

# Ministerial Briefing Book Spring Session 2023



Workers' Safety and  
Compensation Board  
—— Yukon ——

# WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION BOARD

## MINISTERIAL BRIEFING BOOK – SPRING SESSION 2023

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Hot Issues

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## Session Briefing Note 1.1

Spring 2023

### Assessment Rates

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for the commitment and effort they invest every year in establishing assessment rates that are fair to employers and workers.
- The rates determine the amount of money that employers contribute to the Compensation Fund so that the Fund can support workers who are injured.
- Rates are about caring for the workers who fuel Yukon's economy.
  - Employers and workers can help lower those rates by reducing workplace injuries and supporting the successful return of injured workers to the workplace.
- In 2023, five of the industry rate groups saw a rate decrease, two had no change, and two groups saw a rate increase.
- Prevention is key to reducing injuries and controlling rates.
  - WSCB continues to work with stakeholders to enhance workplace injury prevention initiatives and support early and safe return to work.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- This may be an issue as assessment rates for some groups have increased for 2023; two industries were reclassified.

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#### Background:

- Assessment rates are driven by three factors:
  - Costs associated with caring for workers who are injured in Yukon workplaces, such as wage loss benefits and healthcare costs.
  - The performance of the Board's investment portfolio, which historically has been favourable.
  - Administration costs, including providing services to workers and employers.

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Spring 2023

## Assessment Rates

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- Assessment rates reflect industry performance over a 10-year period. Even if an employer is performing well, with a solid health and safety program and few workplace injuries, they may experience a rate change due to overall rate group performance.
- An assessment rate is the amount an employer pays for every \$100 of assessable payroll.
- Rate group assessment rates will change in 2023 as follows:
  - Resources and Transportation Low decreased from \$2.65 to \$2.45
  - Resources and Transportation Medium decreased from \$4.71 to \$4.40
  - Resources and Transportation High increased from \$7.24 to \$7.43
  - Construction Medium increased from \$3.25 to \$3.35
  - Construction High had no change at \$4.92
  - Services Low had no change at \$0.76
  - Services Medium decreased from \$1.72 to \$1.59
  - Services High decreased from \$2.48 to \$2.27
  - Government decreased from \$1.87 to \$1.84
    - The government rate group includes the Government of Yukon, municipalities and First Nations.
- Two industries were reclassified in 2023:
  - Outfitting moved from Resources and Transportation Medium to Resources and Transportation High
  - Bulk Oil Dealers moved from Services Medium to Resources & Transportation Low

Approved by:



President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 1.2

Spring 2023

### Employer Rebate 2022

WSCB

#### Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board on its prudent management of the Compensation Fund in the best interests of workers and employers.
- At the end of 2021, the Compensation Fund's funded position was 143%, which is above the target range of 121%-129%.
- The Board's management has resulted in the Fund being well-prepared for the drastic drop in the markets that occurred in 2022.
- The Board of Directors will provide me with an annual report by April 30, 2023. This annual report will outline the Board's financial position as of December 31, 2022.
- Any decisions on future rates or rebates rests with the Board of Directors.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about a rebate for 2022 in light of the funded position at the end of 2021 at 143%.

#### Background:

- The safety and compensation systems are funded by assessments collected from employers who are registered with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
  - The Board's funded position is considered when determining assessment rate changes, rebates and subsidies.
  - Worker benefits and prevention activities are never affected.
- Distributing the Compensation Fund's surplus reserves to eligible employers in the form of rebates accelerates the movement of the Fund towards its target levels.
- The Board of Directors is committed to maintaining the Compensation Fund at a target range of between 121% and 129% of total liabilities. The target range is established by terms set out in the Board's funding policy.

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Spring 2023

## Employer Rebate 2022

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- At the end of 2021, the funded position had increased to 143%, largely due to strong investment returns.
- With the drop in the markets in early 2022, the funded position dropped into the target range.
- Maintaining the target range ensures rates charged to employers represent the actual costs of the system and reduces volatility in the rates.
- The Board has distributed five rebates to employers:
  - 2015 approximately \$10M
  - 2016 approximately \$10M
  - 2017 approximately \$10M
  - 2018 approximately \$5M
  - 2020 approximately \$10M

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 2.2

Spring 2023

### Examination of YG Safety Committees

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- I am aware of occupational health and safety concerns raised by the Yukon Employees' Union.
- I can assure members of this house that the health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Every worker has the right to work in an environment where hazards are appropriately identified and controlled to the greatest extent possible. This is what workplace health and safety officers work to support.
- I am confident that the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board works with all employers equally.
- I have been assured that safety officers continue to monitor compliance of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and work with Government of Yukon officials to improve health and safety within government departments.
- As Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, I do not become involved in workplace safety investigations.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon Employees' Union raised concerns over Government of Yukon compliance with the workplace health and safety legislation.

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#### Background:

- The Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) issued a news release on April 7, 2021 titled "Occupational Health & Safety Failure at Yukon Government" expressing concerns that Yukon Government has failed to provide leadership in the area of health and safety due to a lack of government-wide health and safety audits.



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Spring 2023

## Examination of YG Safety Committees

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- In fall 2021, the YEU brought forth additional concerns regarding the existence, operation, and oversight of Joint Health and Safety Committees in some government departments
- In December 2021, the YEU brought this concern to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and the Workplace Health and Safety branch is investigating their concerns.
- A news article was published on March 7, 2022 titled "YEU 'finding problems' with committee numbers".
  - The article outlines YEU's concerns about safety management systems within Government of Yukon departments, specifically whether employers are meeting legislated requirements in having JHSCs.
- In February 2023, the YEU raised concerns about an extension granted by WSCB to the Department of Education to complete training of JHSC members.
  - Section 41 of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states that JHSC members are to be trained within six months to perform their duties.
  - The original deadline for Department of Education JHSC members to be trained is February 15, 2023.
  - An extension was given to May 1, 2023.
  - As of February 6, 2023 the Department of Education has trained 29 out of 49 total members with the remainder to be trained by May 1, 2023.
  - Due to staff shortages, it has been difficult for teachers and other school administration to take two days off work to attend training. The Department of Education is currently working with PSC to develop a training program for JHSC members that will make attendance at training easier for school staff.
- Amending compliance dates is standard practice when working with employers who demonstrate a willingness to comply with orders and demonstrate progress towards compliance.
- Workplace health and safety officers review the functioning of JHSCs with large employers and where deficiencies are found, they work with the employers to improve the functioning of those committees.

## Session Briefing Note 2.2

Spring 2023

## Examination of YG Safety Committees

WSCB

- Yukon's *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* requires all employers with over 20 workers to have a health and safety program which supports the assessment and mitigation of hazards to reduce the risk of both physical and psychological harm.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* requires all employers with over 20 workers to have a Joint Health and Safety Committee which reviews the employer's health and safety management program and make recommendations for improvements.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has concluded the evaluation of identified JHSC's and continues to actively monitor the JHSC's to ensure compliance with the legislation.
- The overall government health and safety program evaluation will commence in Q1 2023.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states a Minister shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the determination of a claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 6, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 2.3

Spring 2023

## Safety Concerns at Eagle Gold Mine (Victoria Gold)

WSCB

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## Recommended response:

- I am aware of the safety concerns brought forward against Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle Gold Mine.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is aware of these allegations and I have been assured that these concerns are being properly investigated.
- The health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Every worker has the right to work in an environment where hazards are appropriately identified and controlled to the greatest extent possible. This is what Workplace Health and Safety officers work to support.
- As Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, I do not become involved in workplace safety investigations.

