services started the opioid overdose response unit, which is an outreach service where a support worker and/or an LPN can provide outreach services, including harm-reduction services or a referral to opioid treatment services, to individuals recently having experienced an overdose. These are all strong partnerships.

I would like to mention that the supervised consumption site has now been opened and operating in Whitehorse for a full year, and we have, since the end of the Sitting in May, also had outreach on a number of projects and/or meetings. Of course, in February, we had the first mental wellness summit. In September, we had the second one, phase 2. Presenters at both the summits discussed a variety of topics, including mental wellness for youth and in First Nation communities, alcohol harm-reduction models, health care services in rural communities, supports and housing services, prevention and treatment, suicide prevention, harm reduction, opioids and safe supply projects, and after-care and harm-reduction models. We have also instituted a ministerial advisory committee for the substance use health emergency, which met over this summer. I met personally with Minister Bennett and we spoke about a number of these concerns with respect to the substance use health emergency, decriminalization of certain drugs and, in particular, safer supply.

We met with the nurses association on May 2. We worked diligently on a new Yukon Medical Association agreement. The new three-year agreement with the Yukon Medical Association will work to increase Yukoners' access to primary care, while supporting dedicated health care providers. It includes incentives for physicians to take on more patients.

The Yukon Medical Association is an integral partner in providing health services to Yukoners, and I look forward to our work together to continue to improve the experiences of patients and providers by addressing problematic and systemic challenges and building an innovative, collaborative health care system.

Dr. Ryan Warshawski, the president of the Yukon Medical Association, said when speaking about this new agreement — and I quote: “I believe that this will make Yukon one of the most competitive and desirable places to practice medicine in Canada. The agreement recognizes both the unique and integral role of physicians in both health care delivery and leadership. The Yukon Medical Association is committed to working with the Yukon government as a partner in health care moving forwards.”

I would like to thank all of those individuals who dedicated their time and their energy and their skills to negotiating this agreement.

I have also met on more than several occasions with the northern health ministers pan-territorial meetings. We have had discussions on issues of concern to all three northern territories and how we might address them together.

On July 6, the midwifery clinic opened in Whitehorse, and registered midwives are highly trained members of the health care team, and they specialize in caring for people during all stages of pregnancy, labour, birth, and postpartum. We know that the new Yukon midwifery program will provide safe, integrated, free midwifery care to pregnant people and their babies during their pregnancy, birth, and up to eight weeks after the baby's birth. As of September 23, I am proud to say that the Yukon midwifery program is providing their services to Yukoners living in rural communities across the territory. Families now have integrated midwifery.

I think that it is important that I take a moment to address the social assistance rate review that has been mentioned a few times. I am not sure how this is not really getting through to members of the opposition, but I truly hope that Yukoners have heard that our government is committed to reviewing social assistance rates here in the territory, as part of the *Putting People First* recommendations outlined in chapter 5. It is there, and we have committed to doing that, and we have committed to doing that generally, and more specifically, with respect to what is in chapter 5.

The Yukon social assistance rates are among the highest in Canada at the moment and are indexed to inflation, but we know that they may not be meeting all the needs of Yukoners. We continually monitor the program and the rates.

We have started engagement with social assistance delivery agents. Of course, this is a conversation that has to be had with other levels of government, and we are finalizing a plan to respond to the recommendations in *Putting People First* with respect to social assistance rates. This includes action toward recommendation 5.11 to increase the Yukon's supplementary allowance for those excluded from the workforce due to a disability or age to reflect inflation and to continue to index Yukon's supplementary allowance to inflation going forward — 5.7-percent increase of this year. Is that perfect? Absolutely not. Is it addressing everything we need to do? No. But our commitment is there. We will live up to that commitment of a phased-in approach for review, which is, I believe, sitting on my desk.

The transfer of 405 Alexander — yet another Liberal Government of Yukon commitment — that we would transfer the responsibility and operations of 405 Alexander Street to a non-governmental organization. That, I am pleased to say, has been done. These services have been transferred to Connective, which will work in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations. This marks the final phase of the Yukon government's commitment to do that and to have those services monitored and run by a non-governmental organization. Also, there is the management of the Housing First residence on Wood Street and the shelter in Whitehorse to a non-governmental partner as well, and that is a strong success. I am looking forward to a strong and successful partnership where the approach of Connective and the Council of Yukon First Nations is to achieve person-centred and culturally appropriate enhanced care.

