

**MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY**

**June 15, 2016**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, most of us love and respect the elders in our lives, yet abuse of this vulnerable and growing population is a problem in the NWT and all across the country. Almost three-quarters of older adults surveyed in the NWT in 2010 and then again in 2015 see abuse of themselves or their peers as a problem in their community.

What is abuse in this context? The World Health Organization says it's a single or repeated act or a lack of appropriate action occurring with any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm and distress to an older person. It's a sad fact that all across Canada, elders are most likely to be victimized by those who are closest to them, namely, their own adult children.

Elder abuse can take many forms, but financial abuse and neglect are the most common forms here in the NWT. It's important to note that overcrowded houses, poverty, and the legacy of residential school experience can make matters worse here. The end result of any and all abuse is the same. It compromises the dignity, independence, health, and security of elders. It diminishes and frightens them. It's not what any of us want for our parents or for ourselves.

The information I've quoted here comes from the report the Minister mentioned, *Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults*. It was completed by the NWT Network to prevent the abuse of older adults in November last year. The Network has created a five-year strategic plan to make seniors safe in their own homes and communities. There are 20 recommendations in four areas to accomplish this vision. We all have a role to play in preventing elder abuse and creating safe, secure, and caring communities.

Naming and speaking out about the abuse of older adults is one of the first steps to prevent it, and that's what today is all about. As members of the Legislative Assembly, we have a special role to play. We can advocate for continued data collection so that we better understand the problem, and we can use this information to respond to the abuse of older adults in both policy and legislation. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Seniors. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.