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Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board received complaints of safety infractions against Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle Gold Mine.

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Background:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board received complaints of safety infractions against Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle Gold Mine.
- Safety officers investigated the complaints and orders were written.
- Safety officers will continue to investigate and will take appropriate enforcement measures, where required.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states a Minister shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the determination of a claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

Session Briefing Note 2.3

Spring 2023

Safety Concerns at Eagle Gold Mine (Victoria Gold)

WSCB

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Approved by:



a/President/CEO, WSCB

March 31, 2023

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 3.1

Spring 2023

## Acts Modernization

WSCB

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**Recommended response:**

- This government is proud of our efforts so far to improve health and safety in Yukon workplaces, and we are delivering on our commitment.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* was brought before this house in fall 2021 and received unanimous support on December 2, 2021.
- This Act came into effect on July 1, 2022.
- In order to ensure successful implementation, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board updated policies, held stakeholder information sessions, and updated forms and information on the website.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is continuing the work of communicating the importance of health and safety to Yukon workers and employers.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There may be an interest in what was completed for implementation of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* on July 1, 2022.

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**Background:**

- On November 16, 2017, during Third Reading of Bill 8, Minister McLean stated:
  - “During Committee of the Whole debate, I committed to a full review of the *Workers' Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* within my current mandate. I reiterate that commitment now to this House and to all Yukoners.”
- Public and targeted stakeholder engagement occurred in Whitehorse and in the communities throughout the fall of 2019 and into the first quarter of 2020.
- Following the engagement, a ‘What We Heard’ report was compiled and released in August 2020.

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Spring 2023

## Acts Modernization

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- The modernization and amalgamation of the Acts was tabled on March 10, 2021 and received its first reading on March 11, 2021.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* was brought back to the Legislative Assembly during the fall 2021 sitting as Bill 8 and received unanimous consent on December 2, 2021.
- Implementation activities of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* consisted of:
  - Website updates
  - Guidance documents for workers and employers
  - Outreach activities including 'lunch and learn' sessions which provided an overview of changes and offered opportunities for questions
  - Engagement with stakeholders on nine policies requiring substantive changes; remainder of policies listed on website for stakeholders to provide feedback on recommended changes
  - Internal training and technological updates

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 3.2

Spring 2023

### Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- This government recognizes the invaluable contribution of every Yukoner who fights fires, whether full- or part-time, professionally or as a volunteer.
- A regulation covering presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* came into force on July 1, 2022.
- There are now 19 cancers included under the presumption, including pancreatic and thyroid, alongside three cancers that primarily affect women.
  - This latter addition recognizes the increasing role that women are taking on in fighting fires.
- Any worker not covered under the presumption who contracts cancer as a result of their employment can still apply for compensation.
- These claims will be adjudicated by qualified and competent staff members of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- At the request of this government, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board continues to monitor the research regarding the link between cancers and wildland firefighters.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The expanded list of presumptive cancers is among the most comprehensive coverage for firefighters in Canada.

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#### Background:

- The 19 cancers now included are:
  - multiple myeloma
  - primary leukemia
  - primary non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
  - primary site bladder cancer
  - primary site brain cancer

## Session Briefing Note 3.2

Spring 2023

### Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

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- primary site breast cancer
    - primary site cervical cancer
    - primary site colo-rectal cancer
    - primary site esophageal cancer
    - primary site kidney cancer
    - primary site lung cancer
    - primary site ovarian cancer
    - primary site pancreatic cancer
    - primary site penile cancer
    - primary site prostate cancer
    - primary site skin cancer
    - primary site testicular cancer
    - primary site thyroid cancer
    - primary site ureter cancer
  - Yukon enacted presumptive legislation for firefighters in 2011.
    - Full-time, part-time, volunteer and wildland firefighters are entitled to compensation benefits if they suffer a cardiac arrest whilst participating in an emergency response or within twenty-four hours of the end of actively participating in an emergency response.
    - Full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters were covered for ten different types of primary site cancer, subject to a minimum service period.
    - Wildland firefighters are excluded under presumptive work-related cancer legislation.
  - There is a large body of research papers on the subject of the prevalence of cancers amongst firefighters.
  - There is significant evidence that firefighters develop mesothelioma at more than double the rate of the general population.
    - Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos fibers; asbestos is common in older buildings and firefighters could be exposed when battling fires in these locations.
  - For other forms of cancer, the evidence of increased prevalence amongst firefighters is not as strong.



## Session Briefing Note 3.2


Spring 2023

## Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

- Wildland firefighters are currently excluded from the cancer presumption.
- There is little evidence of an increased risk of cancer for wildland firefighters.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) continue to monitor the research and share any new information to inform future decision making.
- Wildland firefighters in Yukon are not typically exposed to burning manufactured materials that structural firefighters deal with.
- The IAFF has raised concerns that manufactured materials release significant amounts of carcinogenic chemicals when they burn, thereby increasing cancer risk.
- Research remains ongoing with regards to the link between certain cancers and wildland firefighters. Studies are expected to be published in 2023 and 2024.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

**Session Briefing Note 4.1****Spring 2023****Adjudicating Respiratory Illnesses****WSCB**

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**Recommended response:**

- Under workers' compensation legislation, ordinary diseases of life, including a number of respiratory illnesses, are not considered to be work-related.
- Many respiratory illnesses are contagious diseases where the risk of exposure is high in the general population.
- In these cases, it is nearly impossible to determine the source of infection.
- To minimize risk and reduce the chances of exposure to respiratory illnesses, this government advises all Yukoners to protect themselves and each other by following all advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- Widespread immunization and practicing the safe 6 are still the best ways to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.
- Any worker who believes they contracted a contagious disease at work must inform their employer and may apply for compensation by completing a worker's application for compensation benefits. All claims will be investigated and decided on a case-by-case basis.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Questions have arisen around compensation coverage for workers who may be exposed to respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in the workplace.

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**Background:**

- Respiratory diseases of life include the common cold, seasonal flus and COVID-19.
- Workers are not entitled to compensation simply because they contracted a respiratory illness while performing job duties. For a claim related to a respiratory illness to be accepted as a work-related injury:
  1. The job tasks performed must carry an inherent risk of the worker contracting a respiratory illness;

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Spring 2023

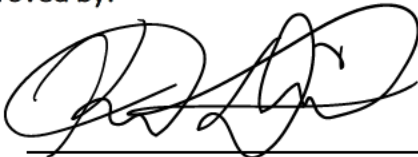
## Adjudicating Respiratory Illnesses

WSCB

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2. There must be causative significance between the job tasks performed and the contracting of a respiratory illness; and
  3. There must be significantly greater risk of a worker contracting a respiratory illness compared to the general population's risk.
- Workers who are not sick but stay home to avoid contracting a respiratory illness are not eligible for workers' compensation benefits.
  - In every claim, WSCB decides if the worker's injury meets the criteria for a work-related injury. Entitlement is based on the specific and unique circumstances of each case.

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 4.2

Spring 2023

### Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- Psychological injuries continue to be a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and this government.
  - The board accepts psychological injury claims that meet the requirements set out by legislation and policy.
  - Unfortunately, we continue to see Yukon workers suffering from these types of injuries at work.
- Whenever we talk about psychological injury, we have to remind ourselves that prevention is the key.
- We can all look forward to improved measures concerning the mental health of Yukoners with the regulations aimed at preventing workplace violence and harassment.
- The regulations received assent on September 4, 2020 and came into force on September 4, 2021.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has produced guidelines and training materials for workers and employers, including an online app, and is working with stakeholders as they develop their Violence and Harassment prevention programs.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Mental health issues continue to be a topic of discussion and front of mind in Yukon workplaces.
- There may be interest in the progress of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board's efforts towards preventing psychological injuries.

