

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

NORTHWORDS WRITERS FESTIVAL

May 29, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am rising today to celebrate a great community and cultural event, the NorthWords Writers Festival, which begins tomorrow.

The festival was created in 2006 as a three-day event to provide a stage for northern and Indigenous writers to welcome established writers from southern Canada. The NorthWords Writers Festival Society was established a year later, and workshops and other literary events were added to the program.

Today the four-day event attracts around 1,000 people. Emerging and established writers converge to develop their craft through public readings, mentorships, panel discussions, workshops, and a writing contest, as well as informal meetings with each other and guest authors. NorthWords promotes the development of young northern and Indigenous writers by sponsoring events for schools.

In 2010, NorthWords NWT began to reach out to writers in other NWT communities with a three-author tour of Fort Smith, Hay River, and Yellowknife. The festival now offers events in all three communities.

The festival took another step forward in 2012 with the publication of the anthology "Coming Home: Stories From the Northwest Territories." This anthology featured the work of 17 NWT writers, half of whom were being published for the first time. This anthology has enjoyed an extraordinary reception from the reading public and has been an important step in the development of NWT writers. It has resulted in increased participation and interest in northern literary events.

Mr. Speaker, the 14th Annual NorthWords Writers Festival runs from tomorrow through Sunday. Events include the open mic event "Flash: Your Five Minutes of Fame," the NorthWords Cafe, a gala and silent action, and "Blush: An Evening of Erotic and Sensual Readings." A line-up of more than 20 writers and authors, filmmakers, songwriters, storytellers, and performing groups will entertain from venues across the three communities. It is an event about and beyond words.

Congratulations to NorthWords, and keep on growing. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.