

Cabinet puts road to Whati over men's healing program, says Yellowknife MLA

'I am never going to be happy when the government decides to invest in roads rather than people'

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Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green says N.W.T. cabinet prefers high-priced road projects over funding solutions to family violence, as the future of a men's healing program for domestic violence is still up in the air.

Funding for the healing program, A New Day, is set to expire on Dec. 31. Regular MLAs have been asking cabinet members to commit another year of funding to the program.

The program provides free, culturally appropriate, individual and group counseling to men who struggle with anger or have used abuse in their relationships. The program is solely funded by the territorial government.

Green says the territorial government is spending \$325,000 on evaluating the program. That's more money than regular MLAs asked for to extend the program by a year.

She also pointed out the government is funding a 97-kilometre road to Whati at a cost of \$150 million.

"About the same number of people live in Whati as the number of people who use the A New Day Program," she said.

"I am never going to be happy when the government decides to invest in roads rather than people."

Green says building the road will have nearly no economic benefit to the territory if mines in the area are not realized.

She has previously criticized cabinet for not consulting regular MLAs on whether the Whati road should be a priority of the government.