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Spring 2023

## Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

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**Background:**

- The regulations for preventing workplace violence and harassment received assent on September 4, 2020.
- Two areas of change are:
  - A new regulation that addresses violence and harassment as workplace hazards; and
  - Enhancements to existing regulations about hazard assessment.
- The PTSD presumption came into effect when the amendments made to the *Workers' Compensation Act* in Bill 8 received assent on November 27, 2017.
- Claims for psychological injury may be denied because the worker does not have a diagnosed psychological injury, as required by the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and policy, or the injury was found to be caused by something other than work duties.
- Introducing the PTSD presumption increased awareness of psychological injury in the workplace. The numbers of claims for PTSD and other psychological injuries leveled off in 2019.
- Costs for psychological assessment and treatment are leveling off as well, but represent a significant percentage of overall medical claims costs. Use of early and safe return to work interventions and a supportive, collaborative case management approach have been found to enhance success and reduce costs.
- Ongoing treatment, case management, and workplace support are often required long-term for workers with psychological injuries.
- Mental health has been affected with COVID-19 and we see an impact in treatment costs, which are increasing and the duration of claims is extending.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board partnered with the University of Fredericton to provide Yukoners access to the tools they need to prevent psychological injuries.
- This partnership aims to encourage employees struggling with mental health to seek supports when required, and for employers to gain the knowledge necessary to provide support.

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Spring 2023

## Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

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- The programs offered include:
  - Enhancing Workplace Resiliency (1 course – 2 hours)
  - Basic Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (1 course – 2.5 hours)
  - Certificate in Managing Psychological Health Issues at Work (3 courses, basic course included – 6.5 hours)
  - Advanced Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (5 courses, basic course included – 50.5 hours)
- Additional information and registration for the courses can be found at [wcb.yk.ca/phscourses](http://wcb.yk.ca/phscourses)
- Northern Safety Network Yukon (NSNY) also offers courses on workplace harassment and violence prevention.
- CCOHS likewise offers courses on the psychological health and safety of workers.

Approved by:

  
a/President/CEO WSCB

March 31, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 4.3

Spring 2023

### COVID-19 and Worker Psychological Health and Safety

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WSCB

#### Recommended response:

- As we are all aware, there have been a number of media reports and reports from medical professionals across Canada raising concerns about the effect COVID-19 is having on peoples' physical and psychological well-being.
- Psychological injury claims continue to be a priority of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and this government.
- Unfortunately, we continue to see Yukon workers suffering from these types of injuries at work.
- The numbers of claims filed for psychological health and safety injuries have not risen to a measurable degree as a result of COVID-19.
- Where the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is seeing a change, however, is anxiety around COVID-19 as a possible barrier for return-to-work.

#### Additional response:

- Prevention is key when it comes to psychological injuries.
- As such, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has partnered with the University of Fredericton to offer psychological health and safety in the workplace programs to Yukoners at a 70 per cent reduction rate from regular tuition.
- These programs are open to all Yukon workers and employers.
- More Yukoners learning about psychological health and safety in the workplace means lower costs related to sick time, improved productivity, reduced stigma around mental health, and overall, a healthier, more resilient Yukon workforce.

## Session Briefing Note 4.3

Spring 2023

### COVID-19 and Worker Psychological Health and Safety

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WSCB

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- In some instances, COVID-19 and the resultant restrictions and fatigue, polarized the public, creating additional mental stress.

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#### Background:

- Worker psychological health and safety claims have remained steady.
- Although the number of claims filed for psychological injuries has not increased noticeably, cross-jurisdictionally, there is discussion around prolonged duration of claims as a result of the decreased availability of medical resources.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board partnered with the University of Fredericton to provide Yukoners access to the tools they need to prevent psychological injuries.
- This partnership aims to encourage employees struggling with mental health to seek supports when required, and for employers to gain the knowledge necessary to provide support.
- The programs offered include:
  - Enhancing Workplace Resiliency (1 course – 2 hours)
  - Basic Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (1 course – 2.5 hours)
  - Certificate in Managing Psychological Health Issues at Work (3 courses, basic course included – 6.5 hours)
  - Advanced Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (5 courses, basic course included – 50.5 hours)
- Additional information and registration for the courses can be found at [wcb.yk.ca/phscourses](http://wcb.yk.ca/phscourses)
- Northern Safety Network Yukon (NSNY) also offers courses on workplace harassment and violence prevention.
- CCOHS likewise offers courses on the psychological health and safety of workers.



Session Briefing Note 4.3

Spring 2023

COVID-19 and Worker Psychological Health and  
Safety

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WSCB

Approved by:

  
a/President/CEO, WSCB

March 31, 2023

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 5.1

Spring 2023

Enforcing the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*WSCB

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**Recommended response:**

- The health and safety of workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Every worker, in every Yukon workplace, has the right to work in an environment where hazards are minimized. This is what the Board's workplace health and safety officers work to support.
- Sometimes safety officers write orders to enforce compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.
  - Whenever possible, safety officers work with employers and workers to resolve issues before taking enforcement actions.
  - When compliance is not achieved, safety officers may issue administrative penalties or other enforcement measures.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Complaints about enforcement activities often follow the actions of workplace health and safety officers.

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**Background:**

- Part 3 Workplace Health and Safety of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* establishes a framework of internal responsibility. Within this framework, every party in a workplace is responsible for protecting both their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace.
- Part 3 Workplace Health and Safety of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* sets out the rights and responsibilities of everyone in the workplace.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and Regulations establish minimum standards for dealing with workplace hazards and provide for enforcement of the law where necessary.
- Safety officers monitor compliance with laws and regulations governing workplace safety.

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Spring 2023

Enforcing the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*WSCB

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- Safety officers explain to employers how to comply with Part 3 Workplace Health and Safety of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and Regulations, and help them to implement appropriate measures such as safety procedures and protocols. They can also issue orders and other enforcement measures as permitted under the Act.
- The Annual Report provides information on enforcement activities.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 5.2

Spring 2023

## Inquiries About Issues to the Minister's Office

WSCB

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## Recommended response:

- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* strictly prohibits me, as Minister responsible, from getting involved in any claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board follows the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and policies when making decisions.
- If an injured worker or an employer disagrees with a decision, I would encourage them to take advantage of the comprehensive reconsideration and appeal process provided by the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

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Context—this may be an issue because:

- Workers and employers sometimes approach a Minister's office or opposition members to request resolution of disputes they have with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

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Background:

- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states a Minister shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the determination of a claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 5.3

Spring 2023

### Reconsideration and Appeal Opportunities for Workers and Employers

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WSCB

#### Recommended response:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board delivers services to Yukon's workers and employers while operating at arm's length from government.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* provides mechanisms for workers and employers to appeal decisions made by the board.
  - I encourage everyone to use the appropriate appeal channels if they disagree with any decision.
- The Workers' Advocate Office can assist injured workers with claim-related matters, and the Employer Advisor, through the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, is a resource for employers.
- As Minister responsible, I am prohibited from getting involved in appeals or appeal decisions.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Workers and employers sometimes approach the Minister's office or opposition members to request resolution of disputes they have with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

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#### Background:

- If there is disagreement with a decision made on claims, assessments, workplace health and safety orders or administrative penalties, a request may be made to have these decisions reconsidered and then appealed. There are two levels:
  - Reconsiderations are internal reviews of the initial decision by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board
  - Appeals are external reviews of the decision by the independent Appeal Tribunal
- Reconsiderations are documentary reviews of the file.
- After reviewing the file, written submissions and any other relevant information, the decision maker will provide their decision, including rationale, to the parties.

