

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

### **MINISTERIAL MANDATE PRIORITIES: ALFRED MOSES**

**May 24, 2018**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while we were away from the House, the Premier shuffled Cabinet portfolios. When the music stopped, the honourable Alfred Moses was sitting on the chairs which gave him responsibility for Housing and Homelessness. These are the portfolios of primary interest to my constituents in Yellowknife Centre.

The Premier's mandate letter to the Minister repeats his letter to the previous Minister. It is as if the last two years didn't happen. There is no indication of priorities, just a long list of objectives, and no direction to continue with the changes started by the previous Minister. Since this letter is inadequate, I am now going to provide a summary of the mandate letter I would have written.

First, residents of Yellowknife Centre continue to experience a high level of homelessness. Families are often the invisible homeless, but they are especially hard-hit. I have constituents, a working family of six, who, for the last three years, have been living in a bachelor apartment and who are waiting for suitable housing. The waiting list for transitional housing for families at the YWCA and public housing is both in the hundreds. Federal funding administered by the city for the YWCA Housing First program for families has recently ended.

Mr. Speaker, families are facing a housing crisis, and addressing this crisis must be the Minister's top priority. Where is the mandate requirement to wrestle every possible new dollar from Ottawa's National Housing Strategy?

Second, my riding has a large population of elders. Those who are looking for affordable places to live in their retirement have few choices, and some are deferring retirement while they wait for something to open up. The waiting list for the independent units at Avens is six years long. The situation at Northern United Place is also gridlocked. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the Housing Corporation is going to build more units for seniors, but I can tell you now it won't be enough to meet these increasing demands.

Third, my riding has a large number of rental units. The cost of rent is unaffordable, meaning it consumes more than 30 per cent of the family's budget. The last community survey revealed that a total of 800 families in Yellowknife are in core need because their housing is unaffordable.

Mr. Speaker, high rents drive people out of Yellowknife and out of the territory at a time when we want more people to live here. The Minister must find effective ways to help working families afford a decent place to live. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.