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Session Briefing Note
Yukon Association of
Education Professionals
Collective Bargaining

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General response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes and respects the hard work, expertise, and devotion of our education professionals.
- We are committed to securing a renewed collective agreement that is fair, balanced and fiscally responsible, and that supports ongoing efforts to attract and retain highly qualified educators in the Yukon.

Current Status response:

- Although significant progress was made between the bargaining teams in September and October, they remain far apart on monetary issues. Both parties mutually agreed that further bargaining would not be productive because of this.
- On October 9, 2024, the Yukon Association of Education Professionals formally requested a declaration of impasse from the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board (YTLRB). YAEP also requested that the Board establish a conciliation panel to assist the parties reach an agreement. As YAEP requested conciliation, the parties are now following that process to work towards a negotiated agreement.
- The conciliation process is set out in the *Education Labour Relations Act*, which outlines the steps and timelines for working towards achieving a negotiated agreement. The conciliation board is made up of three members: one nominated by each party, and a third nominated as chair by the two members.

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Collective Bargaining

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- The aim of the conciliation board is to assist both parties in reaching a final negotiated agreement.
- Conciliation sessions have been tentatively scheduled for the first week of December.

Monetary Proposals and Impact on Recruitment:

- We are committed to securing a renewed agreement that preserves Yukon educators as amongst the highest paid in the country and is fiscally responsible.
- Teachers in Yukon are among the highest paid in Canada, with average salaries 30% higher than British Columbia. We aim to maintain this status through a negotiated agreement.
- Where some groups of YAEP members are not market competitive, such as teachers on call, the Government of Yukon has proposed significant increases to assist in recruitment and retention.
- We look forward to working through the conciliation process with YAEP to finalize a renewed collective agreement.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Negotiations with YAEP have reached an impasse due to a wide gap on monetary issues. YAEP issued a news release stating that 95% of its members had voted in favour of job action. YAEP has requested that the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board declare a deadlock in negotiations, and have opted to proceed with the conciliation process, per the process set out in ELRA.

Session Briefing Note
Yukon Association of
Education Professionals
Collective Bargaining**Fall 2024**
Public Service
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Background:

- Collective bargaining is a complex process that often spans several months and may result in changes to elements of the agreement, such as annual wage increases, allowances, premium payments, leave provisions and other matters of importance to the Yukon Association of Educational Professionals and the employer.
- The *Education Labour Relations Act* governs collective bargaining and grievance adjudication processes for Yukon's education sector, with negotiations led by the Public Service Commission (PSC).
- Under the *Education Labour Relations Act*, either the Government of Yukon or YAEP may give up to three (3) months' notice to begin negotiations for the renewal of the collective agreement. Additionally, a Letter of Understanding G permits notice to be given four (4) months prior to the agreement's expiration.
- The YAEP issued a notice of intent to bargain on March 5, 2024.
- Negotiations commenced in September and continued on dates in early October.
- Throughout the bargaining process, YAEP has emphasized a need for significantly improved compensation for educators, citing an erosion in members' buying power from 2021 to 2024, as a result of high inflation.
- On October 3 and 4, 2024, YAEP asked its members to respond to a survey regarding potential job action based on YG's negotiating position. This was not a strike vote, and YAEP is not in a legal strike position.
- On October 4, 2024, YAEP issued a press release outlining the Employer's last proposal for general wage increases and advised that membership voted 95% in favour of strike action. This communication did not include accurate information and was misleading, resulting in many calls from concerned parents, guardians and educators.
- In response, a Statement was issued from the Minister, Public Service Commission, correcting the record and providing accurate information about the status of collective bargaining with YAEP.

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- On October 7, 2024, YAEP requested that the Chair of the Labour Relations Board declare an impasse.
- On October 9, 2024, YAEP formally requested conciliation.
- On October 25, 2024, both the YAEP and YG have confirmed their nominees on the Conciliation Board.
- Tentative dates for conciliation have been set for the first week of December.
- No strike can be authorized or commenced until the legislated process of conciliation has concluded.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-11-14

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note
**Nursing Retention and
Recruitment Bonuses****Fall 2024**
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- We are pleased to announce the signing of a new Letter of Agreement on April 16, 2024, between the Yukon Employees' Union and the Government of Yukon, which extends recruitment incentives for nurses until March 31, 2025.
- Nurse employees, including Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and Licensed Practical Nurses, performing a position requiring a nursing designation will continue to be eligible for a signing bonus and reimbursement for exam fees.
- Combined with a new Nurse Group wage grid introduced in the 2022-2024 PSAC/YEU Collective Agreement, this bonus package is designed to address wage gaps with other Canadian jurisdictions and tackle ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, providing essential incentives to attract and retain staff to serve our communities.

Additional response:

- While these incentives specifically target nursing positions, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to all frontline care workers who tirelessly contribute to the health, safety and wellbeing of Yukoners.
 - Your dedication and hard work are truly commendable.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- This matter has gained media attention, particularly regarding concerns raised by the Yukon Employees' Union about the administration of nursing retention and recruitment bonuses.
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Background:

- A new Letter of Agreement, effective from April 1, 2024, until March 31, 2025, extends recruitment incentives for nurses to address challenges such as turnover, high vacancy rates, rising overtime costs and reliance on agency nurses.
-

Session Briefing Note**Nursing Retention and
Recruitment Bonuses****Fall 2024**Public Service
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- This agreement maintains the signing bonus and exam fee reimbursement for Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and Licensed Practical Nurses, as outlined in the original Letter of Agreement from November 30, 2022.
- Specifically, the agreement continues to provide a signing bonus of \$7,500 for newly hired Nurse Practitioners and Registered Nurses, and \$4,500 for newly hired Licensed Practical Nurses, contingent on a 12-month service agreement. Should a nurse not fulfill this requirement, the bonus will be recovered on a prorated basis.
- Additionally, the Government of Yukon is offering reimbursement for exam fees incurred within 24 months prior to the job offer for new nursing graduates hired after December 1, 2022.
- This new agreement follows the expiration of a prior temporary Letter of Agreement on March 31, 2024.
- It coincides with a new collective agreement ratified on June 6, 2023, between the Government of Yukon and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)/Yukon Employees' Union (YEU), which remains effective until December 31, 2024.
- This collective agreement introduces separate Nurse Group pay grids and annual retention allowances ranging from \$3000 for a Whitehorse-based RN to \$21,000 for a community-based Primary Health Care Nurse in Charge.
- Additionally, the previous retention bonuses and Expanded Scope bonus amounts have been incorporated into the new salary grid for nursing positions.

Approved by:Lyle Dinn

A/Public Service Commissioner

2024-08-20

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Auxiliary On-Call Employees**

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- Auxiliary on-call employees play a vital role in the Government of Yukon workforce, contributing to the delivery of public services by filling in for absent employees due to illness or leave. They also provide coverage during peak periods and special projects.
- Auxiliary on-call employees are members of the Yukon Employees' Union, and their terms and conditions of employment are outlined in the collective agreement.
- While some of these terms and conditions align with those for regular employees, others are tailored to accommodate the unique role auxiliary-on-call employees play within the organization.
- Despite not being entitled to paid sick leave, auxiliary-on-call employees receive additional compensation in lieu of health and welfare benefits and leave entitlements. They also have access to the Employee and Family Assistance Program.

Additional response:

- The Public Service Commission actively monitors the use of auxiliary on-call employees across the Government of Yukon and maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Yukon Employees' Union to ensure their appropriate use.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- During the Opposition briefing in March 2024, concerns were raised about the use of auxiliary-on-call employees by departments and the benefits these employees are entitled to under collective agreements.
-

Background:

- The collective agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada / YEU governs the terms and conditions of auxiliary-on-call (AOC) employment. They receive the same
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Session Briefing Note

Auxiliary On-Call Employees

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pay rate as regular employees in the same classification and work flexible hours based on organizational needs.

- AOCs lack a guaranteed set of working hours, differing in terms and conditions from regular employees. They generally have no set hours of work and are called in as needed.
- Other notable distinctions include:
 - AOCs receive pay in lieu of leave entitlements.
 - AOC positions are ineligible for pension.
 - Severance pay is calculated based on regular hours worked rather than continuous service.
 - A premium paid in lieu of extended health care coverage.
- Letter of Understanding “S” in the collective agreement establishes a joint committee to monitor the use of AOCs. The LOU outlines the process for dispute resolution if parties disagree on the intended use of an AOC.
- The Public Service Commission provides quarterly AOC reports to the YEU detailing the persons employed, categorized by department, and number of hours worked. This process allows YEU to monitor AOC utilization effectively.
- As of August 31, 2024, there are approximately 793 AOC positions.
- The annual AOC count over the last four (4) years:
 - June 2020 (920) to June 2021 (876) - (4.78 per cent decrease)
 - June 2021 (876) to June 2022 (904) - (3.20 per cent increase)
 - June 2022 (904) to June 2023 (851) - (5.86 per cent decrease)
 - June 2023 (851) – June 2024 (808) (5.05 per cent decrease)
- Active in the system does not necessarily mean that individuals worked hours. AOCs are released after one year of inactivity.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang
Public Service Commissioner

2024-09-27
Date Approved

Appendix A– AOC Employees and Hours Worked

Total Auxiliary On-Call (AOC) Employees and Hours Worked, by Fiscal Year

Department	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24	
	Employees	Hours	Employees	Hours	Employees	Hours	Employees	Hours
Community Services	34	24,229.93	50	30,552.40	53	25,602.39	19	8,247.8
Economic Development	5	3,957.00	9	3,800.00	10	6,310.5	6	4,819.5
Education	44	23,973.95	49	32,787.31	43	32,612.91	49	35,739.58
Energy, Mines & Resources	34	18,395.13	31	16,364.38	25	13,994.35	25	13,541.35
Environment	21	12,046.37	35	13,082.42	39	13,056.1	40	13,032.55
Executive Council Office	12	4,813.48	9	2,374.45	9	3,782.53	8	4,736.65
Finance	15	13,507.60	19	13,120.50	16	5,880.83	8	5,645.99
French Language Services Dir.	2	870.25	2	277.40	6	1,805.25	7	6,045.75
Health & Social Services	466	341,207.63	493	280,392.68	474	243,550.34	457	242,429.61
Highways & Public Works ¹	114	84,348.63	136	71,133.90	139	71,138.85	133	66,513.81
Justice	75	48,126.68	67	31,466.99	71	39,534.32	66	45,534.13
Legislative Assembly Office ²	0	-	1	1,589.00	1	142.5	0	0
Public Service Commission	9	4,509.75	15	6,885.17	16	7,130.63	14	7,556.44
Tourism & Culture	34	13,548.34	31	13,004.58	31	8,328.05	33	12,579.2
Women & Gender Equity Dir.	2	1,309.50	2	982.50	2	594.3	1	14.7
Worker's Safety & Compensation Board	13	11,310.43	10	6,664.77	6	4,310.6	4	2,677.75
Yukon Housing Corporation	8	3,702.20	4	1,670.75	4	1650	7	3,738.2
Yukon Liquor Corporation	16	9,258.85	16	12,054.70	19	15,589.7	7	11,630.58
Sum of Department Counts	904	619,115.69	979	538,203.88	964	495,014.13	894	484,483.59
YG Total: Unique Employees	865		938		927			865

1. Count includes Fleet Vehicles Agency.
2. Count includes Elections Office, with use of AOC employment in each quarter.

Appendix B – Type of Employment: 2020 - 2023

As of December 31, 2023, the Government of Yukon employed 6,305 individuals. This figure includes all employees, regardless of their actual work hours, and encompasses short-term casuals, or auxiliaries employed as required to substitute for regular employees. This figure differs from the number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) as seen in session briefing note *Size of Government/ FTE Growth* TAB #20 because the method used to generate the table in TAB #20 tracks and reports on actual hours worked, rather than simply counting the total number of employees as shown in the table below.

The table below illustrates the total number of employees by employment type over a four-year period:

Employment Type	2020	2021	2022	2023
Auxiliary on-call	920	862	862	821
Casual	246	296	234	205
Perm/term	4,593	4,566	4,580	4,775
Seasonal	50	42	38	41
Other	413	372	422	463
Total	6,222	6,138	6,136	6,305

Note: Other includes the following: AOC-R, students and temporary teachers/teacher on call.

Recommended response:

- We are dedicated to fostering safe, respectful and healthy workplaces that support the delivery of high-quality public services to Yukoners.
- Our priorities include promoting constructive ways to manage conflict, ensuring equal access to conflict resolution support and addressing conflict promptly.
- The Government of Yukon's *Respectful Workplace Policy* is central to maintaining a healthy and productive work environment.
- We emphasize early intervention and alternative dispute resolution, with all public servants sharing the responsibility for respectful conduct.

Additional response:

- To prevent and address conflict, and disrespectful conduct, the Organizational Development Branch, in collaboration with the Investigations Office and various government departments, delivers comprehensive conflict management services. This collaboration ensures that we are taking comprehensive and coordinated steps to maintain respectful workplace standards.
- These services include coaching, group processes, facilitated conversations and training, all aimed at helping employees manage conflict in a healthy and productive way.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Conflict support remains a high-profile concern for labour organizations.
-

Background:

- Services dealing with conflict management were previously provided by the Respectful Workplace Office. With the establishment of the Investigations Office (which handles investigations related to harassment, discrimination and serious

Conflict Support

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interpersonal conduct), the Respectful Workplace Office now called “Conflict Management Services” was integrated into the Organizational Development Branch of the PSC.

- These services focus on promoting conflict competency through education and workplace interventions in response to complaints or requests.
- Specifically, they include:
 - **Alternative Dispute Resolution Consultation:** An informal and confidential exploration of an employee's situation and options.
 - **Conflict Coaching:** A structured process offering private and confidential sessions to help employees develop conflict competency.
 - **Facilitation:** A neutral third party facilitates dialogues between employees or within work teams, similar to mediation but less formal, allowing for open conversations without the need for formal agreements.
 - **Mediation:** A neutral third party assists in negotiating a mutually acceptable solution.
 - **Group Processes:** Collaborative interventions to resolve underlying issues through workplace engagement, followed by appropriate dispute resolution processes.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-23

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Establishment of Investigations Office

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Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful workplace, with a duty to investigate and respond to serious allegations of discrimination, harassment and violence.
- In recognition of this duty, we have established an internal Investigations Office within the Public Service Commission, dedicated to effectively addressing serious workplace misconduct and ensuring a swift and comprehensive response.
- Conflict Management Services (formerly known as the Respectful Workplace Office) continues to take a restorative approach to interpersonal conflict, tailoring responses to each unique situation while the newly established Investigations Office focuses on severe cases.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon also updated the *Respectful Workplace Policy*, GAM 3.47, to reflect these changes.
- The Investigations Office is fully operational, playing a crucial role in strengthening workplace safety and fostering a respectful work environment.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On April 16, 2024, the Opposition asked for an update regarding the establishment of the Investigations Office.

Background:

- Historically, the Respectful Workplace Office managed investigations into disrespectful conduct, including discrimination and harassment, within the Government of Yukon. This encompassed a spectrum of behaviours, ranging from interpersonal conflict to more serious instances of disrespectful conduct and harassment.
- Recent investigations into serious allegations, including sexual harassment, have been handled by external investigators.

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Fall 2024

Establishment of Investigations Office

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- The creation of an internal Investigations Office is intended to streamline and enhance the investigative process, making it more timely, cost-effective, trauma-informed and integrated with other services provided to the Government of Yukon employees.
- While investigations address severe incidents, the Conflict Management Services Office, (formerly known as the Respectful Workplace Office,) remains committed to offering conflict resolution services for issues that do not meet the threshold for a formal investigation.
- These services, including conflict coaching, facilitation, mediation, group processes, and training, play a vital role in supporting and nurturing respectful workplaces throughout the Yukon government.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-14

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Yukon Association of Educational Professionals 2024-2025 Confidence and Supply Agreement

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes and values the important role that education professionals play in nurturing the intellectual, social and personal development of Yukon students.
- In accordance with the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, the Government of Yukon has committed to allocating an additional \$1 million to each budget of the Mains until 2025-26.

Additional response:

- This funding is intended to enhance the recruitment and retention of current and new rural education professionals across the Yukon.
- In an effort to meet this commitment, the Public Service Commission engaged with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals (YAEP) to secure their agreement to implement a signing and retention bonus for rural school staff for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years; however, the YAEP did not agree to the proposal.
- Government of Yukon is currently in collective bargaining negotiations with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be interest from the Opposition regarding the status of the commitment to provide additional funds for enhancing the recruitment and retention efforts of new rural education professionals in Yukon.
- The Opposition may have an interest regarding what will happen to the allocation for 2024/2025 given that the YAEP has not agreed to the signing/retention bonus.

Session Briefing Note

TAB #6
Fall 2024

Yukon Association of Educational Professionals 2024-2025 Confidence and Supply Agreement

Public Service
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Background:

- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement is effective from January 31, 2023, until the passage of the Mains of the 2025-26 budget or until an election is called.
- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement reaffirms the Government of Yukon's commitment to improving the Yukon's education system, specifically, through the allocation of an additional \$1 million each year to enhance recruitment and retention efforts for new rural education professionals.
- The Public Service Commission sought YAEP's agreement for the Department of Education to implement a signing and retention bonus for current and new rural school staff for the 2023/24 school year.
- On March 5, 2024, the YAEP notified the PSC that they will not be signatory to the agreement and officially served notice to bargain.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-10-01

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Recommended response:

- The Yukon government and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) / Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) ratified a collective agreement on June 6, 2023, effective until December 31, 2024.
- The agreement introduces a bonus package to address wage gaps with other Canadian jurisdictions and tackle recruitment and retention challenges for nursing positions.

Additional response:

- Some Allied Health Professionals receive a \$1,000 annual retention allowance under the current collective agreement. These Allied Health Professionals are:
 - Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, School Community Consultant, Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support Consultant and Speech Language Pathologist.
 - There is also a retention allowance available for Audiologists of \$3000 per year.
 - While this bonus initiative is specific to nursing positions, we extend our appreciation to all frontline care workers contributing tirelessly to the health, safety, and wellbeing of Yukoners.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

Concerns about wage disparities between allied health professionals and nurses were raised on March 26, 2024, by the Opposition, following an email dated March 20, 2024, addressed to Minister McPhee from a Collective of Allied Health Professionals, Leaders, and Voters.