## Session Briefing Note 5.3

Spring 2023

Reconsideration and Appeal Opportunities for  
Workers and Employers

WSCB

- After receiving the reconsideration decision, if the parties are still not satisfied with the decision, an appeal can be submitted to the Appeal Tribunal, an independent, quasi-judicial body.
  - The tribunal's decisions are final and binding.

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 5.4

Spring 2023

### Reprisals Against Workers

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- The safety of workers in all Yukon workplaces is important to this government and to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to report, act on and resolve workplace safety concerns.
  - I encourage workers to report workplace safety concerns to their supervisor. This is an important way to make everyone in the workplace safer.
- In those rare cases where a worker believes they have been disciplined, dismissed or otherwise penalized by their employer for seeking compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, their concerns may be investigated by a safety officer.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Workers and employers sometimes approach the Minister's office or opposition members to request resolutions of disputes they have with Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

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#### Background:

- Sections 53-56 of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* establishes a prohibition on certain acts.
- A reprisal against a worker is the act of dismissing, disciplining or penalizing a worker because they have sought compliance with the workplace health and safety part of the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.
- A worker who believes on reasonable grounds that an employer or trade union has taken or threatened to take reprisal against them may elect to make a written complaint either in accordance with the dispute resolution process set out in a collective agreement (if applicable) or to the board, wherein the board may refer the complaint to an arbitrator.

Session Briefing Note 5.4

Spring 2023

Reprisals Against Workers

WSCB

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Approved by:



\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved



## Session Briefing Note 5.5

Spring 2023

## Replacing the Mine Rescue Station

WSCB

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**Recommended response:**

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board's mine rescue station is a base for the delivery of important health and safety services.
- As mining activity increases in the Yukon, it is essential to have a building to house critical equipment that would be needed in an emergency.
- The current building's lifespan is at an end and it no longer satisfies operational requirements.
- The Board of Directors purchased land on Wasson Place and approved replacing the current building.
- A design is finalized and a tender for the new mine rescue station will be released in early March 2023.
- The current building is energy inefficient and replacing it will significantly decrease the carbon footprint.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is responsible for delivering mine rescue training and the mine rescue station is an essential component. Stakeholders may have questions when tender documents are released.

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**Background:**

- In 1946, *An Ordinance Governing the Safe Operation of Mines in the Yukon Territory* made it mandatory for mine owners or agents to provide adequate mine rescue equipment, in good condition and available for use at all times. Under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, mines are still required to have adequate rescue equipment on site.
- Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Board* is responsible for delivering mine rescue training. The Mine Rescue Station is a key resource for delivering training and supporting mine rescue operations in the Yukon.

## Session Briefing Note 5.5


Spring 2023

## Replacing the Mine Rescue Station

WSCB

- The exact age of the existing mine rescue station building is unknown, but is estimated to have been built in the late 1950s.
  - In 2008, the property value was assessed and the building given another 10 years of economic life.
- In 2016, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board contracted an engineering firm to conduct a hazardous building materials assessment.
  - The assessment determined demolition will be safer and more cost-effective than renovation.
- Currently, the building is used to store mine rescue equipment.
- A tender for design work was issued in the first quarter of 2019 and awarded to local design firm, Kobayashi + Zedda.
- The impact on assessment rates is expected to be minimal.

Approved by:



/President/CEO, WSCB

February 28, 2023

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 6.1

Spring 2023

## Summary of Accomplishments

WSCB

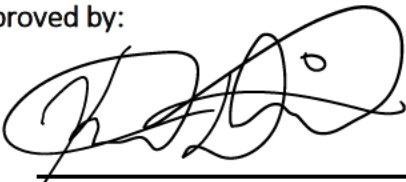
Accomplishment	Significance	Priority	In mandate letter?
January 2023 New App: Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment	This new app is a resource to deliver accurate workplace violence and harassment prevention information to Yukoners in an easy-to-access and secure manner. The app is designed to work from any mobile device.	Medium	No
January 2022 to present Facilitated the coming-into force of the <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i> with stakeholder communication sessions, outreach, updated policies, website, IT systems and forms	Implementation of <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i> required substantial internal and external updates to existing materials.	High	Yes
January to July 2022 Policy Engagement to align statutory policy instruments with the new Act	Amendments to policies are required to fully implement the new Act on July 1, 2022.	High	Yes

Session Briefing Note 6.1  
Summary of Accomplishments

Spring 2023  
WSCB

Accomplishment	Significance	Priority	In mandate letter?
December 2021 Assent of Bill 8, <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i>	Modern, clear legislation that recognizes and addresses the nature of work in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century, streamlines administrative processes, and enhances workplace safety through combined emphasis of workplace health and safety and compensation.	High	Yes

Approved by:



\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB

February 3, 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

### Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

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#### Recommended response:

- As we are aware, homelessness has far-reaching consequences that impact Yukoners. The substance use health emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic have only intensified these issues.
- Meanwhile, rental options are too few and often too expensive. Vacancy rates in the rental market have dropped to 0.8% - the lowest in years –a reality that influences the Yukon Housing growing waitlist.
- Down payment costs remain out of reach for many Yukoners, and homeownership may be less affordable as interest rates rise.
- Across government, we are working with stakeholders to develop new land parcels, increase housing stock, and rapidly increase housing supply while also responding to the findings of the 2022 Office of the Auditor General Report on Housing.

#### Additional response:

- We continue to enhance our Community Housing stock to support a full housing continuum - 47 new affordable units at 401 Jeckell, 10 units of affordable and supportive housing for seniors through Normandy Living and three new triplexes in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse demonstrate how we are responding to the 2022 Office of the Auditor General of Canada recommendations on housing.
- Partnership with Da Daghay Development Corporation for the construction of 98 new units is one of numerous housing examples that further support vulnerable Yukoners.
- Through our new approach to housing YG employees in communities, we aim to decrease the housing cost disparities in communities, further incentivize private sector investment in housing, and prioritize

## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

### Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

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allocations of the government's existing staff housing units to meet critical needs for community well-being.

- Finally, as part of the response to the 2022 Office of the Auditor General of Canada recommendations on housing, we have expanded capital incentive programs to include land development for residential housing, while also enhancing our Community Housing stock.
- 

#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Since COVID-19, Yukoners have faced additional housing challenges including increased housing prices and low vacancy rates.
  - The recently declared substance use health emergency in the Yukon and closure of Chilkoot Trail Inn have added strain on the housing crisis.
- 

#### **Background:**

##### Recent interest rate hikes

- The Bank of Canada raised interest rates for an eighth time in January, bringing the Bank rate to 4.50%. At the start of 2022, that rate was 0.25 %. Rising debt costs will make it more challenging for homeowners to qualify for a mortgage and will increase monthly debt costs for existing homeowners and developers.

##### Housing Action Plan and Safe at Home Plan

- The 10-year Housing Action Plan (HAP) for Yukon was launched in 2015 and provides guidance on housing priorities for the territory.
    - A Housing Action Plan Implementation Committee (HAP – IC) made up of key housing stakeholders and partners from across the territory oversees its implementation.
  - The Safe at Home community-based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness (Safe at Home) was launched in November 2017.
  - The Safe at Home plan was developed by the Government of Yukon, the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and a number of local NGOs.
-

# Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

## Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

- The Safe at Home Society was awarded \$10 million under the Northern Carve-Out of the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, \$5 million in funding under the federal Rapid Housing Initiative 2.0, and \$1.02 million in funding from YHC's Housing Initiatives Fund - for a supportive housing project proposal.

