

## MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

### FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVEY

June 1, 2017

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in her most recent report, the chief coroner noted that four out of five murders in the NWT in 2015 involved domestic violence. This is a repeat of 2012, where four of out five murders also involved domestic violence. That's 80 percent, Mr. Speaker. The rate for Canada as a whole is less than half that, at 36 percent in 2015.

In discussing her findings with the media, the chief coroner said the territory needs a massive shift in attitudes so people realize that this is not normal and not acceptable. To make this shift, there needs to be education for young people, public advertising campaigns, and culturally appropriate on-the-land programing.

This government and previous governments have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in what our mandate calls the crisis of family violence, mostly on crisis responses. Money has been spent on prevention but to no effect, taking the unchanging murder rate as an indicator.

Mr. Speaker, today I am renewing my call for this government to budget the necessary funds in the next business plan to redo the 2007 Family Violence Survey. You may recall, the NWT Bureau of Statistics surveyed 753 people in communities large and small 10 years ago to gauge their understanding of family violence. The good news is that 88 percent of respondents said they were either very worried or somewhat worried about family violence, but the detailed findings are revealing. An important finding is that a quarter of men and 16 percent of women still believe that physical violence between a couple is a private matter to be resolved within the family. There is a general reluctance to define family violence as a problem for which help is needed.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that family violence is a problem, in fact a crisis, and that help is needed. Updating the family violence survey will give us the information we need to create an effective action plan, one that is aimed squarely at the attitudes that perpetuate family violence. It will tell us why what we're doing isn't working. It is time for us to strengthen the prevention of family violence, to work in a smart and consistent ways to ensure every NWT resident hears the message that violence is not inevitable and it is preventable. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.