

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

### **FAMILY VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK**

**October 17, 2017**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague, Mr. Nadli, I am drawing attention today to the fact that this is Family Violence Awareness Week, and I am going to take this opportunity to raise awareness of a recent report on this issue.

Two Aurora College researchers interviewed 56 frontline service providers across the NWT to document the needs and service gaps of women experiencing violence from their intimate partners. What they discovered is that there are three social processes that contribute to our shocking rate of violence against women. First, women put up with violence because they feel locked in by a lack of housing and poverty and, as a result of these two factors, a fear that their children will be apprehended. This is especially true in small communities.

Second, women shut up about violence because society is not speaking out effectively about violence in intimate relationships. Forces such as historic trauma, the normalization of violence, gossip, and community and family retribution together keep women quiet.

The third social process is described as "getting on with life," meaning that because of the lack of resources to make change, getting on with life is a way of coping. Of course, there are women with the courage to tell their story to police, shelter workers, and victim services, and they overcome these barriers to make changes for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, there is more that the NWT can do to help keep women safe. It is time to finalize the standards for family violence shelters and to provide permanent stable funding that will allow the shelters to meet these standards. It is time to establish family violence shelters in the Deh Cho and Sahtu so that safety is available and close to hand in those regions. It is time to establish a death review committee that will review intimate partner deaths and discover patterns that may aid in prevention.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, we have to push back against the idea that intimate partner violence is normal and that there is nothing we can do about it. Violence against women in the NWT occurs at many times the national average. It has been at that rate for years. It is time to make investments to make sure that women are safe in their homes and their communities. Mahsi.