### Land Development

- The Government of Yukon continues to support new land development to increase the supply of land available for housing development. This includes:
  - Government-led land initiatives in Whistle bend, as well initiatives to sell the 5<sup>th</sup> and Rogers site (See TAB #34) and old Macaulay Lodge site (See TAB #37);
  - First Nations land development projects – KDFN's Copper Ridge West (See TAB #35) and Range Point projects;
  - Private Sector land development project initiatives – the Tank Farm (See TAB #40).
- Community Services estimates an additional 1,476 new housing lots will come online by 2026, enough to accommodate 2,713 additional housing units.

### New Housing Construction and partnerships with the Private Sector

- Yukon Housing Corporation offers several loans and grants programs (See TAB #4) to incentivize new housing construction – namely, the *Housing Initiative Fund* (See TAB #63), the *Developer Build Loan* (See TAB #59), and the *Municipal Matching Rental Construction Program* (MMRCP).
- These territorial-based programs complement new housing construction incentive programs under the National Housing Strategy, including the *National Housing Co-investment Fund* and the *Rapid Housing Initiative*.
- Finally, we provide subsidies to households living in private market housing through the *Canada Yukon Housing Benefit* (See TAB #57) and the *Rent Supplement* program.

### Community Housing and the Most Vulnerable

- Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners continue to implement the new Community Housing Program, which aims to improve better client outcomes and fiscal resiliency (See TAB #58)
- Currently, YHC offers over 700 units through the Community Housing program in which eligible Yukoners pay 25% of their income for rent (rent-geared-to-income), we provide

# Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

## Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

support to more than 80 households through our rent supplement program and more than 130 Yukoners through the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit.

- Starting in early 2023, YHC is introducing a mixed-income and mixed-use tenant's allocation policy to its Whitehorse buildings while providing tenants with appropriate partner supports to help them maintain housing.
- Work continues with the Safe at Home Society with the intent of allocating a percentage of units to individuals on the By-Name List.
- YHC is working to implement the Aging in Place Action Plan, which includes broadening programming to include Senior Supportive Housing Program as an option for seniors who require additional supports.
- Finally, YHC and housing providers have recently completed or are currently making significant capital investments to expand the community housing stock, including:
  - The 401 Jeckell – 47-unit building (See TAB #19);
  - Three new triplexes in Mayo, Watson and Whitehorse (See TAB #21);
  - A new Housing First building in Watson Lake (See TAB #25);
  - A new 10-plex in Old Crow (See TAB #23);
  - Duplexes in Carmacks, Dawson, Faro and Mayo (See TAB #20); and
  - New emergency shelters in Dawson and Whitehorse (See TAB #42).

### Major investments in housing include:

- The Canada Yukon Housing Benefit, an eight-year rent subsidy program to support low to moderate income Yukoners renting private market rental housing (See TAB #57).
- \$3.5M for Normandy Living, a private senior's residence with supports (See TAB #38)
- \$21.7M for the design and construction of the 4<sup>th</sup> and Jeckell, a 47-unit mixed-income housing development in Whitehorse (See TAB #19).
- \$2.4M over 2021-2022 for the construction of three triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse in addition to \$3M in federal funding under the Rapid Housing Initiative - contributing nine units of housing options. (See TAB #21)
- \$400K in 2021-2022 for the design of the Watson Lake Housing First project which will be tendered in the Fall 2023 (See TAB #25).
- Design work to support the housing needs in the communities of Teslin, Carcross and Dawson in 2022-2023.
- \$5.7M annually under the Housing Initiatives Fund (See TAB #63).
- \$2.4M to Yukon through a Northern Housing Fund under the National Housing Strategy.



## Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

### Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

- \$6.9M for First Nation Energy Efficiency Program and \$8.4M for Community Housing retrofits under the Low Carbon Economy Fund (LCEF) provided on a 75% (Canada) - 25% (territory) cost-matching ratio between 2019 and 2024. (See TAB #60 & #61)
- \$4.1M for the construction of a Housing First residence for vulnerable individuals (5<sup>th</sup> and Wood St.) in Whitehorse
- Continued commitment by Government of Yukon toward the Municipal Matching Rental Construction program for new rental units.

#### Affordable rental housing incentives (in partnership with the private market):

- Since its inception in 2019, the Housing Initiatives Fund (HIF) intakes have brought on line 361 units and 159 are under construction. (See Tab #63).
  - The sixth intake of the Housing Initiative Fund was launched in November 2022. The deadline to submit an application February 3, 2023.
- The Municipal Matching Rental Construction Grant has supported the construction of over 126 new rental homes throughout the Yukon, ten of which are in progress.
- Since 2020, our homeownership loan program that focuses on providing financial support for the purchase and construction of building projects in rural Yukon, has helped 21 Yukoners to buy or build their first homes. 14 of these projects are completed.

#### Approved by:



Justin Ferbey  
President, Yukon Housing Corporation

January 31, 2023

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note**

**Our Clean Future Annual Report**

Environment  
Energy, Mines and Resources

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**Recommended response:**

- We continue to make significant progress in the implementation of *Our Clean Future*.
- In September 2022, we released our second annual report. It outlines the progress we made in taking action on climate change in 2021.
  - Notably, in 2021, the Yukon Climate Risk Assessment was released and we saw a 12% decrease in our emissions when compared to 2020.
- Through this report we introduced five new actions and revised 13 existing actions to better meet our goals.
- *Our Clean Future* is an adaptive strategy, which means that we assess and adjust the actions we are taking year-over-year to stay on track to meet our long-term goals.
- We will continue to track and report our progress annually.

**Additional response:**

- Over the past year, we have advanced several key actions, such as:
  - Legislated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and associated reporting through the *Clean Energy Act*;
  - Received and analyzed the recommendations from the Yukon Climate Leadership Council ([Ref ENV #24 / EMR #34](#));
  - Established a standard method for determining the health of wetland ecosystems, and tracking baseline conditions to understand future changes;
  - Established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks to the Yukon's transportation corridors; and,
  - Enacted the single-use paper bag ban on January 1, 2023.

## Session Briefing Note

### Our Clean Future Annual Report

Environment  
Energy, Mines and Resources

#### Third response:

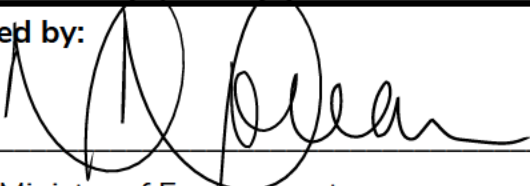
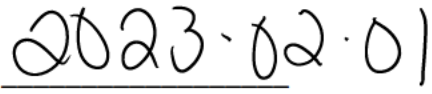

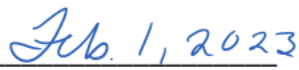
- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our 45 per cent greenhouse gas emissions target reduction by 2030.
- We will continue to build on *Our Clean Future* as we learn more about climate change and introduce more actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.
- We will also continue to work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond, to identify opportunities for new actions and to accelerate and intensify existing actions to reach our ambitious target.

#### Context — this may be an issue because:

- Climate change is of high interest to Yukoners; they will want to know the government's progress in delivering on *Our Clean Future* commitments.

