

JULIE GREEN—MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
Family Violence Funding and Program Standards
Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 26, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am aware that the money for family violence has increased in this budget, and that will certainly be welcome to service providers. On what basis was this money increased? Does it tie to the shelter standards that have been discussed in years gone by? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have been working for a while with the shelters and the shelter network to develop a funding formula that makes sense. We are not a hundred percent done that work, but we figured we had made enough progress to build a solid business case that would allow us to start making valuable increases in this area, which is why you see the \$500,000 increase, which represents about a 15-percent increase overall to the shelters.

What we do know is that a lot of other jurisdictions are only partially funded in this area and that they raise a lot of money on their own, which is true here as well. We are looking at finishing our work and making sure that starting this year, but in future years, we are getting the funding right for these important family-violence shelters here in the Northwest Territories. This is an important step.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is something the Minister and I can agree on. What is the status of the shelters standards work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That work is ongoing. They are all embedded and sort of tied together and will be part of the formula, as well. Our expectation is to be completed before the end of this term. Hopefully, you know, summertime, late spring is kind of what we are hoping, but, recognizing that we do occasionally have human resource challenges, hopefully, it won't be delayed too far beyond then.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister just remind us what the purpose of the shelters standards is? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is to help us all and together to define the types of and scope of services that are provided in the shelters and what we are able to provide some financial support to so that we have some consistency across the territory and we are able to fund based on a consistent application. I think the Member knows, for many years, we have been funding the shelters, but there really

hasn't been any sort of set criteria on why one shelter gets X dollars and the other one does not. So that is where we are working on, is finding something that will help us set sort of some consistency in application.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I understand correctly, this would also have a financial application so that there was consistency in how the shelters were funded. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That is the plan. I will note that that wasn't applied this way in this particular round. We are funding all. We are increasing funds to all the shelters using the \$500,000 this time, but, going forward, that is the expectation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Yes, thank you. Just finally in this area, when the standards are complete, is the Minister planning to come and discuss them with the Standing Committee on Social Development? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, I am planning to share them with standing committee. If standing committee wishes to have a meeting, I am always happy to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.