We spent a bit of time this summer at Cornerstone for their grand opening in July. I was happy to see that Cornerstone multi-use building. The Yukon government is extremely supportive of this project, and we thank Jillian Hardy for her commitment and dedication. I am sure that there would not have been this achievement without her drive.

We are all acutely aware of Yukoners' concerns with respect to the state of inflation and its effect. We have taken decisions to provide assistance to the most vulnerable and to seniors.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this House today. There are a number of issues that I would love to continue to speak about, but I will take my chance to do so later in the session.

Thank you.

**Mr. Cathers:** I am pleased to rise today in speaking to the supplementary budget. I would note that a few of the issues that I will touch on today — that we will, of course, on behalf of Yukoners, be raising during this Fall Sitting as my colleagues and I in the Yukon Party Official Opposition bring forward the priorities, issues, and concerns that we hear from Yukoners.

I want to start with talking about the doctor shortage. Of course, we have seen this government be incredibly slow to act on the fact that over one-fifth of Yukoners don't have a family doctor — with a report by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, as we previously discussed in this Assembly, showing that the Yukon's rate of physicians per capital is the lowest in Canada and the only jurisdiction to get worse over a five-year period. That is the record of this Liberal government.

We see inflation leading to a cost-of-living crisis with an increasing number of Yukoners having trouble making ends meet. That is contributed to by this Liberal government. Health care wait times in the Yukon for many procedures are beyond what is considered medically acceptable. Does this government have a wait-time reduction strategy? No, they do not, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen specific commitments made by this government, such as opening a publicly funded walk-in clinic and a bilingual health care centre, slip from the timelines the government indicated. The bottom line is that Yukoners who need access to a doctor — unfortunately far too many of them, thousands of them — do not have the ability to get that.

We have seen the government on the issue of the education system pay lip service to priorities in the area of Hidden Valley school. The response in the wake of the very serious situation that happened there has resulted in the Minister of Education making commitments to my constituents to provide them with whatever they needed and failing to meet those commitments.

The Yukon has a firewood shortage. The Yukon, which is a territory that is larger in land mass than almost every country in Europe, surrounded by boreal forest, is importing wood from British Columbia yet again this winter due to this Liberal government's lack of action on providing access to a wood supply for Yukon companies.

In the area of the inflation response, it is interesting that we see that the government has talked about an inflation response but has been very slow to act on it.

Similarly, earlier this year, they declared a substance use emergency related to the opioid crisis, and yet, in the spring, we saw no new positions or services for addictions, and there is not a single dime of new money in this fall budget to provide increased addictions services. While, as we have noted before, we do support effective harm-reduction programs, there is much more that needs to be done, and a real plan to address the opioid crisis needs to be much more than a list of actions focused mainly on harm reduction. In fact, I believe that the number one goal of any substance abuse action plan should be to help as many people as possible break from their addictions and live free from the risk of overdose. It is important that, in

addition to prevention and treatment, appropriate resources are there to help the RCMP go after illicit drug dealers and to arrest and prosecute the people who are selling these toxic drugs. Mr. Speaker, that is something that the RCMP themselves have said.

Moving specifically to the issue of inflation, I want to note that what we see in terms of the recent rollout of initiatives by government with some small measures to try to claim that they are addressing the inflation problem is: First of all, these measures are not in the supplementary budget that we are debating. According to the government's own handouts, the only money that is in the supplementary budget for inflation rebates is reflecting the announcements that they made in the spring. So, in the spring, they made the announcements and the budget was out of date when it was tabled. In the fall, I have in my hand a series of press releases from ministers of this government issued on September 27, 2022 about new measures to support Yukoners most affected by inflation — and the second one, also issued on September 27 of this year, and the third one issued on September 28.