#### Background:

- *Our Clean Future* was released in September 2020 and is a 10-year strategy.
- *Our Clean Future* contains 136 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and supports the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Approved by:	
	
Deputy Minister of Environment	Date approved
	
Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources	Date approved

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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### **Recommended:**

- All Yukon households are seeing their budgets stretched by elevated levels of inflation, with lower-income households often feeling the effects more than others.
- The government continues to assess how inflation is impacting Yukoners and several measures included in the 2023-24 Budget will help make life more affordable for Yukoners.
- In 2023–24, the government is extending the Inflation Relief Rebate Program, which provides a \$50 per month rebate on ATCO Electric and Yukon Energy utility bills for the April and May billing periods, along with an additional three months later in the year.
- Other measures in the 2023-24 Budget to help make life more affordable to Yukoners include funding for food in Yukon schools, the timber harvesting incentive to boost fuelwood supply, a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible recipients of the Yukon Senior Income Supplement, and a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.

### **Additional response:**

- This government already established a strong record of making life more affordable for Yukoners with almost \$10 million-worth of inflation relief made available in last year's budget.

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- This included more funding for Food Network Yukon, a 10 per cent top up to the Pioneer Utility Grant and rebates on the purchase of firewood.
- Yukoners are also receiving inflation relief from the federal government. This includes the accelerated Canada Workers' Benefit, the elimination of interest on student loans, a doubling of the GST tax credit, dental care and the Canada Housing Benefit for renters.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Inflation has increased to decade highs in many countries, including Canada, which is experiencing the highest inflation in almost 40 years.
- Energy prices have been a significant driver and these prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- [March's rate of inflation in Yukon was the highest in Canada at 5.5 per cent vs 4.3 per cent nationally according to the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index.](#)

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### **Background:**

#### Key government initiatives addressing affordability in Yukon

#### **Highlight of affordability spending in Budget 2023-24**

- \$5.3 million to extend the Inflation Relief Rebate. Yukoners will receive a \$50 credit on their power bill in April and May and for an additional three months later in the year.

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- \$300,000 for the Timber Harvesting Incentive program.
- \$1.5 million to increase monthly social assistance payments by \$100.
- Over \$800,000 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- \$500,000 for food in schools.

**This builds on previous programs to protect the affordability of Yukoners including**

- Last year, the Government of Yukon announced almost \$10 million in new inflation relief measures targeted at vulnerable groups.
- The inflation relief rebate covered seven months at a total cost to Government of \$7.6 million. The inflation relief rebate automatically applied a \$50 credit to all residential and commercial ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy electricity bills.
- Yukoners on social assistance received a one-time payment of \$150.
- Seniors were supported by a 10 per cent top up in the Pioneer Utility grant and a one-time payment of \$150 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- Yukoners who heat their homes with wood are eligible for a \$50 rebate per cord of fuel wood, this program is retroactive to April 1, 2022. Yukon also introduced the Timber Harvesting Incentive that gives commercial timber harvesters \$10 per cubic metre.
- The pilot program giving an extra \$500 per month to Extended Family Caregiver agreement caregivers and foster caregivers was extended to the end of the fiscal year.
- In June 2022, the Yukon government extended the Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement and Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement programs, administered through Economic Development.

**Yukoners are also supported by Federal Government affordability programs**

## Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- Accelerated Canada Workers Benefit payments and new minimum entitlement starting in July 2023 (\$4 billion over six years, starting in 2022-23).
- Making all Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans permanently interest-free, starting in April 2023 (\$2.7 billion over five years and \$556.3 million ongoing).
- **GST Tax Credit:** The GST tax credit will be doubled for six months in current benefit year. Additional payment will be provided in one lump-sum, before the end of the benefit year. Targeted to individuals and families with low incomes (below \$39,826, and gradually phased out above that level). Single Canadians without children would receive up to an extra \$234 and couples with two children would receive up to an extra \$467 this year. Seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average.

### Inflation outlook

- The inflation rate in Whitehorse was 5.5 per cent in March, down from 7.0 in February, but 1.2 percentage points higher than the national inflation rate of 4.3 per cent. Whitehorse's inflation rate was the highest in Canada for fourth consecutive month.
- This ranking is a reversal from earlier in 2022 when Whitehorse had the lowest inflation in Canada. For 2022 as a whole, the relatively lower inflation at the beginning of the year and higher inflation at the end of the year cancelled out, and so, the annual inflation rate in Whitehorse was the same as the national rate: 6.8 per cent.
- It is natural that relatively lower inflation in Whitehorse is eventually followed by relatively higher inflation as prices in Whitehorse follow the national trend over the long term.

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- The Bank of Canada has started to take a more aggressive approach to battling inflation by raising interest rates 4.25 percentage points since March 2022. The Bank's increase of 0.25 percentage point on January 25 brought the overnight rate to 4.5 per cent, the highest rate since early 2008. [This rate was maintained at the April rate announcement.](#)
- The housing market in the Yukon has stayed resilient the face of higher interest rates that have cooled markets in most other parts of Canada. Yukon was the only Canadian jurisdiction that saw residential sales in 2022 increase over 2021
- It wasn't until the fourth quarter until signs of cooling showed in the Yukon data, with average sales prices falling across all housing type. Compared with the end of 2021, prices were down by 1.2 per cent for single-detached, 3.9 per cent for duplexes, 11.4 per cent for condos, and 1.6 per cent for mobile homes.
- Most forecasters expect inflation in Canada will move towards historic norms over the next couple of years as supply chain problems subside and the effect of higher interest rates move through the economy. Canadian inflation is expected to decline from near 7 per cent in 2022, to between 3.5-4.0 per cent in 2023. Inflation in 2024 is expected to return to the midpoint of the Bank of Canada's target range of 1-3 per cent.
- Inflation in Whitehorse follows the national trend and therefore expected to fall to 3.8 per cent in 2023 and to 2.5 per cent in 2024.

### **INFLATION RELIEF ACROSS GOVERNMENT**

#### **Tourism and Culture:**

#### **COVID-19 Business Relief Programs**

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Yukon acted quickly and decisively by implementing one of the most robust business relief programs in the country, beginning with the Yukon Business Relief Program (YBRP) in



## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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2020, which was open to any business from any sector that experienced at least a 30% revenue loss due to the pandemic.

- In that same year, Tourism and Culture (T&C) also launched the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which was reviewed and endorsed by the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB) and industry.
- The TRRP committed \$15 million over three years to support the tourism sector and was focused on four key themes:
  - Providing tourism sector leadership;
  - Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
  - Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
  - Refining the brand and inspiring travelers to visit.
- Through the TRRP, various financial support programs were rolled out during the course of the pandemic to sustain the tourism industry and prepare it for the eventual reopening of borders, including:
  - Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
  - Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
  - Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;
  - Great Yukon Summer (GYS) program;
  - Great Yukon Summer Freeze program;
  - ELEVATE program; and
  - A top-up to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

### **Community Tourism Destination Development Fund**

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- In October 2022, the Department of Tourism and Culture announced the creation of the new Community Tourism Destination Development Fund, which is slated to run for an initial three-year term.
- The new annual funding program is available to local businesses, First Nations governments, First Nation Development entities, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for projects that will improve tourism-related services and infrastructure.
- Projects can focus on infrastructure like accommodations, attractions, activities and amenities, and special consideration will be given to umbrella projects, where multiple organizations are working together.

### **Creative and Cultural Industries**

- In November 2021, the Department of Tourism and Culture released *Creative Potential; Advancing the Yukon's Creative and Cultural Industries*, a 10-year strategy to support the growth and development of the creative and cultural industries in the Yukon.
- The CCIS identifies 4 strategic objectives and 22 key actions, which reflect input gathered through extensive public and sector engagement.
- We have identified 10 actions in support of pandemic recovery to be completed over three years as Phase 1 implementation, which includes:
  - Modernizing existing funding;
  - Offering new funding streams;
  - Industry branding and promotion;
  - Marketing and export strategies;
  - Workshops; and

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- Labour market supports.

