

JULIE GREEN—MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
NWT Arts Strategy and Sector Funding
Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment—March 5, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question for the Minister relates to page 37. I am wondering if she could tell us the last year in which arts organization operating funding was increased. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will have to get back to the committee on when the last increase to the arts organization operating funding was. You will see in the mains that there is \$200,000 provided to the NWT Arts Council. It was a supplemental last year, in this mains. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The page that I have has \$460,000 for the next fiscal year, this fiscal year, and the fiscal year prior to that. My question really is, given the importance of festivals and cultural events to tourism and the growth in tourism, whether the Minister has considered increasing this line item to drive that segment of our economy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think that we do need to look at our arts community. It is another diversification of the economy. It is something that I think we need to support. We are just finalizing the Arts Strategy, which will be provided. It is just going through Cabinet and will be going to standing committee. Then, after that, we are developing an action plan. Within that action plan, we will identify increases as needed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: That is good news. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to be clear that I am talking about arts organization operating funding, not NWT Arts Council funding. Are we talking about the same thing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely. The strategy goes across all sectors. It does not just look at the arts council; it looks at the arts community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister just confirm that the work, including the action plan, will be done during the remainder of this Assembly? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are working very closely with the NWT Arts Council. We are just finishing up the Arts Strategy, the draft, which will have to go to standing committee. As soon as that is approved by standing committee and here, then we will be actually working on the action plan. I will try to get that done in this Assembly, but I can't commit that it will, because it is important that we get this right. Like I said, the strategy came across my desk, and I flipped it right back and said, "Let the Arts Council." I have committed to actually working very closely with the arts council on this, and I want to honour my commitment to the Arts Council. We will try our best, but we can't commit that it will be completed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.