Now, a casual bystander might assume that this rollout of new inflation measures would be reflected and central to the supplementary budget, especially since the Premier's own comments at second reading said that these measures were included in the budget. But the reality is that the budget and the handouts that we have been given by departments show that they are not. They remain unbudgeted — to be picked up at a future date. So, those include the \$50 for firewood cords purchased, and, of course, it does little good to have a rebate for purchasing firewood if you can't find the supply. That is something that we have heard repeatedly from Yukoners.

It includes the carry-forward of the electrical subsidy, which we see reflected in the budget here — the amounts that they announced in the spring totalling just under \$3.2 million in total cost for that initiative.

We had it confirmed to us today by officials at the briefing for the Yukon Development Corporation that the funding in there that is showing up in the budget is reflective only of the commitment that rolled out this summer. It does not include the new measures that the Premier and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced in September.

Additionally, the measures announced by the Minister of Health and Social Services, both the one-time payout to social assistance recipients, the one-time payment for recipients of the Yukon seniors income supplement, and, additionally, the one-time 10-percent payment to pioneer utility grant recipients, the extension of funding for caregivers, and the funding for Food Network Yukon — none of that, Mr. Speaker, is actually included in the supplementary budget. So, again, it is important to note that this supplementary budget, like the budget in the spring, is not actually reflective of the current fiscal position nor commitments the government has made or its announcements. It's out of date before it is tabled, and it is failing to account for millions of dollars in increased spending that this government has committed to.

It also shows that their actions on inflation have been cobbled together in response to criticism and rushed out at the

last minute, rather than with a thoughtful approach. We have repeatedly called for the government to take some direct measures, such as a number of other jurisdictions have done, in cutting the territorial fuel tax. Provinces have cut their fuel taxes. Unfortunately, both the Premier and one of his ministers have been very dismissive of that idea, but I have to remind members that, in fact, cutting the territorial fuel tax alone would provide approximately \$9.7 million in tax relief to Yukoners, according to the numbers that the government itself indicates in their own budget as the revenue received from that fuel tax. If one looks south to the Province of Alberta, fuel prices are lower. That has also been reflected in lower increases in the cost of food.

Now, in response to this, we have heard a very dismissive response from the outgoing Premier and ministers, but I would note that the handout they provided us — the interim fiscal and economic update of October 2022 — prepared by the Department of Finance —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** Member for Mount Lorne Southern Lakes, on a point of order.

**Hon. Mr. Streicker:** Earlier today, Mr. Speaker, you directed us not to use adjectives around titles. The member opposite just used one of those adjectives again in his reference to the Premier.

**Speaker:** Member for Lake Laberge, on the point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** On the point of order, I will acknowledge that I did refer to the Premier as the “outgoing Premier”. I will retract that and rephrase it and say, “The Premier has one foot out the door.”

#### Speaker’s ruling

**Speaker:** On the point of order, please refrain from using remarks that are not the title of the member. Members do not have the opportunity to edit their own mistakes.

Please continue.

**Mr. Cathers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I’m going to quote from the document prepared by the Department of Finance and provided to members, the interim fiscal and economic update of October 2022. It says that higher fuel prices have been the biggest driver of inflation. The document also notes that the inflation rate in Whitehorse rose to 7.7 percent in July — the highest rate since the early 1990s. Inflation was little changed in August at 7.6 percent, with prices in Whitehorse up in all major categories of the consumer price index. It also notes that the price of gasoline and fuel oil were up significantly from 12 months earlier. I should note, just for Hansard, that this is from page 10 of the interim fiscal and economic update.

Again, our concern is that, unfortunately, the government does not seem to be taking this issue seriously. Ministers were very slow to act on this issue. They are very dismissive of any ideas coming from the Official Opposition, even when the

measures we point to have actually been successful in other jurisdictions at keeping the cost of fuel lower and in reducing —

**Speaker:** Order, please.

The time being 5:30 p.m., the House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*Debate on second reading of Bill No. 206 accordingly adjourned*

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*

#### The following document was filed October 11, 2022:

35-1-70

Firearms Legislation — Bill C-21, letter re (dated July 27, 2022) from Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Justice, to Brad Cathers, Member for Lake Laberge (McPhee)

#### The following written question was tabled October 11, 2022:

Written Question No. 28

Re: *Education Act* requirements for initiatives that promote equality and non-discrimination (Tredger)