In 2023-24, three new funding programs will provide \$450,000 annually to the creative and cultural sectors, including:

- Express Micro-grant;
- Indigenous Artists and Cultural Carriers Micro-grant; and
- Creative and Cultural Career Advancement Fund.

### **Additional Funding Programs**

- Tourism and Culture also provides annual supports to the tourism and culture sectors through Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) with many NGOs across the Yukon and through a number of regular funding programs, including:
  - Advanced Artist Award;
  - Arts Fund;
  - Arts Operating Funds;
  - Cultural Industries Training Funds;
  - Culture Quest;
  - New Canadian Events Fund;
  - Touring Artist Fund;
  - Historic Properties Assistance Program;
  - Historic Resources Fund;
  - Museums Contribution Program;
  - Special Projects Capital Assistance Program (SPCAP); and

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund;

### **Yukon Development Corporation:**

#### **Inflation Relief Rebate**

- The Inflation Relief Rebate provides \$50 per month to all non-government residential and commercial electricity customers to help ease the impacts of rising inflation.
- The IRR initially covered June, July, and August 2022, and was extended to cover October, November, and December 2022. The budgets for these were included in 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates.
- The IRR was subsequently extended for March, April, and May 2023. The budget in 2023-24 is comprised of:
  - \$2,056,000 for program costs in April and May 2023 (costs for March 2023 are included in the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2).
  - \$3,246,000 for a further three additional months. We will continue to monitor inflation and costs of living, and we anticipate this will show on electricity bills next winter when electricity bills are typically higher.

### **Economic Development:**

- Economic Development is in the process of developing a temporary paid sick leave program. Program criteria, including eligibility and duration, are currently being developed.

### **Energy, Mines and Resources:**

#### **Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs**

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- Energy efficiency programs are available for the transportation sector, renewable heating sector, and the construction sector focusing on high efficiency buildings.
- For existing homes, the Energy Branch offers the Good Energy rebate program for high performance heating systems and upgrades to thermal enclosures including insulation and windows and high performance new homes. Taking these measures will save homeowners money on their energy costs.
- For commercial and institutional buildings, the Energy Branch offers rebates for greenhouse gas-reducing retrofits and renewable heating.
- For First Nation and municipal buildings, the Energy Branch offers retrofit and funding support through its Community Institutional Energy Efficiency Program.
- There are two current incentives for wood, one for harvesters and one to offset fuelwood costs:
  - In October 2022 we launched the timber harvesting incentive to provide registered Yukon timber harvesting businesses an incentive of \$10 per cubic metre of timber harvested or sold between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. We have paid out \$163,000 to industry so far.
  - In September 2022, we launched a new firewood rebate to offset the increased costs of firewood for home heating. The rebate provides \$50 for each cord of firewood purchased, up to a maximum of 10 cords. As of February 14, 2023 we processed 586 applications, and paid out approximately \$69,850 in rebates for 1,389 cords of firewood.

### **Yukon Housing Corporation:**

Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan which support housing affordability and those in need include:

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

Finance  
Executive Council Office

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- The 47-unit housing complex at 401 Jeckell Street in Whitehorse opened in January 2023. The building provides new homes to Yukoners, including 5 three-bedroom, 12 two-bedroom, 16 one-bedroom and 14 bachelor units;
- The Opportunities Yukon 45-unit Cornerstone Development in Whitehorse opened in summer 2022 and is providing supportive living and accessible housing;
- Triplex housing units in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse were completed in spring 2022 and are providing affordable homes to families in each of these communities;
- In Old Crow, the 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing complex is under construction with expected completion in summer 2023; and
- The 10-Plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake is included in the Northern Carve-Out. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2023-24.

### Other highlights from the plan

- More homes will be created for Yukon families in rural communities through the construction of three duplexes in Dawson City, Mayo, and Carmacks. These homes are on track for completion in summer 2023.
- The demolition of Macaulay Lodge in Whitehorse was completed in October 2022. Planning for the redevelopment of the site to support mixed commercial and residential use is underway.

### Health and Social Services:

#### **For 2022-23:**

## **Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability**

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- a one-time \$150 payment to social assistance recipients;
- a one-time payment of \$150 to Yukon Seniors Income Supplement recipients;
- a one-time 10 per cent additional payment to Pioneer Utility Grant recipients;
- a six-month extension of \$500 per month to caregivers of children in out of home care; and
- Committed \$100,000 to Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to continue to support food security across the territory.

For 2023-24:

- a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible Yukon Senior Income Supplement recipients; and
- a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.

**Public Service Commission:** *(no change from Fall BN)*

### **Remote work policy in support of employees working in communities**

- In fall 2021, the Yukon government introduced a new remote work policy to support employees to continue working remotely in the long term.
- Implementing the new remote work policy is an action in the Our Clean Future strategy, as people are supported to work from home and reduce their emissions by commuting less.
- The new remote work policy also enables employees to work remotely from Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse, in some circumstances.
- The Public Service Commission will strive to support more long-term remote work arrangements throughout the Yukon government where it makes sense, and will track data on long-term arrangements going forward.

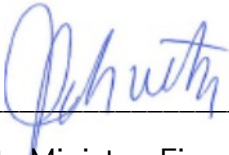
## Session Briefing Note

**FIN TAB #26**  
**ECO TAB #73**  
**Spring 2023**

### Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance  
Executive Council Office

Approved by:



April 24, 2023

a/Deputy Minister, Finance

Approved

2023 04 21



Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

Approved



**Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
– Update on Calls to Action**

Executive Council  
Office

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**Recommended response:**

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process, and the Government of Yukon is continuing our work to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- We are working collaboratively with First Nations to advance progress in key areas including health and social services, education, justice and heritage, through the Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan.
- We are also working with Yukon First Nations to implement Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy*, which will further advance reconciliation and address the Calls to Action.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- At the Yukon Forum in November 2022, we discussed the approach to implementing and reporting on the Calls to Action with Yukon First Nations.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations for health and social services.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Yukon government (YG) previously made public its intention to fulfill its commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.
- The Calls to Action were a topic at the November 29, 2022 Yukon Forum.

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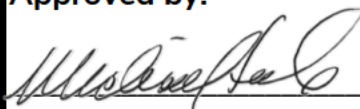
**Background:**

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in June 2015. It contains 94 Calls to Action focused on redressing the harms resulting

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
– Update on Calls to Action**Executive Council  
Office

from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. Thirty-two of the Calls to Action relate directly to YG.

- YG and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) collaborate on addressing the Calls to Action through the Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan.
- YG has taken steps to address the Calls to Action, including:
  - establishing the position of Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives at the Department of Education, signing an agreement to establish a YFN School Board, and entering into education agreements with all YFNs (speaks to Calls 7 and 10 directed to the Federal government);
  - supporting Indigenous athletes and the North American Indigenous Games (Call 88);
  - implementing the YFN Procurement Policy (relates to Call 92) and the Representative Public Service Plan: *Breaking Trail Together* (relates to Call 7);
  - working with YFNs and Yukon Indigenous women's groups to implement Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy* (MMIWG2S+ Strategy) (relates to Call 41);
  - participating at the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of YFN Children and Families to address gaps for culturally appropriate parenting programs (Call 5); and
  - receiving input from YFNs on Health and Social Services programming through the Mental Health Advisory Committee (relates to Call 19).