Background:

- In the 2022-2024 fiscal years, the government allocated \$6 million to nursing staff bonuses:
 - \$15,000 for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners.
 - \$8,000 for Licensed Practical Nurses.
 - Signing bonuses of \$7,500 for new Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners and \$4,500 for Licensed Practical Nurses.
 - \$10,000 bonus for primary care nurses working in Yukon communities.
-

- Reimbursement of exam fees for new nursing graduates hired by the Yukon government.
- The collective agreement continues to address nursing turnover, high vacancy rates, rising overtime costs, reliance on agency nurses and incentivizes the hiring of new Registered Nurses with recruitment and retention bonuses.
- The agreement includes new, separate Nurse Group pay grids and a retention allowance:
 - Effective April 1, 2024, a **primary health care nurse** whose substantive position is headquartered in a Yukon community outside of Whitehorse is eligible to receive a retention allowance of up to \$8,000 per annum in addition to the Registered Nurse retention allowance.
 - Effective April 1, 2024, a **primary health care nurse in charge** whose substantive position is headquartered in a Yukon community outside of Whitehorse is eligible to receive a retention allowance of up to \$18,000 per annum in addition to the Registered Nurse retention allowance.
- The signing bonus for newly hired nurses and exam fee reimbursement were extended for an additional year – until March 31, 2025 - to assist with ongoing recruitment issues, through a Letter of Agreement between the Public Service Alliance of Canada / Yukon Employees' Union and the Yukon government.
- Recruitment incentives have reduced the Primary Health Care Nurses vacancy rate to 15 per cent by February 2024. This marks a significant improvement over the rates of 47 per cent in July 2022 and 32.7 per cent in July 2023.
- However, despite these staffing improvements, Community Nursing and the broader health system continue to rely on agency nurses for support.
- To address these costs, the Department of Health and Social Services has taken proactive measures, including wage increases and bonuses to hire and retain nurses.
- The Department of Health and Social Services is also actioning a Health Human Resources Strategy to address the shortage of health care professionals across all disciplines.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-22

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada provides support to Government of Yukon's two labour boards: the Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board and the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board, which handle collective bargaining and grievances.
 - While the Public Service Commission was working to renew the agreement for Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada services with the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Employment Board, the Public Service Commission was informed that the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada has no legal authority to continue providing these services to Yukon's labour boards.
 - The Public Service Commission is now exploring other options to maintain administrative support for these boards.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Public Service Alliance of Canada/Yukon Employees Union (PSAC/YEU) and the Yukon Association of Educational Professionals (YAEP) may provide the opposition with notice.
-

Background:

- The Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board and the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board are comprised of members from the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Board (FPSLREB), established under the *Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board Act*.
 - According to Yukon laws, the Yukon Labour Relations Boards consist of members who are full-time members of the FPSLREB.
 - The FPSLREB, an independent tribunal, handles collective bargaining and grievance adjudication for Canada's federal public service and Parliament and through agreement with the Government of Yukon, it also handles these tasks for the Yukon public service under Yukon-specific laws.
-

Session Briefing Note

Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada

Public Service
Commission

- Historically, the Government of Yukon has had a long-standing arrangement with the FPSLREB and its predecessors – the Public Service Labour Relations Board and the Public Service Staffing Tribunal.
- In April 2024, the Chairperson of the FPSLREB informed the Government of Yukon that there's no legal authority for the Administrative Tribunal Support Service of Canada (ATSSC) to continue providing administrative support to the Yukon Labour Relations Board and the Teachers Labour Relations Board.
- However, the ATSSC agreed to continue its services until March 31, 2025, despite the expiration of the previous agreement on March 31, 2024.

Approved by:

<u>Lyle Dinn</u>	<u>2024-08-21</u>
Public Service Commissioner	Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**YEU/PSAC Collective
Bargaining**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes and appreciates the dedication and hard work of our employees, who strive to deliver exceptional public services to Yukon residents.
 - The current collective agreement between the Government of Yukon and the Public Service Alliance of Canada/Yukon Employees' Union (PSAC/YEU) is set to expire on December 31, 2024.
 - PSAC/YEU served notice to bargain on September 16, 2024, and dates have been scheduled for the parties to begin discussions.
 - The Government of Yukon is dedicated to negotiating a new agreement that is fair, balanced and fiscally responsible.
 - We are committed to upholding the integrity of the bargaining process and will not be commenting on the specifics of these confidential discussions.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Interest may increase as the collective agreement expires on December 31, 2024.
-

Background:

- The *Public Service Labour Relations Act* and the Yukon Employees' Union collective agreement govern the collective bargaining and grievance adjudication processes for the Yukon public service.
- Negotiations are led by the Public Service Commission (PSC).
- Collective bargaining is a complex process that typically spans several months, potentially resulting in changes to the terms of the agreement, including annual wage increases, allowances, premium payments, leave provisions and other matters of importance to the PSAC/YEU and the employer.

Session Briefing Note

YEU/PSAC Collective
Bargaining

TAB #9

Fall 2024

Public Service
Commission

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-10-01

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Psychological Health and Safety

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- Psychological safety is an emerging area of workplace health and safety that impacts employee retention, rates of injury and operational costs for organizations.
- As an employer, we acknowledge that, similar to our commitment to physical safety, our responsibility for fostering workplace psychological wellbeing extends beyond events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It constitutes an ongoing obligation that lacks a singular, quick solution.
- The Public Service Commission worked with a leading expert in psychological health and safety to assess Yukon government workplaces using 13 factors that can impact the mental health of employees in the workplace from the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety.

Additional response:

- Several recommendations were identified to improve the safety of our workplaces within all stages of the employment life cycle (from hiring-onboarding through to exit-termination).
- To date, the Public Service Commission has actioned the following initiatives in response to the assessment to address issues of cumulative stress, sexual harassment, burnout and other workplace factors:
 - Revised GAM 3.48 - Corporate Health and Safety - to include elements of psychological safety to ensure consistency and standards throughout Yukon government workplaces.
 - Redesigned its approach to harassment investigations by establishing the Investigations Office.
 - Provided and promoted a cumulative stress management program for employees exposed to trauma and stress as a routine element of their role in Community Services, Education, Justice and Health and Social Services.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Psychological Health and Safety

Public Service
Commission

-
- The Public Service Commission continues to make strides in other areas that have a positive impact on the psychological health and safety of our employees such as cultural safety and conflict competency training, initiatives under the People Plan and the launch of the Values and Ethics Code.
 - We also provide support and training to enable leaders to create healthy workplaces, including Leadership Pathways.
 - Yukon government is a national leader in the government sector, being one of the first to take a comprehensive approach to assessing our workplaces using best practices in psychological health and safety.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The proportion of long-term disability claims related to psychological conditions has increased significantly over the past 10 years. The Yukon government's Workers' Safety and Compensation Board premiums have increased because of psychological injury claims.
-

Background:

- In 2022, the Public Service Commission contracted Dr. Joti Samra, one of Canada's leading workplace psychologists, to assess YG's risk areas using the 13 factors of psychological health and safety outlined in the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the workplace.
- The National Standard is a voluntary safety standard developed for Canadian employers by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Standards Association. It identifies 13 workplace factors that contribute to the mental health and safety of workers. For example: psychological and social support, workload management, organizational culture, civility and respect.
- Dr. Samra's assessment offers priority actions and additional recommendations for the employer to consider regarding planning, program delivery, policy development and further assessment within each of the 13 factors.
- Dr. Samra noted three key factors of significant concern and three factors of minimal concern. Strengths to build upon include Recognition and Reward; Engagement; and

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Psychological Health and Safety

Public Service
Commission

Physical Safety. Concerns to address include Organizational Culture; Clear Leadership & Expectations; and Civility and Respect.

- Though not pervasive across the public service, areas of Yukon government report experiencing discrimination, harassment and exposure to traumatic events impacting psychological health and burnout.
- The assessment methodology included a substantial data and documentation review as well as 19 key stakeholder interviews, including the presidents of the Yukon Employees' Union and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals.
- The report was distributed to key stakeholders and senior leaders to guide planning and program decisions over the next few years.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-12

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Highways and Public Works (Ross River)/Economic Development Human Resource Issues

Public Service
Commission

Highways and Public Works (Ross River) response:

- We cannot provide information or confirm details about confidential internal human resources matters. This protects the privacy of individuals and ensures the integrity and impartiality of our processes.

Economic Development response:

- The Government of Yukon is unable to comment on confidential human resource matters.

General response:

- Yukoners expect that Government of Yukon public servants deliver programs and services with the highest standards of integrity, ethics and professionalism.
- In the summer of 2023, the Government of Yukon introduced a *Values and Ethics Code* for all public servants, outlining the common values that guide their work, the behaviours expected of them, and the legal and institutional frameworks in which they operate.
- We have also established an internal Investigations Office within the Public Service Commission to address allegations of serious workplace misconduct.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On August 22, 2024, Economic Development received a media inquiry about the employment status of an Economic Development employee.
- On August 6, 2024, Cabinet Communications received a media inquiry about allegations against a Highways and Public Works employee in Ross River.

Background:

- Employees' ethical obligations are already outlined in the Government of Yukon's corporate human resources policies, the *Public Service Act*, and other legislation.

Session Briefing Note

**Highways and Public Works
(Ross River)/Economic
Development Human Resource
Issues**Public Service
Commission

- However, before the launch of the *Values and Ethics Code*, there was no single document that clearly defined professional conduct for the Government of Yukon public servants in plain language.
- The *Values and Ethics Code*, now a corporate human resources policy in the General Administration Manual (GAM) Volume 3, provides clear guidance on the common values and behaviours expected of all employees, as well as the legal and institutional frameworks within which they operate. It also enhances the employer's ability to resolve human resources issues effectively.
- The development of the *Values and Ethics Code* was a key action led by the Public Service Commission as part of the Safer Schools Action Plan.
- The creation of an internal **Investigations Office** aims to enhance the investigative process, making it more timely, cost-effective, trauma-informed and integrated with other services provided to the Government of Yukon employees.
- Previously, the Respectful Workplace Office managed investigations into disrespectful conduct, including discrimination and harassment, covering a range from interpersonal conflict to more severe cases, while external parties investigated serious allegations, such as sexual harassment.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-27

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Yukon Teachers Labour
Relations Board Annual
Report 2023-24**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The grievances and outcomes detailed in the *Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2023-24* are managed by the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board.
- In 2023-24, there were six (6) active cases, down from 11 active in 2022-23. Of the six cases carried forward from previous fiscal years, one has been closed.
- No new cases were referred during this reporting period.
- The remaining five (5) cases will carry over into the next fiscal year, pending scheduling for a hearing.
- These five (5) cases pertain to grievance adjudication, which includes disputes arising from the interpretation or application of collective agreements, arbitral awards, or disciplinary actions, including terminations.
- The five (5) grievances break down as follows: two (2) cases involve collective agreements, while three (3) are policy related.
- Like 2022-23, there were no reports of grievance activity involving managerial and confidential positions, nor were there any mediation activities.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There could be interest in how many grievances were filed under the *Yukon Education Labour Relations Act* during this period.

Background:

- The *Yukon Education Labour Relations Act* mandates that an annual report be tabled in the legislature each fiscal year.

Session Briefing Note**Yukon Teachers Labour
Relations Board Annual
Report 2023-24**Public Service
Commission

- This report provides an overview of grievance caseloads, grievance adjudication outcomes, the exclusion of managerial and confidential positions, and mediation activities for the 2023-24 fiscal year.
- The Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board (FSLREB) serves as an independent quasi-judicial statutory tribunal offering dispute resolution and adjudication services on key labour relations and staffing matters within the federal public service.
- Through an agreement with the Government of Yukon, the FPSLREB also administers collective bargaining and grievance adjudication for Yukon teachers, operating as the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board in these capacities.

Approved by:Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-09-20

Date Approved

Annual Report 2023-2024

YUKON TEACHERS LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD



COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

Chairperson:	Edith Bramwell
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Vice-Chairpersons:	Marie-Claire Perrault Amélie Lavictoire
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Members:	Adrian Bieniasiewicz Pierre Marc Champagne Caroline Engmann Goretti Fukamusenge Bryan R. Gray Patricia Harewood Chantal Homier-Nehmé John G. Jaworski James Knopp Audrey Lizotte Ian R. Mackenzie David Orfald Nancy Rosenberg
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Adjudicators:	Ian R. Mackenzie
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**REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION
OF THE YUKON EDUCATION LABOUR RELATIONS ACT
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING
MARCH 31, 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Under section 4(1) of the *Education Labour Relations Act* (RSY 2002, c 62; “the Act”), the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board consists “... of the persons from time to time holding office as full-time members of the Public Service Labour Relations Board, established under the federal act.” The federal act is defined as the *Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act*, which came into force on November 1, 2014, and was later renamed the *Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board Act* (S.C. 2013, c. 40, s. 365). Under the federal act, the former Public Service Labour Relations Board was continued as the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board (“the FPSLREB”), an independent quasi-judicial statutory tribunal.

The FPSLREB is an independent, quasi-judicial statutory tribunal that offers dispute-resolution and adjudication services in key labour relations and staffing matters of the federal public sector.

Through its mandate, the FPSLREB is committed to:

- supporting a fair staffing environment and harmonious labour relations within the federal public sector;
- helping parties resolve disputes in a fair, impartial, and efficient manner that respects the terms and conditions of employment; and
- eliminating barriers by leveraging technology for adjudication and dispute resolution services, to provide increased access to justice across Canada and better serve parties before the Board.

Under an agreement with the Yukon government, the FPSLREB administers the collective bargaining and grievance adjudication systems for Yukon teachers. When performing those functions, the FPSLREB acts as the Yukon Teachers Labour Relations Board (“the Board”).

2023-2024 CASELOAD

Overall, from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, there were 6 active grievances. All 6 of those grievances were carried forward from previous fiscal years, and no new grievances were referred in the current reporting period.

One (1) grievance was closed during the reporting period. The 5 remaining grievances will be carried forward to the next fiscal year. Of those, 4 have been assigned to a Board member. The fifth one has been processed and is awaiting assignment.

Further details on the current caseload are provided below.

CURRENT CASELOAD

Grievances

Adjudication refers to any determination made by Board-appointed adjudicators pursuant to the Act. It includes the determination of grievances that arise from the application or interpretation of collective agreements or arbitral awards or from disciplinary actions or terminations.

The Board received no new grievances in 2023-2024. Of the 6 active grievances that have been carried over from previous fiscal years, one (1) was withdrawn.

The table below provides a breakdown of active grievances as of March 31, 2024:

Number of cases	
Interpretation or application of a collective agreement	2
Policy	3
Total	5

Of the 2 grievances relating to the interpretation or application of a collective agreement, 1 relates to allegations that the bargaining agent was not consulted by the employer on new policies and directives, and the other relates to an allegation that the employer breached the probationary-service clause of the collective agreement. Both grievances remain to be scheduled for a hearing.

Of the 3 policy grievances, 1 relates to contracting out, 1 relates to staffing, and the third one relates to individual training plans. All 3 grievances are awaiting to be scheduled for a hearing.

Managerial and confidential positions

A person is employed in a managerial and confidential capacity when, due to the nature of the duties they perform, they must meet the criteria established under the *Act* for exclusion from a bargaining unit.

The Board did not deal with any such matters in 2023-2024.

Mediation

Parties with matters before the Board may choose mediation to resolve their underlying grievance issues or their complaints that have been referred to adjudication.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process that provides parties with the opportunity to find their own solutions to issues in dispute. The process is facilitated by an impartial third party who has no decision-making powers, and its outcome creates no precedents.

The Board did not receive any mediation requests during the reporting period.

Session Briefing Note**Yukon Public Service Labour
Relations Board Annual
Report 2023-24**Public Service
Commission**Recommended response:**

- The grievances and outcomes detailed in the *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report 2023-24* are managed by the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board.
- In the 2023-24 fiscal year, there were a total of 116 active cases. Of these, 48 were carried forward from previous years, while 68 were newly opened.
- During the reporting period, 73 cases were closed, leaving 43 cases to be carried forward into the next fiscal year.
- By the end of 2023-24, 34 grievance cases related to grievance adjudication remained active. These cases involve issues related to the application or interpretation of collective agreements, arbitral awards, disciplinary actions, or terminations.
- Of the 34 grievances, 27 were individual grievances and seven (7) were policy related.
- The 27 individual grievances included 16 concerning the application or interpretation of collective agreements and 11 involving disciplinary measures.
- As of the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, four (4) active complaints were on file: three (3) complaints related to the duty of fair representation and one (1) complaint involved discrimination against an employee organization.
- A total of 53 new applications were received in 2023-24: 49 applications objected to the identification of managerial and confidential positions and four (4) applications were for revocations.

Session Briefing Note**Yukon Public Service Labour
Relations Board Annual
Report 2023-24**Public Service
Commission

- One (1) mediation case was initially scheduled but later removed after it was deemed not ready for mediation. Three (3) complaints were successfully referred to mediation.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There could be interest in the number of grievances filed under the *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Act* during this period.

Background:

- The *Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Act* mandates that an annual report be tabled in the legislature each fiscal year.
- This report provides an overview of grievance caseloads, grievance adjudication outcomes, the exclusion of managerial and confidential positions, and mediation activities for the 2023-24 fiscal year.
- The Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board (FPSLREB) serves as an independent quasi-judicial statutory tribunal offering dispute-resolution and adjudication services on key labour relations matters and staffing matters within the federal public service.
- Through an agreement with the Government of Yukon, the FPSLREB also administers collective bargaining and grievance adjudication for the Yukon public service, operating as the Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board in these capacities.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-09-20

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Annual Report 2023-2024

**YUKON PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR
RELATIONS BOARD**



COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

Chairperson:	Edith Bramwell
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Vice-Chairpersons:	Marie-Claire Perrault Amélie Lavictoire
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Members:	Adrian Bieniasiewicz Pierre Marc Champagne Caroline Engmann Goretti Fukamusenge Bryan R. Gray Patricia Harewood Chantal Homier-Nehmé John G. Jaworski James Knopp Audrey Lizotte Ian Mackenzie David Orfald Nancy Rosenberg
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Adjudicators:	Fazal Bhimji David Jewitt Dan Quigley
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**REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION
OF THE YUKON PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING
MARCH 31, 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Under section 6(1) of the Yukon *Public Service Labour Relations Act* (RSY 2002, c 185; “the Act”), the Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board consists “... of the persons from time to time holding office as full-time members of the Public Service Labour Relations Board, established under the federal act.” The federal act is defined as the *Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act*, which came into force on November 1, 2014, and was later renamed the *Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board Act* (S.C. 2013, c. 40, s. 365). Under the federal act, the former Public Service Labour Relations Board was continued as the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board (“the FPSLREB”), an independent quasi-judicial statutory tribunal.

The FPSLREB is an independent, quasi-judicial statutory tribunal that offers dispute-resolution and adjudication services in key labour relations and staffing matters of the federal public sector.

Through its mandate, the FPSLREB is committed to:

- supporting a fair staffing environment and harmonious labour relations within the federal public sector;
- helping parties resolve disputes in a fair, impartial, and efficient manner that respects the terms and conditions of employment; and
- eliminating barriers by leveraging technology for adjudication and dispute resolution services, to provide increased access to justice across Canada and better serve parties before the Board.

Under an agreement with the Yukon government, the FPSLREB administers the collective bargaining and grievance adjudication systems for the Yukon public service. When performing those functions, the FPSLREB acts as the Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board (“the Board”).

Highlights of 2023-2024

Further to the appointment of two new members in the previous fiscal year, more cases were closed than opened. As such, the Board was able to reduce its overall case inventory by 8%, from 48 files at the end of 2022-2023 to 44 files at the end of 2023-2024.

On another note, two Client Consultation Committee (CCC) meetings were held in 2023-2023. Those meetings provide an important means of collaborating with our stakeholders and also help the Board develop its case-management initiatives, policies and processes.

2023-2024 CASELOAD

Opened and closed cases

Overall, from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, there were 116 active files. Of that number, 48 files were carried forward from previous fiscal years and 68 new files were opened. Seventy-three files were closed in 2023 - 2024, and 43 files will be carried forward to 2024-2025.

Further details on the current caseload are provided below.

CURRENT CASELOAD

Grievances

Adjudication refers to any determination made by Board-appointed adjudicators pursuant to the Act. It includes the determination of grievances arising from the application or interpretation of collective agreements or arbitral awards or from disciplinary actions or terminations.

As of the end of fiscal year 2023-2024, there were 34 grievances referred under the Act. Twenty-seven (27) are individual grievances, and 7 are policy grievances.

Individual grievances

Eleven (11) new individual grievances were referred to the Board in 2023-2024: 8 grievances relating to the interpretation and application of a collective agreement and 3 relating to disciplinary matters. All grievances referred in 2023-2024 will be carried forward to the next reporting period.

Six (6) individual grievances were closed in 2023-2024: 1 relating to the interpretation and application of a collective agreement and 5 relating to disciplinary measures (3 suspensions, 1 termination, and 1 disguised discipline). Of those 6 grievances, 5 were withdrawn, and another was closed following the issuance of a decision by the Board.

As of the end of fiscal year 2023-2024, there were 27 individual grievances. Of those, 16 related to the application or interpretation of a collective agreement and 11 related to disciplinary measures. See Table 1 for a breakdown of active individual grievances.

Table 1 – Individual grievances as of March 31, 2024

Individual grievances as of March 31, 2024	
Application or interpretation of a collective agreement	
No-discrimination clause	5
Hours of work	5
Duty to accommodate	3
Leave	4
Respectful workplace	1
Union rights	1

Disciplinary measures	
Suspension without pay	5
Termination	5
Disguised discipline	1
Total	27

Policy grievances

Two (2) new policy grievances were referred to the Board in 2023-2024: one involving retention bonuses and another involving management rights and responsibilities. They will both be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

Four (4) policy grievances were closed in the fiscal year. The 4 grievances related to operating irregularities, overtime compensation, leave, and a vaccination requirement. Of those 4 grievances, 3 were withdrawn and another was closed following the issuance of a decision by the Board.

As of the end of fiscal year 2023-2024, there were 7 policy grievances. The topics of these policy grievance were: hours of work (1), probation period (1), management rights and responsibilities (1), no-discrimination clause (1), interpretation and application of a policy for on-call employees (1), discrimination related to COVID-19-related leave (1) and retention bonus (1).

Status of grievances (as of March 31, 2024)

Of the overall active grievance caseload, 4 files are scheduled for a hearing, 22 remain to be scheduled, 3 are proceeding by written submissions, 2 are settled awaiting withdrawal, 1 is awaiting a decision, and 1 is open and awaiting processing and 1 is in mediation. None are held in abeyance.

Complaints

Two (2) new complaints were presented to the Board in 2023-2024 and none were closed.

As of the end of fiscal year 2023-2024, there were four (4) complaints under the Act.

Three (3) complaints relate to the duty of fair representation, 1 relates to discrimination against an employee organization. Three (3) of these complaints were referred to mediation, and one is scheduled for hearing.

Applications

In 2023-2024, the Board received 53 applications. Forty-nine (49) of those applications were objections to the identification of a managerial or confidential position and 4 were revocations. Fifteen (15) applications were carried forward from previous years, for an overall inventory of 68 applications.

Sixty-three (63) applications were closed in 2023-2024, including 50 that were filed in that same year, and 13 that were carried forward from previous years. The closed applications included 59 managerial and confidential applications for exclusion that were closed following the issuance of an order, 2 applications related to the revocation of an appointment which were withdrawn, and 2

applications were closed for administrative reasons.

As of the end of fiscal year 2023-2024, there were 5 active applications involving managerial and confidential exclusions and revocations under the *Act*. Of those, 4 related to applications for exclusions – 3 were referred this year the other carried forward from previous years, while 1 related to a revocation of an appointment referred in 2023-2024.

MEDIATION

When a proceeding is brought before the Board, mediation is offered to help the parties resolve their differences without resorting to a formal hearing. The parties may also request the Board's assistance in resolving a dispute before a matter is referred to adjudication.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process that provides parties with the opportunity to find their own solutions to the issues in dispute. The process is facilitated by an impartial third party who has no decision-making powers, and its outcome creates no precedents.

In 2023-2024, one file was assigned to mediation and then removed from the scheduling list further to a conclusion that the case was not ready for mediation. Three (3) complaints were referred to mediation in 2023-2024, as mentioned in the complaints section of this report.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

A mediator was appointed to assist with the negotiation of the collective agreement. Mediation sessions were held in April and May 2023 which led to the ratification of a new collective agreement in August 2023.

Session Briefing Note
YEU Petition/Grievance -Clean
Drinking Water**Fall 2024**
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- As per the collective agreement, the Government of Yukon has a formal grievance process in place to address concerns by the Yukon Employees' Union.
- The Government of Yukon is committed to following this process in all grievance matters.

Additional response:

- We are unable to provide any further comments on specific grievances as they will be addressed through the established procedures outlined in the collective agreement.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

The Yukon Employees' Union and media have expressed concerns regarding the presence of lead in school drinking water. The Yukon Employees' Union has filed a grievance on this issue with the Government of Yukon.

Background:

- Earlier this year, the government committed to testing the water supplies of thirty schools to ensure compliance with national lead level guidelines.
 - This issue gained public attention after students at Del Van Gorder School in Faro discovered elevated lead levels in their school's water during a science fair project.
 - Yukon Employees' Union President has highlighted the health risks of lead exposure. He criticized the government for not adequately assessing or addressing the risks in schools, which are both educational and workplace environments.
 - While some testing and remediation took place in 2018 and 2019, follow up testing was not conducted after guidelines were updated in 2019.
 - The union is advocating for the completion of water remediation efforts before the Christmas holidays and has initiated a petition to rally public support.
-

Session Briefing Note
YEU Petition/Grievance -Clean
Drinking Water

Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-10-17

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Employee Engagement Survey**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Employee Engagement Survey is a key tool to assess the health of our work environments within the Yukon public service. It is conducted every two (2) years.
- The most recent survey was held from May to July 2024.
- Analysis of the 2024 Yukon Government Employee Engagement Survey shows that employees continue to be satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organization. We are pleased to see this positive trend.
- The results also indicate that employees perceive the workplace as supportive of their health and safety, particularly in terms of psychological protection.
- Psychological safety, an emerging aspect of workplace health and safety, plays a crucial role in employee retention, reducing injury rates, and lowering operational costs for organizations.

Additional response:

- Each department has been provided with a detailed report on their engagement levels, and it is the responsibility of Deputy Ministers to address and celebrate their results.
- The Public Service Commission provides departments with resources to help identify and implement strategies to improve workplace health and engagement across the public service.
- Results will be published on Yukon.ca and on the internal site, Yukonnect. Results will be shared with all senior management teams and employees.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Employee Engagement Survey

Public Service
Commission

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions may arise regarding the status and findings of the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey.
-

Background:

- The previous Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in the fall of 2021.
- The 2024 survey saw a 65.9% response rate.
- For the 2024 survey, 4662 employees were surveyed, 450 of them by paper. This does not include school-based employees, who will be surveyed at a later date.
- The Yukon Bureau of Statistics collects and analyzes survey data.
- No one in the Yukon government has access to personally identifying information. Results are only reported where minimum respondent counts are satisfied, and no identifying information is reported.
- Engagement surveys are a standard management tool used by public service employers across Canada. Engagement is a key indicator of the overall experience of our employees and is linked to increased productivity and innovation and impacts organizational performance and client service.
- The pandemic pushed the 2020 survey to 2021, but the survey cycle is now back on track with the original schedule, having completed the most recent survey for 2024. The survey will continue to be conducted every two (2) years going forward, with the next one scheduled for 2026.
- While the senior leadership score of 58 is lower than the other scores, this score has increased by three points since the 2018 survey and has remained stable since 2021.

Approved by:	
<u>Meagan Lang</u>	<u>2024-10-25</u>
Public Service Commissioner	Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Public Interest Disclosure
of Wrongdoing Act Review**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* is essential whistleblowing legislation designed to protect employees who report serious misconduct in the workplace from reprisals.
- A comprehensive review of the Act is underway, as mandated by the legislation.
- This review evaluates the Act's effectiveness and implementation, focusing on how well it facilitates disclosures and protects employees. Additionally, it seeks to identify areas for improvement.
- The review is in its final stages, with the Public Service Commission drafting a final report that includes recommended changes based on public feedback, data and a jurisdictional scan. It is expected that the review will be completed by the end of this year.

Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner response to Act Review:

- I extend my sincere gratitude to the Ombudsman for his invaluable recommendations to improve the Act.
- The review has taken longer than expected to gather input from all stakeholders, including the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner and the public.
- We ask for your patience and understanding as we work to make informed decisions that serve the best interests of our community.

Legal Action response:

- We are unable to comment on matters currently before the courts.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- On March 27, 2024, the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner publicly inquired about the completion timeline for the review during a local radio interview. Additionally, recent media coverage of the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's legal action against the Department of Environment may prompt an inquiry.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act Review

Public Service
Commission

Background:

- The Act came into force on June 15, 2015, facilitating the disclosure and investigation of significant issues related to public entities that employees believe may be unlawful, dangerous to the public, or injurious to the public interest.
- The Act aims to protect employees making such disclosures and fostering confidence in the administration of public entities.
- A provision in the Act mandates a review within five (5) years of its coming into force, which began on June 15, 2020.
- The review consisted of two (2) phases:
 - **Phase 1** (2020-21): A comprehensive legislative review, assessment of international trends and data collection on disclosures, investigations and complaints of reprisals.
 - **Phase 2**: A confidential online survey for public entity employees, a policy discussion paper distributed to stakeholders, and an online public engagement for Yukoners from December 1 to December 15, 2023.
- The Public Service Commission, in collaboration with the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, endorsed the two-phased approach, considering challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and limited capacity in 2020-21.
- Various stakeholders, including the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner, unions, Yukon government departments and public entities covered by the Act (Yukon University, Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Energy Corporation, and select independent officers of the Legislative Assembly), actively participated in the review process.
- The results of this engagement were made publicly available through a "What We Heard" on February 28, 2024.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-09-27

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Remote Work**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The experience of working from home during the pandemic showed us that the Government of Yukon can effectively deliver high-quality programs and services to Yukoners while providing valuable flexibility to our employees.
- The remote work policy, implemented for approximately three years, allows employees the flexibility to maintain long-term remote work arrangements.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting a more inclusive and representative workforce by enabling employees to work remotely, in particular from Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse.
- This is done through the remote work policy which provides a framework for remote work arrangements.
- A remote work arrangement requires mutual agreement of the employee and employer and they both must agree on the location of the remote workplace as part of the agreement.
- In alignment with the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, employee engagement sessions were held in the fall of 2023 to identify potential barriers to remote work.
- These findings are documented in the “What We Heard” report, as part of the People Plan. The Public Service Commission is using the feedback from these sessions to review the remote work policy.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions relating to the Government of Yukon’s approach to remote work.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Remote Work

Public Service
Commission

Background:

- The need to update the Government of Yukon's approach to remote work was identified before the COVID-19 pandemic. The new policy, effective October 2021, replaces the previous "Telework policy" from 2009.
- The remote work policy aligns with broader objectives, such as enhancing employee satisfaction, fostering a more inclusive workforce and contributing to environmental sustainability. This initiative is a key action in the Our Clean Future climate strategy.
- As of September 30, 2024, approximately 238 government employees, or 3.7 per cent of positions, have active remote work agreements that range from working at home one day per week to five days per week.
- The table below presents the number of work-from-home arrangements by department as of September 30, 2024:

Department	Number of Positions
Community Services	15
Economic Development	3
Education	8
Energy, Mines & Resources	24
Environment	44
Executive Council Office	11
Finance	9
French Language Services Directorate	1
Health and Social Services	57
Highways and Public Works	23
Justice	7
Public Service Commission	19
Tourism and Culture	5
Women and Gender Equity Directorate	1
Workers Compensation	4
Yukon Housing Corporation	4
Yukon Liquor Corporation	3
Total	238

Session Briefing Note**Remote Work**

Public Service
Commission

- While the policy supports remote work, out-of-territory arrangements are limited to exceptional and time-limited circumstances, requiring approval from the Public Service Commissioner.
- Since January 2021, the Public Service Commission has been responsible for centrally tracking employees with work-from-home agreements. Before this, individual departments tracked such agreements.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-10-09

Date Approved

**Staff Housing/Housing
for Employees**

Yukon Housing Corporation
Public Service Commission

Recommended response:

- Our government continues to provide employee housing in rural communities to facilitate staff recruitment and retention.
- Yukon Housing Corporation currently manages 79 direct leases with employees.
 - Employees typically stay in staff housing for an average of three years.
- There are 6 employees on the waitlist as of November 6, 2024:

Waitlist by Community	
Community	Employee
Beaver Creek, Carcross, Carmacks, Destruction Bay, Mayo, Old Crow, Teslin	1
Dawson City	1
Haines Junction	2
Faro	1
Pelly	0
Ross River	0
Watson Lake	1
Total:	6

Additional response:

- The Public Services Commission revised the employee housing policy (GAM 3.30) in 2019 to:
 - Prioritize housing for essential positions, such as health professionals and teachers.
 - Limit tenancies to three years to encourage alternative housing options and support private-market housing development.
 - Align rental rates to be closer with the private market.
- A review of the policy’s effectiveness is currently underway.

Staff Housing/Housing for Employees

Yukon Housing Corporation
Public Service Commission

Context:

- The availability of housing for Yukon government employees is crucial for staff recruitment and retention in communities, making it a high-profile issue.
-

Background:

- In addition to the 79 direct leases, the corporation also leases 73 units under agreements for special use with departments.
 - Education: 4 units
 - Health and Social Services: 45 units
 - Yukon Hospital Corporation: 23 units
 - Highways and Public Works: 1 unit
- In 2024, YHC reviewed its pet policy, helping to address concerns raised by staff seeking flexibility in the number of pets allowed. Key updates include:
 - A household may keep **a maximum of two dogs or two cats or one dog and one cat.**
 - A household **may also keep one fish tank, terrarium or cage no larger than 38 liters or 10 gallons.**
- While tenancies are now limited to three years, the policy allows for extensions in situations where alternative housing options do not exist in an employee's community.
 - In 2023, 23 employees whose leases were set to expire were granted a one-year extension, upon request.
- As of January 2021, YHC and PSC began reporting taxable housing benefits for employees paying below-market rents, aligning with Canada Revenue Agency requirements.
- Rural private developers and landlords note that the corporation's rent for employee housing have historically been below-market rates, discouraging private housing investment.
 - Rental rates for employees renting before May 2019 are being increased per collective agreements and are limited by the current rent cap.

Session Briefing Note

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Fall 2024

Staff Housing/Housing for Employees

Yukon Housing Corporation
Public Service Commission

Approved by:



President, Yukon Housing Corporation

2024-11-18

Date approved

Meagan Lang

A/Public Service Commissioner

2024-11-18

Date approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Senior Leadership Appointments
and Compensation**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon values the expertise contributed by individuals serving in senior leadership roles within the Yukon public service.
- We remain committed to fostering a public service that mirrors the diversity of Yukon's population at all organizational levels.
- At the end of September 2024, our reporting on gender distribution within senior leadership appointments is:
 - 41 per cent of deputy head appointments are held by women and 59 per cent are held by men (7 women and 10 men).
 - 48 per cent of assistant deputy minister appointments are held by women and 52 per cent are held by men (26 women and 28 men).
- The deputy head count includes deputy ministers and presidents of corporations.

Additional response:

- Severance pay upon resignation or retirement is determined by the provisions outlined in Section M, which governs the terms and conditions of employment for managers, legal officers and deputy heads. This section, along with salary ranges for all Government of Yukon positions, is publicly available.
- However, the release of individual income details, including total severance payments is restricted by the Access to Information and *Protection of Privacy Act* to ensure privacy and compliance.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Senior Leadership Appointments and Compensation

Public Service
Commission

Context-this may be an issue because:

- In the past, media and opposition have expressed interest in senior leadership compensation and gender distribution of these roles. Additionally, recent changes at the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister levels may prompt inquiry.

Background:

- In December 2021, media coverage highlighted that woman constituted only 17 per cent of deputy heads in the Government of Yukon.
- Reporting on gender distribution for senior leadership appointments encompasses active employees, temporary and acting assignments exceeding 30 days.
- While the specifics of an individual deputy head's income, including salary and severance provisions, are confidential, it is important to note that the release of such personal information is currently restricted under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-09-26

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Size of Government - FTE Growth

Public Service Commission

Recommended response:

- In the 2023 calendar year, the Government of Yukon workforce consisted of approximately 5,315 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), reflecting the actual hours worked.
- This marks an increase of nearly 66 FTEs, equivalent to a 1.2 percent increase compared to the previous calendar year.
- The increase in FTEs is primarily attributed to improving healthcare and education services, reflecting the government's commitment to enhancing and expanding services for Yukoners.

Additional response:

- While the Government of Yukon has seen recent growth, this expansion aligns with longstanding trends over the past two decades, adapting to meet the evolving needs of society.
- According to a report titled "Restoring Balance: A Fiscal Sustainability Strategy for the 20th Legislative Assembly" published by the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territories public service grew 27.3% or 1,391 since 2019-2020. In contrast, the Government of Yukon's public sector has grown by 5.20% or 269 FTE's during this period.
- It's important to note that the numbers mentioned are not directly comparable due to differing formulas applied.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 'size of government' is a topic of continual interest in the media and among opposition groups.

Background:

- The Yukon Financial Advisory Panel report (2017) delves into the "size of government" and spending trends as a share of gross domestic product (GDP); however, it does not provide details that may account for the growth trends such

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Size of Government - FTE Growth

Public Service Commission

as the notable drop in Yukon's GDP (between 1980 and 2015) after the 1982 Faro mine shutdown and the increase in YG jobs due to the devolution of the federal programs since 2003.

- The devolution process saw the transfer of 250 federal employees to the Government of Yukon from the Northern Affairs Program (246) and a component of Human Resources and Skills Development (4).
- The Government of Yukon's response to expanding services and improving standards, particularly in health care and education, has contributed to overall growth.
- Monthly reports by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics provide comprehensive employment data, differentiating between public and private sectors.
- Yukon Bureau of Statistics employment data is measured by the number of employed persons in each sector and includes full-time, part-time, permanent, and temporary employees.
- Yukon Bureau of Statistics data clarifies that public sector employment growth is not solely attributable to the Government of Yukon as it aggregates federal, municipal and Yukon First Nations governments, as well as employees of organizations that are publicly funded such as schools, post-secondary institutions, and hospitals.
- FTEs tracked and reported by the PSC are based on actual hours worked, considering part-time jobs and unconventional work hours, and accounting for vacant positions within the reporting period.
- These FTEs differ from projected FTEs in the Main and Supplementary budgets.
- Ongoing collaboration between the PSC and the Department of Finance aims to enhance reporting approaches for future improvements.
- Appendix A – Number of FTEs by Hours Worked identifies the number of FTEs by department from 2013-2023.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn
A/Public Service Commissioner

2024-08-27
Date Approved

Appendix A – Number of FTEs by Hours Worked

Total FTEs by Department: 2013 – 2023

Department	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022*	2023*
Community Services	282.2	280.3	283.2	281.7	292.3	298.5	296.4	319.6	337.8	329.3	273.3
Economic Development	52.4	55.3	54.2	52.8	44.2	48.1	50	49.9	55.4	56.5	57.9
Education	934.7	935.7	944.7	980.7	1,060.4	1,056.6	1,043.9	1,045.1	1,094.5	1,074.0	1,110.8
EMR, YDC	259.4	262.7	266.9	269.8	265	255	259.7	248.6	264.8	264.7	268.9
Environment	196.5	195.9	203.9	205.5	209.2	213.3	211.3	218.7	228.3	235.3	247.2
Executive Council Office	88.4	90.7	100.7	93.6	84.1	89	93.6	87.2	87.5	86.4	92.8
Finance	51.9	54.2	53.9	65	80.9	89.7	89.8	79.4	73.1	72	80.1
French Language Services Dir.	7.7	12.7	14	15.5	20.6	23	23.6	22.4	23.4	19.3	22.6
Highways & Public Works	776.6	782.5	792.4	788.5	765.7	785.8	813.7	841	863.5	870.7	872.5
Health & Social Services	944.3	965.7	958.6	1,021.1	1,114.8	1,183.6	1,408.5	1,479.2	1,489.0	1,441	1,473.9
Justice	255.3	277.9	275.9	276.2	285.7	275.1	279.2	281.7	296.1	302.5	305.4
Leg Assembly and Elec.	8.2	8.3	10.6	11.6	9.8	8.9	9.3	8.6	8.3	8.7	9
Public Service Commission	97.5	95.1	97.3	97.6	101.6	110.6	118.1	138.1	151.8	148.9	157.0
Tourism & Culture	101	102.9	100.4	105.2	105.2	106.9	105.9	100.7	106.1	105.8	105
WCHSB	76.4	75.4	75.9	79.4	79.2	81.2	84.2	86.2	85.2	78.9	76
Women & Gender Equity Dir.	7.6	7.1	6.3	7.1	7.9	8.2	8.5	9.1	8	7.4	10.4
Yukon Housing Corporation	71.1	71.8	72	65.2	63.9	65.8	64.3	64.1	68.1	65	70.9
Yukon Liquor, Lotteries Yukon	60.9	60.4	61.6	63.5	74	79.3	84.3	82.4	82.7	82.9	81.9
YG Total	4,272.1	4,334.6	4,372.7	4,479.9	4,664.5	4,778.5	5,044.3	5,162.1	5,323.8	5,249.2	5,315.7
FTE count change over previous year		62.5	38.1	107.2	184.6	114	265.8	117.8	161.7	-74.6	66.5
Percent change over previous year		1.46%	0.88%	2.45%	4.12%	2.44%	5.56%	2.34%	3.13%	-1.4%	1.2%

Full-time Equivalents (FTEs) are determined by staffed positions and include part-time jobs and unconventional work hours as well as calculating how many full-time hours have been worked over a period of time. With this measure, two half-time jobs would count as one FTE.

*Revised

Session Briefing Note**Secondments**

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- Secondments are temporary assignments to, or from, the Government of Yukon involving another government, government agency or First Nations organization.
- Secondments benefit all parties involved by helping to address shortages of qualified personnel, increasing the effectiveness of inter-governmental relationships and supporting capacity development.
- Assignments can range in length from one (1) year to three (3) years, with the majority being two (2) years.
- As of August 5, 2024, there are 48 secondments in effect involving another government, government agency or First Nations organization.

Additional response:

- Of the 48 secondments in effect:
 - Thirty-six (36) Government of Yukon staff are on secondment with various Yukon First Nations governments or First Nations organizations.
 - Two (2) Government of Yukon employees are on secondment to the Federal government;
 - Two (2) Government of Yukon employees are on secondment to the Yukon University;
 - One (1) Government of Yukon employee is on secondment to an Advisory Council;
 - One (1) Government of Yukon employee is on secondment to the City of Whitehorse;
 - Two (2) Government of Yukon employees are on secondment with Yukon Hospital Corporation; and
 - Four (4) outside employees are seconded with the Government of Yukon.

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Fall 2024

Secondments

Public Service
Commission

- The host organization is typically responsible for salary costs; however, this can be negotiated in some cases, such as when the employee is gaining valuable skills and knowledge that can be brought back to the home organization.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions have been raised in previous sittings about the number and length of Government of Yukon secondments.

Background:

- A 'Protocol to Govern Temporary Assignments Between First Nations Governments and the Yukon Government' outlines the considerations and arrangements associated with secondments with First Nations governments and organizations. The protocol was created in 1997 and was updated in 2022 as part of the implementation of Breaking Trail Together, YG's representative public service plan.
- The Public Service Commission maintains a webpage on the corporate intranet to post and promote secondment opportunities with other governments.
- Secondments are governed by a Temporary Assignment Staffing Directive, and can include assignments with the federal government, municipal governments, hospitals, other government agencies and First Nation organizations.
- The table below identifies the number of employees seconded to First Nation governments and other organizations over the last three (3) calendar years:

Year	# of YG Employees on Secondment to F/N governments / F/N organizations	# of YG Employees on Secondment with Non-F/N governments	Total
2023	38	12	50
2022	24	14	38
2021	15	28	43

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-23

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Recruitment and Retention in
the YG Public Service**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- Like governments across Canada, the Yukon government is facing staffing challenges for some positions, such as health care professionals and teachers, because of labour market shortages.
- While individual departments lead recruitment planning and strategies for their own specific workplaces, the Public Service Commission supports departments with initiatives to help address recruitment and retention challenges across all of government.
- Some of the initiatives that we are working on include.
 - Streamlining hiring practices through process improvements.
 - Implementing various actions in the new three-year Breaking Trail Operational plan to increase the representation of employees with Indigenous ancestry in Yukon government's workforce.
 - Focusing on psychological health and safety initiatives to help ensure our workplaces are welcoming for everyone.
 - Actions through the People Plan contribute to talent acquisition and retention, including supporting employee wellbeing, embracing diversity and inclusion, enhancing internal mobility, and supporting employee growth and development.

Additional response:

- We are continually working to ensure the Yukon government public service is recognized as an employer of choice, and that talented people are attracted locally and nationally to meet the operational and strategic needs of today and tomorrow.
 - We have been recognized as a Top 100 Employer in Canada since 2014 due to the benefits, leave options and training and career development opportunities we offer. We also offer competitive pay, a full benefits package and a pension plan so employees can support themselves and their family.
-

Session Briefing Note

Recruitment and Retention in the YG Public Service

Public Service
Commission

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Recruitment and retention, especially of health care professionals and teachers, was topical during past sessions.

Background:

- Identifying and attracting the best people is one of the overarching goals under the People Plan - the Yukon government's strategic public service plan.
- Actions through the People Plan contribute to talent acquisition and retention, including supporting employee wellbeing, embracing diversity and inclusion, enhancing internal mobility, and supporting employee growth and development.
- A tightening labour market has made recruitment and retention increasingly challenging for employers in the Yukon and across Canada. Contributing factors:
 - aging workforce demographics;
 - limited supply of key professionals across Canada, including health care and education professionals; and
 - pandemic impacts, including employee burnout and higher rates of retirement, that have exacerbated existing trends.
- Retirements are expected to contribute to labour market pressures. The following table shows total retirements from the Yukon government for each calendar year since 2020.

Calendar Year	Total Retirements
2024	131
2023	163
2022	205
2021	206
2020	134

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-28

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2024****Diversity and Inclusion in the YG
Public Service**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- As an employer, we are dedicated to fostering culturally safe, diverse and inclusive workplaces for all employees.
- Some of the Government of Yukon's initiatives to further diversity, inclusion and belonging in the public service include:
 - Organizing the annual Indigenous Employees' Award of Honour.
 - Supporting the Indigenous Employees' Forum (IEF) for networking and cultural support.
 - Supporting the YG Pride employee resource group that meets bi-monthly to provide a safe and welcoming space for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees and allies.
 - Offering regular and free training in anti-racism, unconscious bias, cultural safety, intercultural competency and residential school awareness.

Additional response:

- We prioritize upholding the *Yukon Human Rights Act*, collective agreements and the *Respectful Workplace Policy* to address discrimination and support respectful workplace conduct.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions may arise relating to diversity and inclusion in the public service.
-

Background:

- Embracing diversity and inclusion is a key action of the new People Plan (2024-2034), the Government of Yukon's corporate human resources strategy.
- The government is legally and socially obligated to ensure its public service is representative of the community it serves, as outlined in the Final Agreements with Yukon First Nations. This includes increasing the representation of

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2024

Diversity and Inclusion in the YG Public Service

Public Service
Commission

Indigenous people in its workforce to a level proportional to the Indigenous population within the Yukon.

- Other initiatives planned to further diversity and inclusion in the public service include:
 - Modernizing the 'Self-Identification Form,' also known as the workforce census, to improve data on diversity, including 2SLGBTQI+ representation.
 - Extending the Indigenous hiring preference, under the Breaking Trail Together, to 2029 to enhance its effectiveness for qualified individuals who self-identify as Yukon First Nations and other Canadian Indigenous Peoples.
 - Implementing and launching "Elder-in-Residence" services in the Government of Yukon.
 - Reviewing the Employee Equity Policy to ensure that it aligns with 2024 standards.
 - Redesigning the Leadership Pathways program with emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - Establishing a cultural safety and anti-racism strategy aimed to create a more inclusive and respectful workplace environment.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-20

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Breaking Trail Together
Operational Plan 2023-2026**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is dedicated to the vision of *Breaking Trail Together*, a ten-year strategic plan co-developed with six Yukon First Nations governments.
- The plan aims to create an engaged and inclusive workplace where all employees feel safe, supported and respected.
- Currently, we are implementing the second operational plan for 2023-2026, based on feedback from current and former employees, and the public to address the barriers faced by Indigenous Yukoners in hiring practices and their experiences as Indigenous public servants.
- The *What We Heard* report, summarizing the engagement results, was released on October 10, 2024.

Additional response:

- Key actions in this plan include:
 - Designing and launching an “Elder-in-Residence” program to provide cultural support in human resource processes, including one-to-one services for Indigenous employees.
 - Expanding and scaling-up the Indigenous Training Program from the Department of Highways and Public Works to other Government of Yukon departments.
 - Extending the Indigenous hiring preference initiative, launched in 2020, through 2029 to align with the entire duration of *Breaking Trail Together*.
 - This initiative reflects the Government of Yukon’s commitment to reducing recruitment barriers for Indigenous Peoples and increasing their representation within the public service.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Premier’s 2023 mandate letter directs the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission to continue to implement *Breaking Trail Together* - an inclusive
-

Session Briefing Note

Breaking Trail Together Operational Plan 2023-2026

Public Service
Commission

Yukon Public Service which obliges the Government of Yukon to increase representations of Indigenous people in its workforce.

Background:

- Chapter 22 of Yukon First Nation Final Agreements obliges the Government of Yukon to develop a plan to increase representation of Indigenous people in its workforce to a level proportional to the Indigenous population within Yukon.
- Breaking Trail Together, an Inclusive Yukon Public Service, was endorsed by the Government of Yukon and six (6) Yukon First Nation governments at the September 2019 Yukon Forum.
- The Breaking Trail Together strategic plan is built around three pillars:
 - responsive and barrier-free recruitment;
 - culturally safe and supportive work environments; and
 - training and development opportunities.
- The 2023-2026 operational plan identifies approximately 28 actions to support a better and more representative public service workplace for Indigenous people.
- The Indigenous hiring preference initiative is to preference the hiring of qualified candidates who self-identify as Yukon First Nation or Indigenous ancestry. Specifically, it gives qualified candidates of Yukon First Nation ancestry priority, and second priority to qualified candidates of Canadian Indigenous ancestry.
- The goal of preference hiring is to increase the representation of Indigenous people within the public service in different occupations and pay levels.
- According to the 2021 federal census, Indigenous people represent approximately 22% of the Yukon population. Current Indigenous representation in the Government of Yukon workforce is approximately 13% (January 31, 2024, based on voluntary, self-identification).

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-10-10

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****People Plan**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- We are committed to ensuring that the Yukon government's public service is robust, engaged, and capable of efficiently delivering programs and services to Yukoners.
- In June 2024, the Public Service Commission released its new People Plan, which includes a 10-year Strategic Plan (2024-2034) and a detailed three-year Operational Plan (2024-2027).
- The People Plan is a collaboratively developed human resources strategy to support ongoing efforts to build an inclusive, engaged and effective public service.
- The Public Service Commission oversees the operational plan's implementation, ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation to maintain alignment with the organizational objectives.

Additional response:

- Several key projects are underway to bring the new People Plan to life. These projects focus on enhancing recruitment practices and streamlining human resource processes.
- The development of the People Plan was informed by extensive internal and external stakeholder engagement conducted during the summer and fall of 2023.
- The insights and feedback gathered were compiled into a "What We Heard" report, published internally for all employees in the of summer 2024.
- Through the "What We Heard" employees identified and prioritized twenty projects that are included in the People Plan Operational Plan 2024-2027.

Session Briefing Note

People Plan

Public Service
Commission

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Premier’s 2023 mandate letter asks the Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission to continue implementing the People Plan.

Background:

- The People Plan is centered around five (5) overarching goals:
 1. Create an engaging and inclusive workplace experience.
 2. Identify and attract the best people.
 3. Develop the capacity of our people leaders.
 4. Develop and empower employees.
 5. Build a culture of continuous improvement.
- Built upon past People Plan initiatives (2019-2023), the new People Plan incorporates feedback from across the Yukon government to strategically prioritize and address current needs and objectives.
- PSC also canvassed a diverse array of external stakeholder organizations through the engagement process such as: Yukon University, Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, BYTE – Empowering Youth Society, Youth Achievement Centre, Employment Central, Yukon Teachers’ Association, Yukon Employee’s Union, Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada, Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce and Yukon Housing Corporation.
- Projects under the People Plan are routinely tracked and monitored with a progress report slated for release in the winter of 2024.
- The People Plan was developed, in part, as a response to the 2018 Government Internal Audit Services report on Talent Acquisition and Retention, incorporating a clear and practical framework to support the acquisition of talent.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-09

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Values and Ethics in the Public Service**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- Yukoners expect that the Government of Yukon public servants will deliver programs and services in a manner that meets the highest standards of integrity, ethics and professionalism.
 - In summer 2023, the Government of Yukon launched a Values and Ethics Code for public servants to help ensure that employees understand common values to guide public service work and expected behaviours in the workplace.
 - The Values and Ethics Code integrates existing laws and policies that guide the conduct of public servants, such as the *Public Service Act*, the *Conflict-of-Interest Policy*, and the *Respectful Workplace Policy*, into a single easy-to-read document.
 - Online training on the Values and Ethics Code is available for all Yukon government employees.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- In the past several years, there have been occasional local media stories and reports on the conduct of Government of Yukon employees. Questions may arise relating to public service values and ethics.
-

Background:

- Employees' obligations to act ethically already exist in the Government of Yukon's corporate human resources policies, in the *Public Service Act* and other legislation, and in common law.
 - However, until the launch of the Values and Ethic Code, there was no one document to clearly describe in plain language what is considered professional conduct in the Yukon government public service.
-

Session Briefing Note**Values and Ethics in the Public Service**Public Service
Commission

- The code is a new corporate human resources policy in the General Administration Manual (GAM) Volume 3.
- The Values and Ethics Code provides clarity for all employees about the common values to guide their work as public servants, the behaviours expected of them, and the legal and institutional framework in which they operate.
- The Values and Ethics Code also provides increased clarity for the employer to resolve human resources issues.
- In 2018, the Public Service Commission initiated the development of a comprehensive values and ethics code through in-depth research and collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, the Yukon Employees' Union, and senior leaders across various departments.
- The Code received formal approval in the summer of 2023 and was subsequently introduced as a course accessible to employees a few months later.
- As of September 24, 2024, 894 employees have completed the course with ongoing efforts to have all employees complete it.
- Developing a Values and Ethics Code for public servants was a Public Service Commission led action identified in the Safer Schools Action Plan.

Approved by:Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-09-26

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Rural Jobs

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Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to maintaining and growing job opportunities in rural Yukon.
- The Government of Yukon recognizes that rural jobs are necessary to contribute to the development of stable economies in Yukon communities, improve the accessibility and delivery of government programs and services and support the desire of Yukoners to live and work in their communities.
- Since 2022 (post-COVID), the number of rural jobs in the Yukon has increased by approximately 5% (from 899 to 943), which has kept pace with the growth of jobs in Whitehorse (from 5238 to 5511).
- An area in which the Government of Yukon has focused its efforts is growing the number of registered substitute teachers, also known as teachers on call, in rural Yukon.
 - According to data from the Department of Education, the number of registered substitute teachers, also known as teachers on call, in the Yukon doubled during the 2023-24 school year.
 - In rural Yukon, the number has grown from 26 rural teachers on call in September 2023, to 42 rural teachers on call in March 2024.
 - In Whitehorse, the number grew 98 teachers on call in September 2023, to 208 in March 2024.
- Further opportunities for work in communities are facilitated through remote work options and through secondments.
 - In October 2021, the Government of Yukon introduced a remote work policy. The policy provides employees with flexibility to establish long-term remote work arrangements. This not only supports the revitalization of rural communities but also promotes

Session Briefing Note

Rural Jobs

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Public Service
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sustainable development and reduces urban congestion, thereby contributing to a lower carbon footprint.

- In 2022, the Government of Yukon updated its secondment protocol to facilitate assignments with other governments, particularly First Nation Governments. As of August 5, 2024, 48 secondments are in place, demonstrating the program's value in building partnerships and addressing workforce needs.

Additional response:

- These initiatives underscore the Public Service Commission's commitment to supporting the long-term financial and operational sustainability of Yukon communities, fostering mobility, inclusivity and collaboration across the territory.
- Over the past three years, the remote work policy has provided employees with flexibility to establish long-term remote work arrangements. This not only supports the revitalization of rural communities but also promotes sustainable development and reduces urban congestion, thereby contributing to a lower carbon footprint.
- Based on feedback gathered through the People Plan engagement, a review of the remote work policy has been identified as a project in the People Plan Operational Plan 2024-2027.
- In addition, secondments are a critical tool in addressing skill gaps in rural communities, fostering knowledge-sharing and enhancing collaboration across Yukon.
- These temporary transfers of personnel to or from the Government of Yukon – including partnerships with other governments, government agencies, or First Nations organizations – help strengthen local capacity.
- One of the key benefits of secondments is the opportunity they provide for employees to gain new skills and perspectives. By working in different departments or organizations, employees develop a broader

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Rural Jobs

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Public Service
Commission

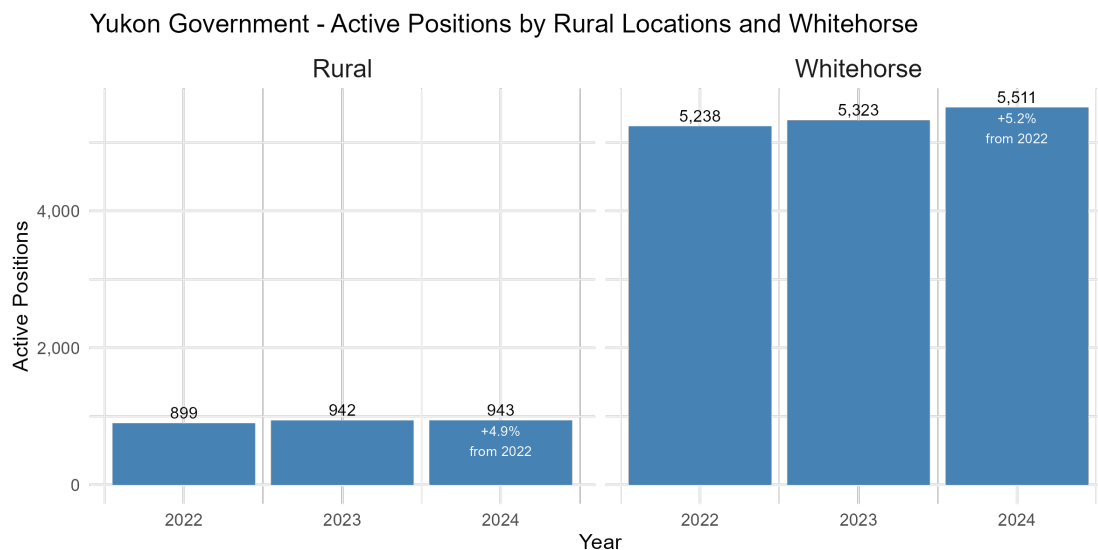
understanding of government operations, policies and challenges, resulting in more innovative and effective solutions.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The opposition raised concerns during question period on October 8, 2024, regarding the Government of Yukon's approach to supporting rural sustainability of rural communities.

Background:

Jobs in Rural Yukon v. Whitehorse



Active positions are counted on September 30th of each year and include the following position types: permanent, temporary, AOC/R, casual, seasonal, student, temporary teachers, and teachers-on-call.

Remote Work

- As of September 30, 2024, approximately 238 government employees, or 3.7 per cent of positions, have active remote work agreements, ranging from working at home one to five days per week.
- In line with the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, employee engagement sessions were conducted in Fall 2023 to identify potential barriers to remote work.

Session Briefing Note

Rural Jobs

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Fall 2024
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- These insights are captured in the “What We Heard” report, as part of the People Plan. The Public Service Commission is currently using this feedback to review and refine the remote work policy.

Secondments

- Secondments are governed by a Temporary Assignment Staffing Directive and may involve partnerships with the federal government, municipal governments, hospitals, other agencies and First Nations organizations.
- Assignments can range from one to three years, with the majority lasting two years.
- The “Protocol to Govern Temporary Assignments Between First Nation Governments and the Government of Yukon,” originally created in 1997 and updated in 2022, outlines the framework for secondments with First Nation governments and organizations. This update aligns with the implementation of *Breaking Trail Together*, YG’s representative public service plan.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-10-10

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Oath of Allegiance – Public Service Act Amendment

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- In spring 2023, the *Public Service Act* was amended to eliminate the requirement for public servants to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown upon joining the public service.
- This update aimed to enhance inclusivity and reduce barriers in the recruitment process, particularly for candidates from underrepresented groups.
- It acknowledged that for some Indigenous employees, the oath of allegiance may be a point of tension due to its association with colonial relationships.
- This change supports our goal to reduce barriers to employment under the *Breaking Trail Together*, the Yukon government's strategy to build a representative public service.

Additional response:

- New public servants and coroners continue to take an oath of office, now updated to emphasize a commitment to serving Yukoners through their democratically elected government.
- The revised oath of office underscores the importance of confidentiality and faithful service without the pledge of allegiance to the Crown, aligning with the government's *Values and Ethics Code*.
- The change to remove the oath of allegiance to the Crown does not affect the ethical obligations for all employees that already exist in policy and law.

Context—this may be an issue because:

This amendment may draw public interest, especially following recent decisions by elected officials, such as a Dawson City representative declining the oath of allegiance. Questions may arise about how these changes affect the role of public servants in the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Oath of Allegiance – Public Service Act Amendment

Public Service
Commission

Background:

- Historically, the *Public Service Act* required new employees to take both an oath of office and an oath of allegiance, with the *Coroners Act* similarly requiring allegiance for coroners appointed from the public service.
- Both acts were amended in spring 2023 to remove the oath of allegiance requirement, focusing instead on commitment to Yukoners and ethical standards.
- The oath of office is a promise that public servants will do their jobs faithfully and keep information confidential. An oath of allegiance is a promise of loyalty to the Crown.
- Removing the oath of allegiance requirement does not change public servants' responsibilities to act ethically and to serve Yukoners through their democratically elected government.
- Ethical obligations for public servants are clearly articulated in a new *Values and Ethics Code* which details expectations for professionalism, confidentiality, and dedication to Yukoners.
- New employees take the updated oath of office upon appointment, but existing employees or those moving within the public service are not required to retake it.
- The oath reinforces public servants' loyalty to Yukoners and references the *Values and Ethics Code* as a guide to their responsibilities.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-11-07

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Interview and Relocation
Expense Directive**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon may offer reimbursement of interview and relocation expenses for job candidates and newly hired employees who are moving to the territory from another jurisdiction.
- The directive is currently under review to introduce more flexible options that balance fiscal responsibility with the need to attract candidates who align with our operational and strategic goals.
- The review is expected to be completed in 2025.

Additional response:

- During 2023-24 fiscal year, interview and relocation expenses totaled approximately \$823,549.
- Over the past five (5) fiscal years, the Government of Yukon has seen an average annual expenditure of approximately \$836,670 on interview and relocation costs, with fluctuations occurring from year to year.
- If an employee, who has been paid relocation expenses (including real estate fees, legal fees, miscellaneous expenses and other discretionary fees) terminates employment within two (2) years, the employee is required to repay a portion of the relocation expenses.
- The repayment amount is pro-rated based on the length of time the employee worked for the Government of Yukon.
- The repayment amount is deducted from any salary, wages, allowance, or other payment owed to the employee by the employer. Alternatively, the amount can be collected through an invoice payable to the Territorial Treasurer of the Yukon.
- Deputy Ministers have the discretion to provide financial relief for the repayment of relocation expenses. This decision may be based on various factors, including medical or family-related circumstances.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Interview and Relocation Expense Directive

Public Service
Commission

Context—this may be an issue because:

- In the fall 2021 and spring 2022, the Official Opposition asked questions about the Government of Yukon’s relocation policy and associated expenses.

Background:

- The relocation benefits outlined in the current directive encompass a range of provisions, including standard travel and accommodation expenses; handling, transport and storage of household items; and real estate and legal fees.
- The existing directive is dependent on the type of hire, for example an indeterminate hire versus a term or casual hire.
- Currently, departments must choose either to offer new hires (indeterminate part-time or full-time employees) relocation assistance to cover the entirety of their move or offer no relocation assistance at all.
- Relocations can incur substantial costs, varying based on the candidate’s origin.
- The overall expense of a relocation remains uncertain until well after a job is offered, leading to budgetary uncertainties for departments.
- The directive was last revised in 2009.
- The table below details total interview and relocation expenses for the past five (5) fiscal years.

Fiscal Year	Total Expenses
2023-24	\$823,549.00
2022-23	\$916,840.00
2021-22	\$554,039.00
2020-21	\$827,196.00
2019-20	\$1,061,728.00

- The repayment amount is deducted from any salary, wages, allowance, or other payment owed to the employee by the employer. Alternatively, the amount can be collected through an invoice payable to the Territorial Treasurer of the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

**Interview and Relocation
Expense Directive**

Public Service
Commission

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-11-12

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Yukon Nominee Program

TAB #31
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Yukon Nominee Program is an employer-driven initiative that could be used by the Government of Yukon to recruit hard-to-fill positions that would benefit the territory when no qualified Canadian or permanent resident is available for the position.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon currently does not use the Yukon Nominee Program for recruiting government positions, as in recent years, it has been fully subscribed to by Yukon businesses.
- The Public Service Commission is working to create a pathway for the government to expand its recruitment options through this program with input from the Department of Economic Development.
- The Government of Yukon remains committed to assisting businesses across the territory meet their labour needs as immigration stands as a crucial tool for attracting workers when local Yukon workers are unavailable, supporting investment, economic growth, and the needs of Yukon businesses.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The opposition has expressed interest in the utilization of the Yukon Nominee Program and has raised concerns about the territory's health care system.
-

Background:

- The Yukon Nominee Program is available for municipal, First Nations and territorial government use though traditionally these employers have rarely used it.
- The Department of Economic Development administers the Yukon Nominee Program and the Yukon Business Nominee Program in partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Yukon Nominee Program

Public Service
Commission

- The Government of Yukon receives allocations from IRCC under the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), determining the number of applications it can approve annually.
- Historically, the Yukon Nominee Program has been used by the private sector to address labour market needs in a low unemployment climate. However, in 2021, the Yukon Nominee Program utilized its full annual allocation for the first time since its inception in 2007.
- In 2023, the program received a significant increase in applications. The annual allocation of 430 was fully utilized, and when a subsequent 150 nominations were allocated during the fall redistribution exercise, those nominations were also used by the territory, resulting in 581 nominations for the year.
- On May 16, 2024, the Government of Yukon paused the application intake for the Yukon Nominee Program from Whitehorse-based employers, as the program reached its nomination cap for the year. Additionally, the government has requested an increased nomination allocation from IRCC for 2025.
- The Government of Yukon has updated the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* to facilitate more nurses working in the territory. The changes allow registered nurses and nurse practitioners to apply directly for licensure in Yukon without needing prior registration in another Canadian jurisdiction, including internationally trained nurses and new graduates.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-11-08

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Employee Benefits**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- As of April 1, 2024, monthly benefit premium rates were adjusted due to increased usage, higher costs per claim and specific costs associated with high-cost specialty drugs, vision claims, paramedical services, out-of-country expenses and insurer administration fees.
- The Government of Yukon's situation is not unique, many plan sponsors and insurers are experiencing similar challenges.
- I am proud to say that the Government of Yukon's benefits plan is one of the best in the country offering retirees the same extended health coverage as employees – a rare benefit that sets us apart from many other jurisdictions where retirees either do not receive benefits or pay a higher percentage compared to the employer.

Specific response regarding fertility:

- Our benefits plan does not include coverage for fertility treatments or fertility drugs.
- Insured Health Services provides coverage for initial fertility consultations and locally completed diagnostic tests.

Additional General Response

- Rates are adjusted annually, considering current year claims, expenses and emerging trends.
- Under the *Public Service Group Insurance Benefit Plan Act*, the Joint Management Committee (JMC), comprised of both employees and employer representatives, is responsible for administering the group insurance plans. The JMC operates on a consensus basis to design the benefit plan and set premium rates.

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Employee Benefits**Public Service
Commission

- The Minister's role is limited to responding to the recommendations put forward by the JMC.
 - Supported by Mercer, a national benefits consulting firm, the JMC bases its recommendations on thorough cost-benefit analysis to ensure the best interests of plan members are prioritized.
 - The Joint Management Committee will meet in January 2025 to assess whether adjustments to the benefit plan design or premiums are necessary for the upcoming fiscal year.
-

Context:

- The Opposition and media have expressed concerns about the 2024 increase in employee benefit rates, particularly the 52.8% benefit premium hike for extended health care. These groups may be interested in reviewing the Financial Accounting Report prepared by Mercer, which is tabled in the legislature annually before October 31, 2024. This report provides a summary of the benefit program's financial results for the fiscal year.
-

Background:

- Employee benefits premium rates are reviewed annually, with the last increase on April 1, 2024.
 - The cost increase for the Government of Yukon as an employer will be \$7.6 million.
 - The employer covers approximately 85% of the premium for most employees, though cost-sharing varies by employee group. For retirees, the employer's contribution depends on years of service at retirement, with employees covering the remaining 15%, which also varies by employee group.
 - There are no changes to the Government of Yukon's group insurance benefits plan, and Canada Life remains the benefits provider.
 - The JMC is supported by Mercer, a national benefits consulting firm which provides expertise and advice on administering benefit plans.
-

Session Briefing Note

Employee Benefits

Public Service
Commission

- The JMC chair or co-chair provides the Minister of Finance with recommendations regarding the benefit plan and rate increases.
- The committee meets regularly to review the group insurance benefit plans and rates.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-10-24

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Pension Adjustment (T4 Box 52)**

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- In January 2023, during preparation for the Government of Yukon's 2022 annual T4 slips, an error was discovered in the pension adjustment calculation dating back to 2018.
- After discovering this error, the Public Service Commission conducted a comprehensive audit, and any necessary pension adjustment amendments from 2018-2023 were sent to the Canada Revenue Agency.
- The pension adjustment reported in Box 52 on a T4 does not impact on an employee's pension or pay. It affects an individual's RRSP contribution limit determined by the Canada Revenue Agency.
- Current or past employees affected by the amended T4 slips do not need to take any immediate action. The Canada Revenue Agency will recalculate the RRSP contribution limits and issue revised notices of assessment.
- The Public Service Commission has communicated this information to employees through a global note and has contacted employees directly who have a lower RRSP contribution limit.
- Additionally, the Public Service Commission has informed the relevant unions to ensure their members are aware of the situation, promoting transparency and awareness among all stakeholders.

Additional response:

- The Public Service Commission (PSC) is also exploring ways to improve the manual process through enhanced computer functionality to better manage the complexities involved.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Opposition may raise this issue during session, as it follows the employee benefits controversy topic during the spring session. The timing of this announcement in August 2024 could further fuel discussions.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Pension Adjustment (T4 Box 52)

Public Service
Commission

Background:

- The pension adjustment rate was incorrectly calculated at 1.6% instead of the correct rate of 1.375% for salary below the Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE), affecting the 2018 to 2021 tax years.
- Since the discovery, the payroll unit has conducted a thorough audit and initiated system updates to amend T4 slips requiring pension adjustment corrections over \$250 per tax year from 2018 to 2023.
- Some employees, both past and present, were not impacted and did not require amended T4 slips.
- Most individuals receiving amended notices of assessment will have a higher RRSP contribution limit, providing more room for contributions if desired.
- A small number of individuals may need to withdraw funds from their RRSP if they have exceeded their allowable limit.
- Employees over the age of seventy-one (71) will still be assessed by the Canada Revenue Agency and receive a response document.
- The table below outlines the estimated number of employees impacted each year and the necessary amendments required for the CRA.

Year	Type of Amendment Required for CRA	Estimated Number of Employees Impacted
2023	T4s & Pension Adjustments	~ 60
2022	T4s & Pension Adjustments	~ 125
2021	T4s & Pension Adjustments	~ 5,600
2020	Pension Adjustments	~ 5,400
2019	Pension Adjustments	~ 5,300
2018	Pension Adjustments	~ 5,000

Session Briefing Note

Pension Adjustment (T4 Box 52)

Public Service
Commission

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- Per the table above, the bulk of the changes will be in the 2018-2021 tax years.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-09-27

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Federal Pension Surplus/ 25-and-out**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Public Service Commission is responsible for leading human resources management across the Government of Yukon, ensuring a strong, effective and well-supported public service.
- While the Government of Canada's Treasury Board Secretariat drives any changes to the Public Service Pension Plan, the Government of Yukon participates in the engagement process and will receive direction on the eligibility criteria for specific benefits.

Public Service Pension Surplus

- The Government of Canada's pension plan has reached a 'non-permissible' surplus, prompting the Treasury Board to consider actions to address it. Recommendations for decisions are expected by late November, with implementation as early as December 2024.
- An updated report from the Office of the Chief Actuary on the pension plan and its surplus is anticipated to be presented to the Treasury Board Secretariat this fall.
- The Public Service Commission has been actively engaged in discussions with the Treasury Board regarding this Treasury Board Secretariat led matter.

Expansion of "25-and-out" Retirement Pension Benefits

- The Government of Canada is considering legislative changes this fall to expand eligibility for the operational service early retirement program under the public service pension plan.
- Commonly known as "25 and out", the proposal would allow eligible federal and territorial public servants to retire with a full pension after 25 years of service, regardless of age.
- This change could apply to specific roles such as border guards, firefighters, corrections officers, paramedics and firefighters in the

Session Briefing Note

Federal Pension Surplus/ 25-and-out

Public Service
Commission

territories, although the federal government is still finalizing eligibility criteria and defining “frontline” positions.

- The Public Service Commission has participated in Treasury Board discussions regarding Yukon positions that may qualify and will continue to contribute to the legislative development process led by the Treasury Board Secretariat.
- Expanding early retirement eligibility for these additional groups will require changes to the *Public Service Superannuation Act (PSSA)* and its *Regulations*.
- The Government of Yukon will be notified and given instructions, if necessary, by the Treasury Board, once it confirms its course of action.
- The Public Service Commission will communicate changes to any impacted employees and unions.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Opposition may raise concerns about the Government of Yukon’s involvement and its potential impacts on these issues, which have been highlighted in national media.

Background:

Public Service Pension Surplus

- The Treasury Board reported a \$42.4 billion surplus as of March 2023, divided into two funds: an unfunded portion for service prior to 2000 (paid directly by the government), and a funded portion (invested by the Public Sector Pension Investment Board) for service after 2000.
- The “non-permissible” surplus of \$1.5 billion, as of March 2023, relates to the post-2000 fund.
- Contributing factors to the surplus include strong investment returns, sufficient contribution levels from both members and the employer, demographic trends, interest rates and prudent management.

Session Briefing Note

Federal Pension Surplus/ 25-and-out

Public Service
Commission

- For 2023, the Government of Yukon's consolidated employer contributions to the public service pension was \$41,687,000.

Expansion of "25-and-out" Retirement Pension Benefits

- Implementing this change will require amendments to federal legislation, including the *Public Service Superannuation Act* and the *Income Tax Act*. No changes to Yukon's laws are anticipated, but eligibility criteria and definitions for "frontline" roles are still being developed by the federal government.
- This proposal stems from a confidential report by the pension plan's advisory committee to recognize the unique and demanding nature of frontline duties.
- Eligible workers will be able to retire early without pension reductions, receiving a pension calculated at two (2) per cent per year of pensionable service, meaning a 25-year retiree would receive 50% of their average salary from their highest-earning five (5) years.
- Similar provisions exist for federal correctional officers, RCMP members and the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Though federal criteria are still being finalized, employees in wildland fire management, airport firefighters, correctional service employees and paramedics are likely to be included.
- The Public Service Commission does not anticipate a significant wave of immediate retirements due to this change.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-09-24

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Hiring Process

TAB #35
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Yukon public service must be representative of the people it serves, skilled and equipped to effectively implement and administer the government's policies and programs effectively.
- Every hiring decision – whether internal or external – shapes the future success of our organization.
- While the Public Service Commission provides overall direction for staffing processes, individual departments have the discretion to decide whether to post openings internally or externally.
- Several factors influence this decision, including staffing needs, strategic priorities, the availability of skills and expertise, provisions in union and collective agreements, goals around equity, diversity and inclusion, urgency or critical need, cost considerations and promotion or succession planning.
- Striking the right balance between these approaches is essential to building an organization that is both dynamic and dedicated to its people.

Additional response:

- Regardless of the posting method, the hiring process remains merit based. The highest ranked, qualified candidate who meets applicable preference and criteria will be offered the position. If no candidates meet those criteria, the position may be offered to the highest ranked overall candidate.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Concerns have been raised about the Government of Yukon's hiring practices.
-

Background:

- The Public Service Commission (PSC) has the legislative authority to develop, maintain and supervise a qualified and efficient public service.
 - Staffing authority is delegated to the Deputy Minister of each department through the *Appointment Delegation Accountability Agreement*. This agreement sets out the
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Session Briefing Note

Hiring Process

TAB #35
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

conditions for how staffing is managed, ensuring the process aligns with the government's objectives.

- The Government of Yukon employs various recruitment methods to ensure that the best candidate is chosen for each position.
- In some cases, competitions may be restricted to a branch, department or to Government of Yukon employees. There are also provisions to prioritize employment equity group members or meet bona fide occupational requirements (e.g., bilingual skills, gender-based criteria).
- **Temporary Assignments** may also be utilized as a staffing mechanism for Government of Yukon employees. These assignments allow employees to take on different or additional duties on a temporary basis to address operational human resource needs, facilitate knowledge sharing across departments, support succession planning and offer career development opportunities.

Appeal Process

- The temporary assignment selection is not subject to an appeal process.
- Bargaining unit members may appeal an appointment to a regular indeterminate or term position (this does not include transfers). They may not appeal competitions for auxiliary or casual hires. Employees can appeal both screening and appointment decisions.
- This appeal process, managed by the union and filed with the PSC, provides an important avenue for redress and transparency.
- It is a complementary aspect of the staffing function and supports fairness within the competition process, ensuring all employees are treated equitably.
- No appointments may be made until the appeal period for any appeals arising from a competition expires and any appeals are resolved.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-10-07

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Group Insurance Plan - Financial Accounting Report

TAB #36
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- Under Section 9 of the *Public Service Group Insurance Benefit Plan Act*, a Financial Accounting report with respect to the group insurance plans is tabled before the legislature each year.
- This report summarizes the financial performance of key insured benefits, including life insurance, long-term disability, extended health and dental coverage for the previous fiscal year.
- These benefits play a crucial role in supporting our employees by covering medical and dental expenses, while also offering financial protection during periods of illness, injury, or other unexpected events.
- The financial report is prepared by Mercer, a national benefits consulting firm that provides expertise and advice on administering benefit plans.
- The financial report is reviewed by the Joint Management Committee, which is comprised of both employees and employer representatives and is responsible for administering the group insurance plans. The JMC operates on a consensus basis to design the benefit plan and set premium rates.
- The JMC met in October 2024 and recommended the approval of the financial report.

Additional response:

- The 2023-2024 Financial Accounting report identifies a deficit of approximately \$3.6 million in extended health and dental care, along with a \$2.6 million shortfall in the long-term disability plan as at March 31, 2024.
- The Government of Yukon has applied prior-year reserves to reduce the long-term disability plan shortfall to \$887,300.
- Typically, the contributions from plan contributors for extended health and dental benefits provide sufficient reserves to absorb fluctuations in claims throughout the year. However, for the 2023-2024 benefit period, increased

Session Briefing Note

Group Insurance Plan - Financial Accounting Report

TAB #36
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

claim costs and higher plan usage resulted in underfunding, pushing the account into a deficit.

- Pursuant to the recommendation of the Joint Management Committee, premiums were increased as of April 1, 2024 to address the fluctuations.
- The Joint Management Committee will meet in January 2025 to review potential changes to premium rates or the benefit plan design for the next fiscal year, starting April 1, 2025.

Context—this may be an issue because:

The Opposition and media have raised concerns about the significant premium increases in 2024, particularly the 52.8% rise in extended health care premiums. As a result, they may closely scrutinize the Financial Accounting Report prepared by Mercer, which is to be tabled in the legislature by October 31, 2024.

Background:

- Employee benefit premiums are reviewed annually, with the most recent increase taking effect on April 1, 2024. Extended health care premiums increased by 52.8%, while dental premiums increased by 24.2%. Long-Term Disability rates increased by 18%.
- This premium increase will result in an additional \$7.6 million in costs for the Government of Yukon as an employer for the current benefit year.
- The government typically covers about 85% of premiums for most employees, though cost-sharing arrangements vary by employee group. For retirees, the government's contribution depends on years of service, with employees covering the remaining 15% which also varies by employment group.
- The Administrative Services Only account covering Extended Health Benefits and Dental Benefits grew by \$1.8 million in the first six months of the current fiscal year due to these premium increases.
- The Long-Term Disability deficit was reduced to approximately \$887,300 after applying reserves of \$1.19 million from the claim's fluctuation reserve funds and \$600,000 in the refunded deposit account from prior year surpluses.
- There are no anticipated changes to the group insurance benefits plan provisions at this time, and Canada Life will continue as the benefits provider.

Session Briefing Note

Group Insurance Plan - Financial Accounting Report

TAB #36
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- Under the *Public Service Group Insurance Benefit Plan Act*, the Joint Management Committee (JMC), comprised of both employees and employer representatives, is responsible for administering the group insurance plans. The JMC operates on a consensus basis to design the benefit plan and set premium rates.
- The JMC is supported by Mercer, a national benefits consulting firm that provides expertise and advice on administering benefit plans.
- The Minister's role is limited to responding to recommendations put forward by the JMC.
- The committee meets regularly to review and manage the group insurance benefit plans and rates.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-10-21

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note

Support for New Health Authority

Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Public Service Commission is supporting the Department of Health & Social Services in strategically planning the overall human resources management function for the new, independent health authority, Health & Wellness Yukon.
- Our support encompasses various critical labour impacts and strategies, including pensions, benefits, union engagement, classification, personnel transfer, legislation, and human resources management systems.

Additional response:

- We understand our staff may have questions about the upcoming changes, and we want to assure you that we are prioritizing the well-being and support of our workforce as we navigate this transformation.
- Preserving similar levels of pay, benefits, and pensions are a priority in our transformation goals. We are committed to consulting with unions and keeping you informed as we move forward on these details.
- It is important to note that under the *Canada Labour Code*, successorship rights are in place for all bargaining unit employees (Health & Social Services and Yukon Hospital Corporation), giving protection to terms and conditions of employment through a transfer of operations.
- Unionized employees will continue to be unionized, and will maintain their negotiated collective agreements entitlements, a comparable pension benefit, and a comparable benefits package. If this results in inequities such as different pay for similar work, then those inequities will be addressed at bargaining with the unions representing the employees.
- We are also committed to protecting the rights of management and confidential excluded staff. Every member of our team, whether frontline, support, or management, plays a critical role in ensuring we can continue to provide high-quality person-centered health care to Yukoners.

Session Briefing Note**Support for New Health Authority**Public Service
Commission

Pension:

- We are dedicated to preserving a similar level of pension benefits for all employees affected by this transition.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation has a different pension plan than the Government of Yukon employees working for the Department of Health & Social Services.
- The Hospital pension plan is sponsored by the Hospital and its Pension Committee of the Board of Trustees, whereas the Public Service Superannuation Plan that Government of Yukon employees participate in is sponsored by the federal government.
- The Government of Yukon is exploring potential pension solutions for Shāw Kwä'ą / Health & Wellness Yukon.
- We will consult with the Yukon Employees' Union and communicate with employees when we know more.

Union engagement:

- We started communication with the Yukon Employees' Union regarding Putting People First and the transition to an independent health authority in February 2022. As we have progressed towards the transition, we have increased frequency of engagement and have maintained regular communication with the Yukon Employees' Union since fall 2023.
- In accordance with our Collective Agreement, we are committed to consulting with the Yukon Employees' Union and will provide them with formal notice of consultation regarding the transfer of any programs involving bargaining unit employees when appropriate, focusing on matters such as pay, benefits, and pensions.
- Beginning March 2024, the Department of Health & Social Services hosted several staff engagement sessions open to all employees of both the Department of Health & Social Services and Yukon Hospital Corporation to

Session Briefing Note

Support for New Health Authority

Public Service
Commission

share information and respond to concerns. Similar efforts at staff engagement will continue throughout transition planning and implementation. Since May 23, 2024, the Health & Wellness Yukon Employer-Union Working Group has met monthly to generally discuss the labour impacts of the transition to a Health Authority. The Group is comprised of representatives from the Public Service Commission, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Yukon Hospital Corporation, the Yukon Employees' Union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Professional Institute of the Public Service Canada. These meetings will continue throughout the transition and for up to one year after the transfer is complete.

Impacts on other Yukon government departments:

- We are currently assessing the potential implications of establishing a health authority on other government departments. This effort is aimed at ensuring a comprehensive understanding of its impact.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- In connection with the passing of the *Health Authority Act* during the Spring sitting, concerns were raised about consultation with staff and unions, and the protection of pensions given that Health Authority employees will not be public servants under the *Public Service Act*.

Background:

- A key recommendation from the Putting People First report is the establishment of an arm's length government organization for the delivery of specific health and social services – Health & Wellness Yukon.
- Health & Wellness Yukon will be established as a corporate entity, not an agent of the Government of Yukon. The new entity will oversee the existing three hospitals under the Yukon Hospital Corporation, primary care, long-term care and treatment facilities currently under the Department of Health & Social Services, and potentially other programs responsible for the direct delivery of health care.
- The creation of this integrated health authority aims to enhance coordinated care across hospital facilities, long-term care homes and social services.

Session Briefing Note

Support for New Health Authority

Public Service Commission

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- Key areas of support by the Public Service Commission that include labour impacts and strategies:
 - **Pension:** Reviewing pension options and providing a labour relations analysis for options provided.
 - **Benefits:** Reviewing benefit options and providing a labour relations analysis for the transition to the new entity.
 - **Classification:** Currently, classification is a corporate function within the Public Service Commission. In an effort to build capacity and support development in job evaluation and classification for the future entity, the Public Service Commission has embedded Health and Social Services employees hired as Classification Analysts to train and work alongside Public Service Commission classification staff until March 2026 (extension possible).
 - **Personnel Transfer:** Conducting a labour relations analysis of the legal requirements and overall strategy to transfer employees to a new entity.
 - **Legislative Implications:** Determining potential legislative impacts on Health & Wellness Yukon such as the Canada Labour Code, Public Service Act, Public Service Labour Relations Act, Public Service Superannuation Act, Public Service Group Insurance Benefit Act and Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act.
 - **Human Resource Management Systems:** Conduct an analysis of the current state of the Government of Yukon Human Resource Management systems to support and inform Health & Wellness Yukon's Human Resource Management systems planning and implementation.
 - The transition to Health & Wellness Yukon will impact two current employers: the Government of Yukon and the Yukon Hospital Corporation, as well as Shāw Kwä'ą as a future third employer.
 - The Government of Yukon employees are represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) / Yukon Employees' Union (YEU). Some Yukon Hospital Corporation employees are represented by PSAC / YEU while others are represented by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada.
 - The Public Service Commission is collaborating closely with the Department of Health & Social Services and the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that our employees are treated fairly during the transition to Health & Wellness Yukon.
 - Health & Wellness Yukon will assume responsibility for administering its own human resources policies to promote healthy work and safety practices, in compliance with its collective agreements.
-

Session Briefing Note

**Support for New Health
Authority**

Public Service
Commission

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-10-01

Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**List of Departmental
Accomplishments**Public Service
Commission

Accomplishments:

- August 30, 2024: Completed performance management training for human resources and managers of all departments.
- August 2, 2024: Completed comprehensive review and update of managerial terms and conditions of employment – Section M.
- July 30, 2024: Led and organized the 2023 Premier's Award for Excellence and Innovation, recognizing Yukon government's employees' exceptional accomplishments and celebrating their talent and teamwork.
- July 8, 2024: Recruitment and appointment of three new Chairs, Classification Appeal Board.
- July 12-14, 2024: Upgraded the E-Recruitment system to version 18.0 to enhance usability with a more streamlined platform and easier navigation.
- June 12, 2024: Released the new People Plan, including a 10-year Strategic Plan (2024-2034) and a detailed three-year Operational Plan (2024-2027) plan, guiding the Public Service Commission's activities to enhance recruitment practices and streamline human resource processes.
- June 12, 2024: Led and organized Public Service Week activities, recognizing and honouring the efforts, commitment and dedication of public servants across the Yukon government.
- June 5, 2024: Established a new Investigations Office within the Public Service Commission to conduct intake and investigations into reports of serious interpersonal misconduct, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and violence in the workplace and revised the *Respectful Workplace Policy* (GAM 3.47) to reflect these changes.
- June 2024: Finalized the second *Breaking Trail Together* operational plan (2023-2026), aimed at addressing barriers in hiring practices and enhancing the overall experience of Indigenous Yukoners employed within the government.
- April 24, 2024: Supported the creation and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between Yukon government, Yukon Hospital Corporation, Public Service Alliance of Canada and Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada for the Health and Wellness Yukon Employer-Union Working Group.

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****List of Departmental
Accomplishments**Public Service
Commission

- April 1, 2024: Classification of 7 new standardized finance job descriptions that provide role clarity and consistency across the finance community of practice.
- January 12, 2024, to February 9, 2024: Led and organized the 2023 Long Service Awards that recognizes and celebrates employees long service with the Yukon government.
- January 11, 2024: Led and organized the 2023 Indigenous Employees' Award of Honour and the Naats Tl'áa Award that recognizes the accomplishments of Indigenous Yukon government employees who provide excellent service to the public and colleagues.
- November 17, 2023: Yukon government recognized as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2024 for its exceptional health and family-friendly benefits, retirement assistance planning, and employee retention.
- November 1, 2023, to December 15, 2023: Launched and completed the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* public engagement.
- October 27-30, 2023: Successfully completed PeopleSoft upgrade which included an improved user interface for a more intuitive system navigation.
- July 17, 2023: Launched a new Values and Ethics Code that integrates existing laws and policies that guide the conduct of public servants and developed and provided online training on the Code – a recommendation identified from the leading expert in psychological health and safety.
- July 11, 2023: Amended GAM 3.48 Workplace Health and Safety to improve the Yukon government's health and safety governance in response to recommendations from the leading expert in psychological health and safety.
- June 26, 2023: Launched a public engagement to learn more about barriers faced by Indigenous Yukoners in territorial government hiring practices and to gather feedback on the overall experience of Indigenous public servants employed by the Yukon government (Breaking Trail Together project).
- June 20, 2023: Supported the implementation of the Safer Schools Action Plan by being the lead department on actions three, eight, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one and twenty-three.

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

List of Departmental Accomplishments

Public Service
Commission

- June 16, 2023: Led and organized the 2023 Premier’s Award for Excellence and Innovation that recognizes the Yukon government’s employees’ exceptional accomplishments and celebrates their talent and teamwork.
- June 13, 2023: Led and organized Public Service Week activities to recognize and honour the efforts, commitment, and dedication of public servants across the Yukon government.
- June 6, 2023: Successfully negotiated, ratified and implemented a new collective agreement with the Yukon Employees Union that is fair, balanced, fiscally responsible and supports recruitment and retention efforts.
- April 26, 2023: Launched online training for all employees on Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.
- March 9, 2023: Amended the Coroners Act and the Public Service Act to remove the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown and support the Yukon government’s efforts to be an inclusive employer and remove barriers from the hiring process.
- January 12, 2023: Led and organized the 2022 Indigenous Employees’ Award of Honour and the Naats Tl’áa Award that recognizes the accomplishments of Indigenous Yukon government employees who provide excellent service to the public and colleagues.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-22

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Fall 2024****Carbon Footprint**Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Public Service Commission proudly supports the “Our Clean Future: A Yukon Strategy for Climate Change, Energy and a Green Economy.”
- One of our key initiatives in reducing our carbon footprint is our remote work policy.
- By enabling employees to work from home, we minimize the need for commuting, contributing to reducing carbon emissions.
- This aligns with the Yukon government’s greenhouse gas reduction target identified in Our Clean Future.
- Our government remote work policy also enables employees to work remotely from Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse, under specific circumstances.

Additional response:

- In further support of our commitment to sustainability, the Public Service Commission has invested in an electric bike, providing staff with a greener alternative for attending meetings instead of using vehicles.
 - When face-to-face community meetings are necessary, staff are encouraged to carpool for safety and environmental reasons reducing our carbon footprint.
-

Context—this may be an issue because:

- During session on April 10, 2024, the opposition requested each department to identify its carbon footprint.
-

Background:

- In 2020, the Government of Yukon released “Our Clean Future: A Yukon Strategy for Climate Change, Energy and a Green Economy.”

Session Briefing Note

Fall 2024

Carbon Footprint

Public Service
Commission

- This comprehensive strategy aims to tackle the climate emergency by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing energy security and promoting a green economy.
- It is a collaborative effort involving Yukon First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups and Yukon municipalities.
- The remote work policy aligns with broader objectives, including enhancing employee satisfaction, fostering a more inclusive workforce, and contributing to environmental sustainability. This initiative is a key action in the Our Clean Future climate strategy.
- The Department of Highways and Public Works accounts for the largest share of emissions, due to the significant role they play in maintaining Yukon’s infrastructure including buildings, roads, airports, and the government’s main pool of vehicles.
- The Department of Highways and Public Works is leading a one-government approach to reduce emissions from Government of Yukon buildings. This initiative focuses on improving energy efficiency and installing renewable energy systems.
- Building improvements are prioritized based on their potential to make the most impact in reducing emissions across government, rather than being tied to any specific department.
- Every year, the Department of Environment publishes a report on the Government of Yukon’s greenhouse gas emissions alongside the Our Clean Future annual report and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Yukon report.
- Emissions from the Government of Yukon have increased since 2010 as the Yukon’s population grows.

Approved by:

Lyle Dinn

2024-08-12

A/Public Service Commissioner

Date Approved

CONFIDENTIAL
Session Briefing Note
Health and Safety

TAB #41
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Public Service Commission is responsible for establishing policies, providing advice and delivering services to promote a culture of workplace safety within the Government of Yukon.
- This includes providing training to employees, supervisors and Joint Health and Safety Committees to prepare them to actively identify and address workplace hazards to prevent injury and reduce risks.
- The Health and Safety Leadership Committee, which includes the Public Service Commissioner, a Deputy Minister and the YEU and YAEP presidents as members, was established to make recommendations to the employer regarding the government's health and safety system.
- The Public Service Commission collects and analyzes information about the government's health and safety performance to report trends and make recommendations to the Health and Safety Leadership Committee, Deputy Ministers and department safety personnel.

Additional response:

- Safety committees, established under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, play a key role in promoting workplace safety by conducting safety inspections, reviewing incident reports and participating in investigations. They make recommendations to the employer on how to mitigate potential hazards.
- The Public Service Commission also offers departments health and safety expertise, advice and assistance to continually improve workplace safety standards.
- The Public Service Commission engages regularly with the YEU on matters related to health and safety, to provide information, consider recommendations from YEU and resolve concerns.

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Session Briefing Note

Health and Safety

TAB #41
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Concerns about the government's safety practices were raised in the Legislative Assembly by MLA Tredger on October 23, 2024, following a propane leak at Whistle Bend Place on January 19, 2024.
- The Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) criticized the government's emergency response and its impact on employee safety in a media release on October 23, 2024, and during a CBC interview on October 24, 2024.

Background:

- Under the Workers Safety and Compensation Act (WSCA), employers must implement a health and safety management system to assess hazards and reduce risks to both physical and psychological well-being.
- Yukon government's General Administration Manual policy 3.48 Workplace Health and Safety outlines how the employer duties under the WSCA are shared and fulfilled by PSC and department Deputy Heads.
- Section 36 of the WSCA mandates that employers with 20 or more regularly employed workers establish Joint Health and Safety Committees.
- These committees conduct monthly workplace inspections, review health and safety reports, investigate complaints and make safety recommendations.
- The government currently has approximately 61 Health and Safety Committees, including in public schools. These committees are crucial to ensuring a proactive approach to workplace safety.
- Both the YEU and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals collective agreements outline how the employer and unions will collaborate on health and safety issues and the establishment of health and safety committees (JHSCs).
- The YEU is provided with Health and Safety meeting minutes from safety committees on a quarterly basis and as requested.
- In smaller workplaces, central committees may represent multiple sites, while larger departments often have location specific or program area committees.
- In some shared buildings, like the Jim Smith Building, interdepartmental committees address common issues collaboratively.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board officers inspect and investigate the health and safety practices of employers and work with them to resolve deficiencies.
- The Health, Safety and Wellbeing branch of the Public Service Commission actively supports departments by providing resources, training and guidance to ensure

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Session Briefing Note
Health and Safety

TAB #41
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

compliance with safety orders and meet the required deadlines, further enhancing the government's safety culture across the public service.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

2024-10-24

Public Service Commissioner

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Do Not Hire Policy

TAB #42
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to inclusive, accessible and effective employment practices that support the recruitment, development and retention of a professional workforce and that comply with applicable legislation.
- “Do not hire” lists are a human resource tool that can be used to automatically prohibit the re-employment of persons who are dismissed for misconduct.
- In the Spring of 2024, the Public Service Commission conducted internal research and jurisdictional scans with respect to such policies. As a result of that review, the PSC decided not to pursue a similar policy for the Government of Yukon.
- As part of the PSC’s internal review, an Information Note was created. The Information Note was used only for internal departmental purposes as part of the policy review.

Additional response:

- YG already has mechanisms in place to ensure the suitability of job applicants, including the requirement that applicants disclose prior employment and references.
- YG also requires criminal records checks in certain circumstances.
- In very rare cases, such as criminal activity or other serious circumstances, YG may make an employee aware that they are not considered suitable for re-employment. In those cases, YG’s position is documented in YG’s recruitment software. This ensures that such issues are identified for consideration in the application process.

Session Briefing Note

Do Not Hire Policy

TAB #42
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

- In all cases, the Government of Yukon complies with applicable legislation, including the Yukon Human Rights Act and its obligations to provide a safe workplace for our employees.

Collective bargaining response:

- The Government of Yukon is dedicated to negotiating a new agreement that is fair, balanced and fiscally responsible.
- We are committed to upholding the integrity of the bargaining process and will not be commenting on the specifics of these confidential discussions.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- This issue gained attention when the opposition questioned the Government of Yukon's position on a "do not hire" list during question period on November 6, 2024.

Background:

- "Do Not Hire" lists are created to automatically prohibit the re-employment of persons who are dismissed for misconduct. For instance, in the NWT, if an employee has been terminated due to misconduct, they are automatically prohibited from future employment for three years pursuant to a "do not rehire" list.
- PSC is continuously seeking to improve its processes and procedures. In the Spring of 2024, PSC reviewed the practices in other jurisdictions and considered whether to pursue an automatic "do not hire" list for Government of Yukon. The PSC decided not to proceed with such a policy.
- A review of policies across the following jurisdictions: British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Northwest Territories, and Newfoundland—shows that only the Northwest Territories maintains an automatic "do not hire" list, managed by their Labour Relations office.

Session Briefing Note

Do Not Hire Policy

TAB #42
Fall 2024
Public Service
Commission

- The NWT list applies a three-year re-employment ban on individuals terminated for cause due to specific forms of misconduct, including position abandonment, termination during probation for misconduct, or dismissals due to insubordination or insolence.

Approved by:

Meagan Lang

Public Service Commissioner

2024-11-07

Date Approved

Recommended response:

- Yukoners continue to face challenges across the housing continuum, which include:
 - Homelessness and a lack of access to housing with services;
 - A lack of affordable rental supply; and
 - High house prices and mortgage rates.
- Exceptionally high building costs and high borrowing costs due to interest rates are creating significant challenges for both Yukon Housing Corporation and partners.
- The corporation's five-year strategic plan, Creating Home, will help transform affordable housing service delivery through the adoption of a more client-centred and collaborative approach that integrates support and leads to better outcomes for Yukoners.

Additional response:

- Across governments, we are working with stakeholders to develop new land parcels, increase housing stock while also responding to the findings of the 2022 Office of the Auditor General Report on Housing.
 - We continue to advance projects that provide new housing to meet Yukoners' needs.
-

Context:

- The combination of high rental costs, limited affordable housing options and difficulties in securing mortgages, continues to be a challenge for many Yukoners.
-

Background:

General housing information in the Yukon

Homelessness

- At least 197 people were experiencing homelessness in the 2023 Whitehorse Point-in-Time Count. This included: 58% men; 38 % female; 4% other.

Rental housing

- According to the Census 2021, within the renter population in Whitehorse:
-

- 22.7% of households live in unaffordable housing;¹
- 17.9% live in unsuitable housing; and
- 10.5% live in inadequate housing.

Rents and vacancy rate, Yukon (YBS)

	October 2022	April 2023	October 2023	April 2024
Median rent (all types)	\$1,300	\$1,325	\$1,350	\$1,420
Vacancy rate (all types)	1.9%	2.2%	1.8%	1.8%

Housing construction

- Labour shortages contribute to higher construction costs and are leading to lower residential construction output.²

Residential building construction, Yukon (YBS)

	January-June 2023	January-June 2024
# residential permits issued*	518	329 (-35% decrease)
\$ value of new permits*	\$59.4 million	\$47.6 million (-20% decrease)

*In addition to new dwelling units, residential permits include renovations, garages, and additions. The totals do not include permits issued for plumbing or stoves.

House prices

- Yukon Bureau of Statistics reports that there were 84 real estate transactions recorded in Whitehorse in the first quarter of 2024 – a decrease of 35 compared to the first quarter of 2023 (119).
- While average prices for single-detached homes in Q1-2024 had fallen relative to Q1-2022 and Q1-2023, condo prices for Q1-2024 had increased 13% since Q1-2023.

Average House Prices, Whitehorse (YBS)

Residence type	Whitehorse Average House Prices		
	2023 Q1	2024 Q1	% Change
Single-detached house	\$635,000	\$629,500	-0.9%
Condominium	\$403,800	\$456,400	13.0%

¹ Housing costs are considered “unaffordable” when they exceed 30% of household income.

² Northern Housing Report, 2023

Yukon Housing Corporation Approach to Address Housing Issues

Creating Home – YHC’s new strategic plan

- Creating Home draws on a recognized framework intended to re-design and transform health care delivery, called the Quadruple Aim, and adapts it to housing.
- This innovative approach to housing delivery will lead to better outcomes by:
 - Improving the client and provider experiences;
 - Strengthening community wellbeing; and
 - Contributing to a sustainable future.
- Creating Home represents a significant shift in how Yukon Housing Corporation operates and delivers housing services.

Capital builds recently completed by YHC or partners:

- Since 2022, 10 YHC-led projects have been completed, creating a total of 77 new residential units; and
- 8 major partnership projects have been completed through the Housing Initiatives Fund, creating over 276 new units.

YHC projects completed 2022-2024

YHC Project	Construction Start Date	Construction Completion Date	Number of Units
401 Jeckell Street, Whitehorse	May 2020	December 2022	47
RHI affordable triplex, Whitehorse	June 2021	June 2022	3
RHI affordable triplex, Watson Lake	June 2021	March 2022	3
RHI affordable triplex, Mayo	June 2021	March 2022	3
Accessible duplex, Mayo	July 2022	June 2023	2
Accessible duplex, Carmacks	August 2022	July 2023	2
RRDC staff trailer, Ross River	June 2023	December 2023	3
10-plex*, Old Crow (*Asset owned by HPW and managed by YHC)	Summer 2021	January 2024	10
Accessible duplex, Faro	Summer 2023	Spring 2024	2
Affordable duplex, Dawson City	August 2022	June 2024	2
Total units completed (YHC projects):			77

Major partnership projects completed 2022-2024

Project (Lead)	Construction Completion Date	Number of Units
Bringing Citizens Home, Whitehorse (Champagne and Aishihik FN)	Summer 2022	20
Cornerstone multi-use building, Whitehorse (Opportunities Yukon)	July 2022	53
Normandy Living seniors supportive residence, Whitehorse (KBC)	December 2022	84
Boreal Commons apartments, Whitehorse (536754 Yukon Inc)	January 2023	87
Affordable modular housing, Mayo (Na-Cho Nyäk Dun FN)	March 2023	8
Jéje Zho 12-bed men's shelter, Dawson City (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in FN)	July 2023	8
VGFN elders complex, Old Crow (Vuntut Gwitchin FN)	January 2024	9
VGFN mobile homes, Old Crow (Vuntut Gwitchin FN)	March 2024	7
Total units completed (major partnerships):		276

Underway or upcoming housing capital projects for YHC and partners

YHC – Underway (113 units):

- 10-unit Supported Living Residence in Watson Lake
- 34-unit residential building with 8 accessible units in Dawson (former Korbo Apartments)
- 45-unit residential building, which includes 9 accessible units in Whitehorse (former Ryder Apartments)
- 6 staff units across three duplexes in Burwash Landing
- 18 two-bedroom units – purchase of 190 Olive May Way in Whitehorse

YHC – Upcoming (37+ units):

Community housing	Staff housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 units in Mayo • 6-plex in Teslin • 6-plex in Carcross • 6-plex Haines Junction • Accessible triplex in Whitehorse • Accessible duplex in Ross River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible duplex in Destruction Bay • Accessible duplex in Pelly Crossing

Major partnership projects underway (299 units):

Project	Anticipated Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Number of Units
Safe at Home Society's permanent supportive housing project "The Hearth"	March 2024	Spring 2026	67
Safe at Home Society's temporary housing project at 408 Alexander	May 2024	October 2024	17
DDDC's affordable rental project "Winter Crossing"	Spring 2024	Spring 2026	105
Northern Community Land Trust Society's "Project 1096"	June 2024	December 2025	32
HIF-7 funding recipients	Spring 2024	Fall 2026	78
Total units			299

Rent subsidy programs to make life more affordable for renters and seniors

- July 2023, the corporation acquired an additional 16 units for lease from Normandy, for a total of 26 units to lease to clients through its rent supplement program.
- Since 2020, the corporation has supported over 300 households pay rent through the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit. As of September 2024, 170 clients are receiving monthly support.

Support for homeowners

- March 8, the corporation announced the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit Homeowner Stream for homeowners in severe core housing need³ with annual household incomes under \$100,000:
 - Clients received a one-time payment of \$1,000.00 for Whitehorse homeowners and \$1,500.00 for homeowners living outside of Whitehorse.
- June 2023, the Yukon government launched an \$8.25 million flood recovery program for residents and businesses affected by flooding in the Klondike Valley.
- April 2023, Yukon Housing Corporation launched the expanded Yukon Home Ownership Program to provide qualified households with mortgages to build or buy their homes across the territory, including Whitehorse.
- The program was recently discontinued due to low uptake and the corporation is currently exploring alternative program options to support homeownership.

³ Severe core housing need is spending 50% or more of a household's income on shelter costs.

- In 2020, Yukon Housing Corporation launched the revised Home Repair Program to support low to moderate-income Yukon homeowners to remain in their homes and age in place by providing funding to address mobility requirements, repairs or core housing needs.

Support for new residential land development

September 2024	<p>As part of the Government of Yukon's ongoing commitment to increase land and housing availability and support business growth, new residential and industrial lots were released in partnership with municipalities and Yukon First Nations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seven residential lots in Haines Junction, Mayo and Watson Lake; and three industrial lots in Teslin and Haines Junction <p>This was the sixth lot release this year and is a direct result of the Government of Yukon's historic investment in land development. Through the lotteries and tenders process, the Government of Yukon has released 685 lots across the territory since 2021 and is on track to release over 1,000 lots by 2026 (TAB #59).</p>
August 2024	<p>As part of its efforts to work in collaboration with municipalities and Yukon First Nations governments to address housing and business space needs across the territory, the Government of Yukon released 33 new residential lots across the Yukon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twelve lots were made available in Carmacks and Faro 21 country residential lots were made available in the Lone Tree subdivision north of Teslin.
June 2023	Government of Yukon partnered with the Government of Canada and the City of Dawson to develop four new residential lots in Dawson.
February 2023	120 lots, including single family, multi-family and townhouse lots in Whistle Bend made available through public lottery.
March 2023	Government of Yukon partnered with Liard First Nation on developing 43 new residential lots on Frances Avenue in Watson Lake.
March 2023	74 residential lots in Logan, Mayo and in Whitehorse's Whistle Bend made available through public lottery.
November 2022	Signed a loan agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation's arm's-length development corporation, Chu Níkwān Limited Partnership, for a new

	residential land development project at Copper Ridge West in Whitehorse, the first large-scale residential land development on settlement land in the Yukon. An amended loan agreement was signed August 2023 with Chu Níkwän for the same development.
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Approved by:



President, Yukon Housing Corporation

August 30, 2024
Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Our Clean Future Implementation

Tab #46
Fall 2024

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

Recommended response:

- We recognize the urgency of the climate emergency and launched Our Clean Future in September 2020 to map our route forward.
- The Government of Yukon continues to make significant progress on implementing Our Clean Future.
- In 2023, we announced the addition of 42 new actions to help us reach our climate goals, which brings the total number of climate actions to 178.
- These new actions are a product of the important work of the Yukon Climate Leadership Council, the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change, Navius Research and the findings in the Climate Risk Assessment report.
- We continue to track our progress on goals, targets and actions. Information on our progress was most recently published in [November in the 2023 Our Clean Future Annual Report](#) and on the Our Clean Future website.
- Since releasing Our Clean Future in 2020, the Government of Yukon has completed [68](#) Our Clean Future actions, [105](#) are in progress or ongoing and [5](#) have not yet been started.

Additional response:

- As we continue to address climate change, it is important for us to look back on our progress as we diligently work towards our objectives.
- Under Our Clean Future, the government is focused on ensuring the Yukon is highly resilient to climate change impacts by 2030. (See [ENV BN #21](#))

Session Briefing Note

Our Clean Future Implementation

Tab #46
Fall 2024

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

- This year, we:
 - Completed flood maps for the Southern Lakes region, [Teslin](#) and Carmacks. Flood hazard mapping for Old Crow and the City of Dawson and the Klondike Valley are expected to be completed in 2025. [A flood hazard mapping study for Mayo is also underway and will be completed in 2026.](#)
 - Worked with municipalities and First Nations governments to finalize the Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Faro, Haines Junction, Teslin, the [City of Dawson and Whitehorse](#). [Plans for Beaver Creek, Mayo, Old Crow, Watson Lake, Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing are underway.](#)
 - Advanced climate change preparedness by initiating development of a permafrost monitoring system for key public buildings, and guidelines to address climate hazards in major infrastructure projects.
 - Established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
 - Completed flood risk mapping for all transportation corridors in the Yukon.
- We are committed to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and we support Yukoners in the transition to cleaner transportation options and energy efficient homes and buildings.
- This year, we:
 - Began providing rebates for medium-duty electric vehicles.
 - Passed an electric vehicle charging station regulation under the *Public Utilities Act* to allow First Nation governments, private

Session Briefing Note

Our Clean Future Implementation

Tab #46
Fall 2024

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

businesses and municipalities to sell electricity through electric vehicle charging stations.

- Installed electric vehicle chargers in every road-accessible community in the Yukon, enabling zero-emissions travel throughout the territory. 19 fast charging stations are now operational throughout the territory, [and one new Level 2 charger in Swift River](#). (See EMR BN #30)
- Since 2020, we have provided rebates for 518 energy efficient new homes, exceeding our 2030 target of 500.

Third response:

- Existing actions put us on track to reduce the Yukon's emissions by 30 per cent by 2030. However, there is still significant work required to meet our target reduction of 45 per cent by 2030.
- [One of the major drivers of emissions is population – more people means more cars on the road and more homes to heat.](#)
- [However, as the population of the Yukon continues to grow, we aren't seeing the rate of emissions increase that we would expect.](#)
- [We are seeing lower emissions per Yukoner than we saw in 2010.](#)
- [This is a promising sign that the emissions intensity of everyday life for Yukoners may be starting to decrease.](#)
- We [passed](#) legislation to set a target of a 45 per cent reduction in mining sector emissions per unit of production by 2035.
- We will continue to build on Our Clean Future as we learn more and implement new actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.

Session Briefing Note

Our Clean Future Implementation

Tab #46
Fall 2024

Environment and Energy,
Mines and Resources

- We will continue to find opportunities to reach our targets as we work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond.

Context — this may be an issue because:

- Climate change and the government's progress in delivering on Our Clean Future commitments is of interest to Yukoners.

Background:

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020, and now has 178 actions, of which 136 are original actions and 42 are new actions. These actions seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.
- The Government of Yukon reports annually on progress for the implementation of Our Clean Future. Four Annual Reports have been published to date, with the latest report released on [November 12, 2024](#) (capturing [2023](#) data).
- The Our Clean Future website was launched in December 2023, which shows the government's commitments and successes towards fighting climate change.

