

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

ADDRESSING CORE HOUSING NEEDS

February 22, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the last sitting the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation tabled her long-awaited response to persistent core housing need experienced by one in five households in the NWT. I put forward a motion in June 2016 with the support of my colleagues that called on the Housing Corporation to reduce core need in housing by 2 per cent a year for four years. This investment will bring the NWT in line with national levels. The motion called for a plan to achieve this goal. The *Towards Level Ground* report is the basis of that plan.

Mr. Speaker, a household experiences core need if they have one of the following problems or, potentially, a combination of all three. Housing may be unsuitable because it doesn't have enough bedrooms for family members; it may be inadequate because it needs major repairs to plumbing, electrical, and heating systems; and, finally, it may be unaffordable if the family is spending more than 30 per cent of their gross income.

Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation's action plan to reduce core need is sketchy. It includes investments in 15 different program areas, but there is no rationale given for why 384 homes are slated for emergency repairs or why 30 households are involved in "rebalancing the public housing portfolio." It is not clear how these programs relate to the three areas of core need, nor is there any information about how the \$67 million earmarked for this project is going to be distributed among the regions or where the money itself is going to come from.

There are households across the territory that are in core need, but the greatest number in all three categories is Yellowknife, and the most acute need in Yellowknife is affordability. According the 2014 Community Survey, 868 city households had affordability problems, and the problem is growing.

Mr. Speaker, the plan proposes affordability relief to just 100 households. We all know that Yellowknife is an expensive place to live and that shelter costs are the largest part of any household budget. This plan may make a small dent in this problem, but it is hard to say exactly how it will serve my constituents' needs. Affordability is a huge problem, and it's getting worse, not better. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi.