

# Constituency Newsletter

## Temporary Special Measures

# A Possible Solution to Get Women Into the Legislative Assembly

Women are half the population of the Northwest Territories but occupy only 10 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly. Underrepresentation is a chronic problem, dating back decades. In the meantime, many provinces and territories have increased women's representation to as much as 40 per cent (in British Columbia). It's time for the NWT to catch up.

Under the leadership of the Speaker, Jackson Lafferty, Northerners are invited to look at and discuss temporary special measures to jumpstart women's representation. The Speaker tabled a white paper during the last sitting that is available on the Assembly's website under the Tabled Documents category.

This is how temporary special measures work. MLAs agree on a target number of seats for women. In a motion passed

on International Women's Day in March, members agreed to four seats for women in 2023 and six seats in 2027, bringing the NWT up to 30 per cent representation by women in the next nine years. The United Nations has determined that this is the threshold at which women can bring about significant and lasting policy changes.

Come the 2023 election, women would become candidates in the same way that they do now, and campaign for support. After the ballots are counted, let's say three women are elected, or one short of the goal. In that case, there would be a temporary seat created to meet the target. The woman who finished best (based on the percentage of votes she earned) but didn't get elected would be appointed to the seat. She would hold that seat for the duration of the assembly. There are many details

## Constituency Meeting

With special guest  
**Honourable Caroline Cochrane**  
Minister of Education, Culture and  
Employment, and Minister Responsible for  
the Status of Women.

**Wednesday October 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**Baker Centre 7 PM**

**The Legislative Assembly's fall session is  
October 11<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup>.**

***Please come and share your issues and  
concerns.***

to work out, such as how two people would share the job of representing one riding.

In order to improve women's representation in other parts of Canada, political parties have set goals of nominating a specific percentage of women candidates. In New Brunswick, for example, there is a campaign to ensure that 50 per cent of candidates in the September 2018 election are women. Research has shown that incentives are necessary, whether guaranteed seats for women or increasing rebates to political parties (where available) for meeting goals of women candidates.

Could temporary special measures work in the NWT? The answer, based on the South Pacific experience, is that there are three conditions for success: support by MLAs and by the electorate, and a set of measures that are specific to the NWT situation. Work to evaluate whether these conditions are in place is under way now and will involve public consultation.

Temporary special measures are one way of increasing women's representation. There are others. Let's discuss other ways we can finally increase the number of women working as MLAs in the Legislative Assembly and ensure the other half of the population has a seat at the table.



*I was happy to be part of the NWT delegations to the 56<sup>th</sup> annual Commonwealth Parliamentarians Association's Regional Conference in Ottawa in July. I talked about the idea of using temporary special measures as a means to increase representation by women in the NWT Legislative Assembly. With me on the panel discussing how to increase temporary special measures is Colleen Mayer, MLA for St. Vital Manitoba (left) and Nancy Peckford, executive director of Equal Voice.*

# Social Development

## Ministerial Switcheroo

Two ministers changed jobs in April, with Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) Minister Alfred Moses taking over Municipal and Community Affairs and the Housing Corporation, and Minister Caroline Cochrane leaving those departments for ECE. I made statements about my priorities for the Ministers in their new jobs:

**Caroline Cochrane:** “Number one is childcare, the second largest expense after shelter for families with kids under four and/or who need care after school and in summer. We have no action on affordability, which was a major promise for this Assembly. We need action on Aurora College (which I describe in the “Aurora College Foundational Review Debated” story in this newsletter). And, the income assistance program needs an overhaul to make the application process more efficient, fair and humane.”

**Alfred Moses:** “Unaffordable housing and homelessness are a crisis, especially in Yellowknife Centre. We’ve made poor progress helping the visible homeless, the couch-surfing unhoused, and those crammed into inadequate and unaffordable housing. Seniors have few or no choices for affordable retirement housing. We need money for homes, not roads.”

## Status of Women Council

The Standing Committee on Social Development had a public meeting with

the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Caroline Cochrane and the President of the Status of Women, Violet Camsell-Blondin, in mid-August. The Minister has instructed the Council to focus on three mandate commitments that relate to women including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and increasing women’s representation in political life.

The Council President confirmed they are no longer leading the Coalition Against Family Violence, an informal group of service providers, individuals and advocates. It’s unclear who will be taking up leadership of the Coalition, but having strong advocacy on family violence outside government is essential. For example, it was the Coalition that developed the New Day healing program for men who use intimate partner violence.

The Minister also laid out a plan for the campaign schools. She is contracting out curriculum development and delivery of the workshops when the curriculum is complete. She is also planning to survey NWT women about their priorities for the Council.

The Council is going through a period of significant change, with four new board members (of six) appointed last year and a second new Executive Director in a year, as well as a new Special Advisor on Women. The Council is working on a new strategic plan this fall, so this issue is evolving.

## Minister responds to Addictions Treatment Centre report

Along with my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Social Development, I toured the four residential addictions treatment centers under contract to GNWT last December. (See my reflections on the tour in my Winter 2018 newsletter available on my website [mla-yellowknifecentre.ca](http://mla-yellowknifecentre.ca) under the news tab.)

The standing committee made three recommendations in February to strengthen the delivery of addictions treatment. All three recommendations will be included in the Addictions Recovery Action Plan due late this year. There will be increased focus on supports to residents returning from treatment, and cooperation with other government departments so people in recovery aren’t discharged into homelessness.

## Adult Day Program

It’s been almost two years since Avens closed its adult day program. An assessment confirmed that there wasn’t enough staff to serve both elders with cognitive issues such as dementia and elders who were physically frail. Health and Social Services advertised a request for proposals twice but there has been no response. I will continue to highlight this issue. Not having a program for elders is unacceptable.



*Youth Parliament is an annual highlight for me because of the diversity it brings to the Legislative Assembly. Representing Yellowknife Centre this year was David Drygeese. I gave him some help to develop his member’s statement.*

# From the Assembly

## Priorities for Housing Families

The experience of a working family of six living in a bachelor suite for three years highlights how the Yellowknife Housing Authority waiting list policies ignore real need. The problem for this family was that they had a place to live, so they didn't get top priority ranking, and didn't move up the waiting list. They would have a better chance at public housing if they lived in a tent. This kind of overcrowding has a negative effect on people going to work and school because they have nowhere to rest or do homework. I'm continuing to push the housing waiting list policies to recognize that people who are inadequately housed are a top priority for receiving housing.

## Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway

When the spring thaw began, the highway was closed for almost three weeks because major stretches turned to muck. When pressed to explain why this brand new all season road was closed, Infrastructure Minister Wally Schumann

said some sections are "susceptible to saturation," and needed gravel and grading. He called this "repairs", but admitted the road wasn't finished when it was officially opened in 2017. I've continually said the roads as an economic engine policy is wrong, especially when it leaves many of our residents living in squalid housing, for example, for want of money spent on roads. The road to Tuktoyaktuk could join the Deh Cho bridge as a quagmire of failed fiscal management, just as we turn our attention to the budget to build the Tliche Road.

## New Day Shelter and Sobering Centre

The day shelter and sobering centre is expected to open in its new location on 50th Street in September. Renovations to the building, formerly the Right Spot bar, are almost complete. I had a quick look inside at the end of August and was delighted with the layout and



*Hats off to Ecology North (with me is Craig Scott, the executive director) and the City of Yellowknife for partnering to create a vibrant multi-use park in the heart of downtown. I was honoured to be part of the jury that chose the five winning designs. Congratulations to everyone who submitted an idea.*

careful attention to what the clients need in this facility. The Department of Health and Social Services is planning a comprehensive communications plan to address the concerns of neighboring residents and businesses, including a contact to resolve concerns and complaints.

# Aurora College Foundational Review Debated

The long-awaited Foundational Review of Aurora College provides a new vision for post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. It describes a polytechnic university located in Yellowknife. Many Yellowknifers support having a university in the NWT, including me, but I have questions about whether the contractor's vision and proposed timeline is feasible or affordable.

I am concerned that the debate about whether to endorse this vision is overshadowing more immediate issues

facing the College, such as declining rates of student retention and program completion, what to do with the programs currently suspended, and reviewing all programs to ensure quality assurance that meets the standards of other post-secondary institutions. I am also keen to see the government address governance issues that have plagued the College for years. In other words, I'd like the government to demonstrate they can run a college before they make plans to run a university.

I believe we could learn some valuable lessons from Yukon College. I'm told that strong leadership and effective partnerships have transformed the College in the last decade and a half. This fall it begins offering its first made-in-Yukon undergraduate degree program, a Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Governance. A third party evaluation has confirmed it is ready and able to deliver and sustain this program. I'd like to see Aurora College follow the same route, addressing its current governance and operational short comings while developing a degree program that is unique to the NWT. Developing expertise and curriculum that addresses climate change, mine remediation, indigenous languages are just some possibilities that come to mind.

What happens next? The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will present a detailed response to the report. It will evaluate each recommendation and decide which will be implemented and when. The terms of reference for the ECE response are available online.



*I chaired the annual caucus meeting in August, this time at the fishing lodge called Lac La Marte Adventures. We were so happy to have a visit with the Whati Justice Committee's on the land camp.*

# Carbon Tax misses the mark if reduced greenhouse gas emissions is the goal

The GNWT announced details in July of the pricing being introduced to meet the federal requirement for a carbon tax in the NWT. Cabinet says that design of a territorial plan is intended to provide a “made in the NWT” framework that takes into account our costs of living, while providing financial incentives to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

Aviation fuel is exempt from taxation, and taxes on home heating fuels will be rebated at the point of sale—that means no change in price from the carbon taxes. Automotive gasoline and diesel will increase by 4.7 cents per litre July 1, 2019, rising to 11.7 cents for gas and 13.7 cents for diesel in 2022. To offset these increased costs, the GNWT is creating a Cost of Living Offset (COCO) which will pay up to \$260 for each adult and \$300 for each child annually

Large, industrial producers of greenhouse gas will see 75 per cent of their taxes rebated, and the remaining 25 per cent

diverted into a fund to pay for energy efficient technology. For full details on other cost increases, rebates and funds, do a browser search “Implementing Carbon Pricing in the NWT”.

I had hoped for a more comprehensive package of measures, including dramatic increases in rebates and incentives to improve energy efficiency of homes and buildings. Increases to Arctic Energy Alliance programs have come thanks to new federal dollars—the GNWT needs to do its part to match or better this increase.

I’m also convinced industry is willing to take up the low carbon challenge. The Canadian Mining Association is on the record in support of a national carbon tax plan.

We are a small player in the overall production of greenhouse gases in Canada, but we need to play our part. With catastrophic storms, another disastrous fire season in British Columbia

shortened seasons for ice roads and damage to our infrastructure from permafrost melt, it’s clear that the impacts and costs of climate change are mounting. For the sake of our children’s future, we must keep our international promises and work toward a lower carbon future.

## Did you know?

### Waivers for Health and Social Service Fees

There are fees for a variety of services under laws such as the *Change of Name Act*, the *Vital Statistics Act*, and the *Health Information Act*. If you can prove that having to pay these fees would be a hardship because your income is limited, the government may waive them. If you want help to make a request, please contact my office for guidance on how to have the fees excused. Please be prepared to report details of your income on a strictly confidential basis.

### Recalculation of Public Housing Rents

Tenants of public housing no longer have to provide proof of their income every month—rent is set for the year based upon information from a person’s annual income tax return. However, if your income goes up or down during the year, you need to report that change to the public housing office. If your income goes down, that means your rent could go down. Or, if your income goes up, you need to report that change to avoid having to pay a rent increase retroactive to the date your income went up. **Contact your public housing office for information on adjustments to your rent.**



During a trip to Iceland, I visited a tanning factory that makes fish leather. The leather is sold to luxury goods manufacturers in Europe. Two of the species they tan are available in Great Slave Lake. This initiative is one of the ways we could diversify our economy with small scale enterprises.

## Your Input is Important

I need to know what you think and what actions you want to see.

### Julie Green

#### MLA Yellowknife Centre

[www.yellowknifecentre.ca](http://www.yellowknifecentre.ca)

[www.facebook.com/juliegreenMLA](https://www.facebook.com/juliegreenMLA)

Twitter: @juliegreenMLA

1 867 767 9143 Ext. 12180

[Julie\\_Green@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Julie_Green@gov.nt.ca)

### Craig Yeo

#### Constituency Assistant

1 867 767 9143 Ext 12113

PO Box 1320

Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

[Craig\\_Yeo@gov.nt.ca](mailto:Craig_Yeo@gov.nt.ca)

Toll Free Phone: 1 800 661 0784

Toll Free Fax: 1 800 661 0879