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

February 6, 2023

Date

**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2023****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

**Embargoed until day of budget tabling**

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**Recommended response:**

- In 2023-24, the Yukon continues to demonstrate its robust position nationally with population and economic growth among the strongest in the country.
- Budget 2023-24 delivers spending initiatives aimed at making life more affordable for Yukoners while also including several inflation relief measures to help combat the rising cost of goods.
- This budget continues to invest in the Yukon's health and social system and includes investments in new and expanded health services through the implementation of *Putting People First*. This includes addressing the substance-use health emergency and supporting the mental health of Yukoners.
- It delivers on our commitment to support a green economy with investments outlined in *Our Clean Future*.
- There are also strategic investments in infrastructure, particularly in housing for the most vulnerable. Other investments in housing include funds for land development, investments in housing projects in Dawson City, Watson Lake and Teslin, subsidies and supports for renters and funding for various affordable and community housing projects.
- Like in previous budgets, Budget 2023-24 continues to build relationships and further reconciliation with Yukon First Nations.

**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2023****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

**Embargoed until day of budget tabling**

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**Additional response:**

- The Yukon government is delivering on its commitment to grow a strong and resilient economy while ensuring robust, sustainable fiscal management.
- A surplus of 2.49 per cent of expenditures serves as a prudent fiscal management tool and demonstrates the ability of the government to address unforeseen events without going into a deficit.
- The fiscal summary includes a \$50 million contingency for presently undefined expected expenditures in 2023-24. This will not affect the Yukon's forecast fiscal position and allows the government to remain transparent about potential pressures.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2023-24 Main Estimates will be debated during the March 2023 legislative session.
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**Background:**

- The 2023-24 Main Estimates include a surplus of \$48.2 million and year-end debt of \$374.8 million.
- Total revenue is expected to be \$1.58 billion in 2023-24. This is an increase of \$115.2 million or 7.3 per cent from the 2022-23 Main Estimates.
- Forecast O&M expenditures total \$1.45 billion, with O&M recoveries offsetting this amount by \$130.9 million. This is an increase of 2.6 per cent in net O&M expenditures from the 2022-23 Main Estimates.

**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2023****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

**Embargoed until day of budget tabling**

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- Forecast capital expenditures total \$483.8 million with recoveries of \$164.5 million. This is a 9.9 per cent decrease in net capital expenditures from the 2022-23 Main Estimates. This represents a reduction of \$63 million from last year's capital budget. This reduction reflects a sustainable approach to budgeting in the territory following elevated capital spending over the last two years, which helped stimulate Yukon's economy during the pandemic.
- There are 5,332.0 FTEs in the 2023-24 budget, which is a decrease of 89.1 FTEs from 2022-23.

**Approved by:**

a/Deputy Minister, Department

February 23, 2023

Approved

**Recommended response:**

- Overall, the changes outlined in the Supplementary Estimates #2 show a government that continues to make sure Yukoners and our economy remain healthy as we emerge from the pandemic while also responding to new and emerging challenges.
- Inflation continues to have an impact on Yukoners, as well as an impact on government projects. Several changes included as part of this Supplementary Estimates are in response to higher costs or work progressing faster than planned.
- The capital budget has no overall gross change in this Supplementary Estimates, but this is not because no adjustments were made. Major projects are still getting the resources they need to reach completion, but other projects were decreased to reflect timelines and funds were reallocated accordingly.
- The increase of \$37.5 million for the Department of Highways and Public Works is being offset by deferrals and offsets in other projects.

## Session Briefing Note

**TAB#28**

**Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2022-23**

**Spring 2023**

## Supplementary Overview

**Embargoed until day of budget tabling**

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### Additional response:

- The largest expenditures are on three important capital projects, accounting for \$53.8 million altogether.
- The first is the replacement of the Nisutlin Bay Bridge. This increase covers higher costs and an accelerated schedule. The additional work on this project results in an increase of \$35.8 million as part of this Supplementary Estimate.
- We also provided additional funding for building the Carmacks Bypass, which is part of the Yukon Resource Gateway Program. Work in this area makes up \$11.8 million of the Capital increase.
- The third project is the construction of the Dempster Fibre Line, which will open a second fibre optic link instead of relying just on one, and so give Yukoners more reliable access to the internet as well as necessary redundancy. This project includes a proposed increase of \$5.7 million.

## Session Briefing Note

**TAB#28**

## Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2022-23

**Spring 2023**

## Supplementary Overview

**Embargoed until day of budget tabling**

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- These increases are offset by decreases in capital. The most significant reductions can be seen in the Yukon Housing Corporation. This is largely the result of revised timelines for various projects and initiatives as well as lower uptake in application-based programs, but also accounts for the housing and building cycle as Normandy Living, Cornerstone and the 47-unit 4th and Jeckell facility are all ready and taking in clients and we are now shifting towards building new relationships for potential future projects.
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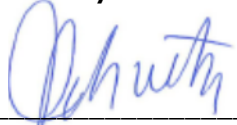
### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2 is tabled in the spring session and will be the subject of debate.
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### Background:


- Opposition may request an explanation for the changes included as part of the Supplementary Estimates #2.

#### Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
a/Deputy Minister, Finance

March 02, 2023  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approved

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, HPW

March 02, 2023  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approved



## Session Briefing Note 3.3

Spring 2023

### Workplace Violence and Harassment

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- This government is proud of our efforts to improve health and safety in Yukon workplaces, and we are delivering on our commitment.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is continuing the work of communicating the importance of health and safety to Yukon workers and employers.
- Violence and harassment are not welcome in any Yukon workplace.
- The *Violence and Harassment Prevention Regulation* came into force September 4, 2021 and provides tools to prevent and mitigate workplace violence and harassment.
- Tools that have been developed to help workers and employers prevent workplace violence and harassment include a Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Guide, an online app, policy and procedures templates, slide show templates and a Safety Talk on this issue.
- I encourage any worker or employer who has questions about workplace violence and harassment to contact the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions as to the role of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board when it comes to workplace violence and harassment.

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#### Background:

- Workplace violence is generally understood as the threatened, attempted or actual application of physical force toward a worker that is likely to cause harm or lead a worker to believe that they are likely to be harmed.

## Session Briefing Note 3.3

Spring 2023

## Workplace Violence and Harassment

WSCB

- Workplace harassment is generally understood as any objectionable comments or behaviours that we know, or should know, are likely unwelcome.
  - This includes any inappropriate comments or objectionable behavior relating to a worker's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, age, disability, religious beliefs or ethnic background.
- Risks of violence and harassment are higher in some sectors including health care, education, government, emergency services and the service sector.
- When a complaint or incident of violence and harassment is reported to WSCB, the role of the safety officer is to check to ensure employers, supervisors and workers are complying with workplace violence and harassment prevention requirements.
  - They may do this as part of a general inspection of a workplace or when investigating a specific complaint or incident.
  - Safety Officers do not determine the merits of harassment files.
  - Orders are written if the employer has gaps in their policies or procedures.
- A worker who has or may have suffered any work-related injury, including violence and harassment in the workplace, needs to tell their employer what has happened and seek any required medical attention as soon as possible.
- To file a claim, a worker needs to submit an "Application for Compensation Benefits" form to WSCB. The claim must be filed within 12 months of the injury.
- Case managers at WSCB process claims looking at all of the evidence and may ask for additional information if needed to make a decision for entitlement. Each claim is decided on its own merits and on a case-by-case basis.

Approved by:

  
a/President/CEO, WSCB

April 6, 2023

Date Approved