Approved by:

Dennis Berry

November 19, 2024

Deputy Minister, Environment

Date approved

Paul Moore

November 13, 2024

Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

Session Briefing Note

Supplementary Overview

(Corporate Note)

Recommended response:

- The 2024-25 Supplementary Estimates No. 1 forecasts an overall gross increase of \$150.1 million in O&M spending, with an offsetting increase of \$20.7 million in recoveries. The net increase in new O&M spending is forecast at \$129.4 million.
- Capital spending for Supplementary Estimates No. 1 reflects a slight overall gross decrease of \$299,000 in spending and a \$4.2 million decrease in recoveries, resulting in a net increase in spending of \$3.9 million. These adjustments are mainly the result of updated cashflow forecasts for various projects.
- Revenues are projected to decrease by \$8.8 million, primarily due to a revenue forecast update from Canada which revised the projection for Corporate Income Tax downward by \$6.7 million as well as a reduction in royalty payments from Victoria Gold of \$2.5 million. This is partially offset by a \$350,000 increase for driver licenses due to recently increased fees.
- The Yukon government continues to maintain a surplus. As part of the 2024-25 Main Estimates, the Yukon government budgeted for a \$50 million contingency to address emergency pressures. \$50 million of the contingency has been applied towards the pressures identified in the Supplementary Estimates No. 1.
- The use of the contingency fund allows the government to present a revised surplus of \$75.4 million as part of these Supplementary Estimates. Changes in the Supplementary Estimates result in a revised year-end net debt of \$530.4 million

Session Briefing Note

Supplementary Overview

(Corporate Note)

Additional response:

- The Supplementary Estimates reflect an O&M increase mainly for:
 - \$50 million for payments to the Receiver for environmental protection work at the Eagle Gold Mine;
 - \$34 million for pressures in Insured Health reflecting support for the wellbeing of Yukoners;
 - \$21 million for wildland firefighting costs in response to the significant fire season experienced in the territory and which helped ensure the safety of Yukoners; and
 - \$10 million for various Yukon Hospital Corporation funding requirements including the added O&M costs of converting ten beds at the Thompson Centre for Acute Care use.
- For the Supplementary Estimates, updates to the 2024-25 Capital Plan have resulted in a decreased allocation of \$299,000. Notable changes include:
 - \$1.9 million towards the completion of the Mental Wellness Unit at Whitehorse General Hospital;
 - \$1.9 million for long-term and acute care bed optimization at Whistle Bend Place and Whitehorse General Hospital;
 - Decrease of \$3.2 million due to cash flow revisions for the construction of the school in Burwash Landing;
 - Decrease of \$600 thousand for the creation of new campsites aligning costs with the revised project timeline.

Session Briefing Note

Supplementary Overview

(Corporate Note)

- There is an increase of 46.6 in FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) for Supplementary Estimates No. 1. These are primarily to hire new long-term care staff in support of additional care beds at Whistle Bend Place, for the Aging with Dignity initiative and new FTEs for schools including teachers, clerical and custodial staff.
- There is also an increase in FTEs related to a transfer in the Capital Planning Office from Highways and Public Works capital budget to Finance in the O&M budget.

Corporate approach to fiscal sustainability:

- We continue to work to ensure that government spending is allocated in a way that meets key priorities and long-term goals.
- To meet these priorities, departments continue to follow established processes to ensure that funding is distributed efficiently and effectively across public services and programs.
- This means regular financial scrutiny is applied to decision-making and that new requests for funding are approved in a financially sustainable way, while continuing to provide the services that Yukoners expect.
- This coordinated approach to funding ensures that government can respond to new and evolving challenges, while managing resources responsibly.

Session Briefing Note

Supplementary Overview (Corporate Note)

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2024-25 Second Appropriation Act is tabled in the fall session and will be the subject of debate.

Background:

- Supplementary Estimates are used annually by a government to account for unforeseen spending at the time of tabling the annual Budget. It is common to have one or two spending updates throughout the fiscal year.
- They are tabled during the fall and spring sessions, debated and voted on in the legislature and provide departments with increased spending authority for O&M and Capital for the current fiscal year.

Approved by:

Jessica Schultz

September 19, 2024

Deputy Minister, Finance

Date approved

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

Executive Council
Office

Recommended response:

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility of all governments and individuals in the Yukon.
- Our government is deeply committed to advancing reconciliation through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments and groups.
- We continue to share our progress toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, most recently through a progress report and Pathways magazine both released in Fall 2023.
- The magazine and report provided an update on the actions being taken across the Yukon government and in collaboration with First Nation governments and groups in areas including child welfare, health, education and justice.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nation governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- While there is still work to do, targeted investments are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including through work on the Yukon Forum joint priorities and by implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2023 mandate letters include a commitment to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC's) Calls to Action.
- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement includes a commitment to working with Yukon First Nations to continue to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through targeted investments.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council
Office

Background:

- The TRC report *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* was released in 2015 and contains 94 Calls to Action on redressing the harms resulting from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. There are 32 Calls to Action that relate directly to YG.
- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) collaborated on addressing the Calls to Action under the 2017 Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan and through other reconciliation initiatives, such as supporting the important work of the YFN-led Yukon Residential Schools and Missing Children Project.
- The Government of Yukon has taken additional 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 the 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:

Justin Ferbey

2024 08 20

Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

Date

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

Recommended response:

- Inflation has continued to improve in recent months, but Yukon households continue to see their budgets stretched by elevated prices, with lower-income households often feeling the worst effects.
- The Government of Yukon continues to monitor inflation and its impact on Yukoners, so that we can take steps to ease the burden.
- As inflationary pressures continue to lessen, efforts to make life more affordable for Yukoners and to help industry are shifting from short-term assistance to measures with the potential to provide longer-term benefits, such as actions to improve home affordability.

Additional response:

- The Main Estimates for this year has continued to build on existing supports for Yukoners by making sure they can access essential services at prices they can afford.
- Budget 2024-25 included investments to advance affordable housing projects across the territory. From the Housing First Project in Watson Lake to the recently awarded replacement of the Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse, the Yukon government is taking action to build more affordable homes for Yukoners, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- There is also over \$42 million in continued funding for early learning and childcare. This includes funding for the universal childcare program, which has reduced childcare fees to less than \$10 per day, on average.
- We are also making life more affordable and leading the nation with our Yukon-wide dental program, which has \$5.4 million in continued funding for 2024-25.
- To make sure that more people have the option of staying home when they are sick, the Temporary Paid Sick Leave was extended.
- We also extended the Interim Electrical Rebate, which provides welcome relief from power bills to Yukoners across the territory.
- In addition to items included in the 2024-25 Main Estimates, additional initiatives in many departments are continuing to assist Yukoners with the cost of living.
- The Department of Community Services, for example, is developing a program that will see free transit passes provided to non-governmental organizations, vulnerable populations and youth.
- The Department of Health and Social Services will also provide additional funding of \$777,000 for Safe at Home to provide temporary supportive housing at 408 Alexander Street.

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Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- These are just a few examples of the many programs and initiatives that continue to support Yukoners.

Third response

- The Government of Yukon has also remained responsive to higher inflation in recent years through its various grants and subsidies, which are indexed to inflation. These include:
 - Subsidies for medical travel
 - The Yukon Child Benefit
 - Social Assistance Payments
 - Student Financial Assistance
 - Seniors' benefits
 - The Pioneer Utility grant
 - The Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation
 - Residential rent caps
- The Yukon's minimum wage is also responsive to price changes, as its annual change is tied to inflation in the previous year.
- After growing 6.8 per cent in 2023, the minimum wage increased a further 4.9 per cent to \$17.59 per hour on April 1, 2024.
- The Yukon's minimum wage is the second highest wage in Canada, behind only Nunavut's minimum wage of \$19.00 per hour.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- These increases also contribute towards the strong earnings growth we continue to see in the territory, where average weekly earnings grew 6.1 per cent over the first half of 2024. This is the strongest growth in the country.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Inflation has fallen from historical highs, but Yukoners are still dealing with higher prices for a variety of goods and services following a lengthy period of elevated inflation.
- The moderation of inflationary pressures that began to take hold late last year has continued into 2024. Growth in the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been much lower in every month in 2024, and inflation in recent months has been near or below the historic average of 2 per cent.

Background:

Inflation – Recent performance and outlook

- Following ten increases in the overnight rate since March 2022, the Bank of Canada has made three 25 basis point cuts in 2024, with the overnight rate dropping from 5.0 per cent to 4.25 per cent. Expectations of further rate cuts this year and in 2025, could further reduce pressure on shelter prices as mortgage rates decline.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- Both locally and nationally, price pressures have lessened, and inflation continues to trend towards historic norms. The current outlook for the Whitehorse CPI reflects expectations of a return to 'normal' levels of inflation, with the inflation forecast of 2 per cent in 2024, much improved from 4.9 per cent in 2023 and 6.8 per cent in 2022. Beyond 2024, annual inflation is expected to remain at 2 per cent over the remainder of the five-year forecast.

PROGRAMS AND OTHER MEASURES THAT SUPPORT AFFORDABILITY

Five-Year Capital Plan projects supporting housing affordability (Yukon Housing Corporation)

- The **Old Crow 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing** facility is complete and opened in April 2024.
- Construction of the **10-plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake** began in the summer of 2023. It is scheduled to be completed in the fall 2024.
- Construction of the **Faro and Dawson Duplex** projects started in summer 2023 and is now complete.
- Groundwork began at the old **Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse** in September 2024 and we are aiming for completion in spring 2026. When completed, the new complex is anticipated to deliver over 45 new units.

Universal Child Care Program (Education)

- Universal child care is available to all Yukon families using licensed child care spaces. The universal child care program has reduced fees to less than \$10 per day, on average, for families across the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

Dental Care program (Health and Social Services)

- The Yukon's Dental Program was launched in 2023 and provides \$1,300 per year in dental benefits to Yukoners without dental coverage. The program will cover dental treatments necessary to relieve pain and infection, prevent disease, treat cavities, and restore chewing and social function. It will also offer full coverage for preventive care, such as routine dental cleaning.

Paid sick leave program (Economic Development)

- On April 1, 2023, the Department of Economic Development launched the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program runs for two 12-month blocks:
 - April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024; and
 - April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025
- The Paid Sick Leave Rebate is a temporary program that offers up to 40 hours of paid sick leave to employees and self-employed Yukoners that earn less than the average private-sector wage of \$33.94/hour. The program includes all illnesses (and injuries not covered by any other Act, benefit, or program). The program is available to employees regardless of whether their employer offers paid sick leave, though employees must use all paid sick leave available to them through their employer before they are eligible for the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program is still in effect and will run until March 31, 2025.

Yukon Child Benefit (Health and Social Services and Finance)

- The Yukon Child Benefit provides monthly payments to modest and low-income households who have children under 18. The maximum benefit per child is now tied to inflation, effective the 2023–24 benefit year.

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Inflation and Affordability

(Corporate Note)

Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement (Health and Social Services)

- The Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement provides a monthly income supplement for eligible Yukoner senior's receiving Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) from the federal government. This amount is adjusted for inflation in October, each year.

Inflation Relief Rebate and Interim Electrical Rebate (Yukon Development Corporation)

- The Inflation Relief Rebate, a \$50 rebate that was automatically applied to electrical customers' bills, was a temporary measure to address inflation. The Inflation Relief Rebate was most recently applied to all ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy bills for November and December 2023 and January 2024.
- The Interim Electrical Rebate continues to provide residential electrical customers with a maximum rebate of \$22.62 per month based on the electricity they consume, up to 1,000 kilowatt hours (up to \$271.44 per year). This affordability measure will continue until March 2025.

Social Assistance Review (Health and Social Services)

- Health and Social Services is undertaking a review of the Yukon's Social Assistance rates to inform options to improve the delivery of the program and ensure it is meeting the needs of program clients.
- While the review is underway, the department is providing a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.

Out of Home Childcare Increases (Health and Social Services)

- To offset inflationary cost of living increases and provide sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of children placed in their care, Health and Social Services provided an ongoing 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care in 2023-24, on top of the annual indexed increase.

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Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

- Combined, this amounted to a 16.46 per cent rate increase for community and extended family caregivers. The new rates are as follows:
 - Whitehorse: \$46.86 per day
 - Rural Communities: \$50.16 per day
 - Old Crow: \$86.40 per day
- Rates are indexed annually to the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index, with an increase of 2.4% scheduled to take effect in October 2024.

Supportive Housing (Health and Social Services)

- \$777,000 for Safe at Home will go towards establishing temporary supportive housing at 408 Alexander Street.

Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit Rental Subsidy (Yukon Housing Corporation)

- The Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit offers a rental subsidy for low-to-moderate income renters.

Comprehensive Municipal Grant (Community Services)

- The Comprehensive Municipal Grant is how the Government of Yukon directly funds municipal governments. This core funding supplements municipal resources and pays for vital services, like the provision of fresh drinking water, the collection of solid waste and recycling, recreation programming and other services as required under the Municipal Act and other legislation.
- The high inflation seen in 2022 (6.8 per cent) increased the grant payments provided in April 2024. This resulted in a \$2.3 million increase for Yukon municipalities with overall contributions of over \$24.5 million for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Session Briefing Note

Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs (Energy, Mines and Resources)

- Energy efficiency rebate 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.
- Between January 1, 2018, and June 30, 2024, 286 high-performance retrofits to residential, commercial and institutional buildings have been completed across the territory.
- Innovative programs like the Better Buildings Program that offer up-front funding, combined with our Good Energy rebates, make energy retrofits more accessible and affordable for Yukoners.

Approved by:

Jessica Schultz

September 25, 2024

Deputy Minister
Department of Finance

Date Approved

Session Briefing Note**Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

Recommended response:

- Since its introduction in 2019, the Government of Yukon has been supportive of carbon pricing as a policy to help us reduce emissions and move toward our ambitious climate targets.
- We take a balanced approach to carbon pricing in the territory, one which considers the need to reduce emissions as well as the fair return of carbon pricing revenues to Yukoners.
- The Yukon's carbon rebate is revenue neutral. We are committed to both reducing carbon emissions in the territory and to returning all the federal government's revenues to Yukoners.
- Returning proceeds to individuals, municipal governments, Yukon First Nations, businesses, and mining operations is a critical part of our approach to carbon pricing in the Yukon.
- We are returning 100 per cent of the federal carbon levy to these five rebate groups who receive more, on average, than they pay in carbon pricing levies.

Additional response:

- The departments of Environment and Finance work together to coordinate with our federal counterparts to assess the implications of carbon pricing in the territory and to ensure the needs of the territory are recognized in national policy.
- This includes retaining control over how revenues are distributed back to Yukon individuals, municipal governments, Yukon First Nations and businesses.

Session Briefing Note**Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

- It also includes excluding the carbon price from electricity generation and aviation, in recognition of the unique constraints of our northern jurisdiction.

Third response:

- Carbon pricing is just one tool in our toolkit to address the climate emergency.
- We continue to implement Our Clean Future to reduce the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions and, more broadly, to reduce the impact of the carbon levy on Yukoners.
- In December of last year, we announced 42 new actions under Our Clean Future as part of the third Our Clean Future annual report outlining the progress we have made on the strategy.
- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our target of reducing our emissions by 45 per cent by 2030.
- Ensuring that we utilize every policy lever at our disposal, including carbon pricing, is essential to meet our goals.
- Together, we are finding solutions to reduce our emissions while strengthening our economy and supporting our industry partners.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Carbon pricing remains a highly sensitive topic across the country with many provinces and territories voicing their own perspective on how they would like to see this pricing mechanism handled moving forward.

Session Briefing Note**Carbon Pricing
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

- In October 2023, the federal government announced a temporary 3-year exemption for home-heating oil from the federal carbon price, with the intention of helping Atlantic Canada in particular.
 - While Atlantic Canada welcomed this change, the exemption has received considerable backlash. Most provincial governments (except for British Columbia) have called for extending the carbon price exemption to all home-heating fuels (including natural gas).
 - Critics also argued that the exemption undermines the credibility of the carbon tax and may weaken the incentives to switch to lower carbon heating options.
-

Background:

- The federal Draft Regulations Amending the Fuel Charge Regulations stipulate that all heating oil will be exempt from the fuel charge starting November 8, 2023, until April 2027.
- This means that light fuel oil consumption in all buildings, including residential, commercial, and institutional, will be exempt from the fuel charge.
- Nearly half (49.2% in 2022) of Yukon homes use oil-based heating.
- In Yukon, individuals, businesses, placer/quartz mining operations, Yukon First Nations governments and municipal governments are all eligible for a rebate for carbon pricing.
- Individuals who live outside of Whitehorse receive a remote supplement, which was recently increased from 10 to 20% (and is now in line with the federal remote supplement for backstop jurisdictions including Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan).
- On September 12, 2024, British Columbia's Premier David Eby announced that if the federal government were to remove the carbon pricing backstop, then British Columbia would end the carbon levy in the province.
- British Columbia has had its own carbon pricing system in place since 2008.

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Carbon Pricing (Corporate Note)

Environment & Finance

- British Columbia and the Yukon were the remaining supporters of carbon pricing as a climate change policy, with all other provinces publicly opposing the federal system. In late 2023, the newly elected Premier of the Northwest Territories also called for an exemption from the federal carbon levy for the territory.
- To date, Canada has been firm on granting no exception to the backstop.

Approved by:

Dennis Berry

October 2, 2024

A/Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Jessica Schultz

October 1, 2024

Deputy Minister of Finance

Date approved

Fall 2024

Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

ECO-FIN-EMR

Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes the seriousness of the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold mine on June 24 and is treating the response as a government priority that reflects the urgency of the situation.
- Our priorities are to ensure the health and wellbeing of Yukoners and to protect the environment.
- An Independent Review Board has been established to investigate the heap leach failure that occurred at the Eagle Gold mine. Three highly qualified experts are on the Independent Review Board. The objective of the investigation is to determine the causes of the heap leach facility failure.
- We are committed to working with the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun to develop remediation strategies for the failure. A joint team of technical experts hired by the Government of Yukon and the First Nation meet on a regular basis to inform our actions.
- For the most up to date information on the situation at Eagle Gold Mine and actions we are taking, you can visit Yukon.ca/victoria-gold-updates.

Additional responses:

- On August 14, 2024, PricewaterhouseCoopers Inc. was appointed by the court as Receiver of the assets and property of Victoria Gold Corp.

Fall 2024

Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

ECO-FIN-EMR

The Receiver is responsible for overseeing remediation of the heap leach failure and its environmental impacts, including compliance with territorial and federal orders.

- The Government of Yukon is committed to a thorough accounting of events leading up to the failure and the development of recommendations so that a similar event does not happen again in the Yukon.
- Once the causes of the failure are determined by the Independent Review Board, this information will inform the most appropriate subsequent steps and potential investigations, including consideration of a public inquiry.
- As of September 4, 2024, there are 27 liens against Victoria Gold worth over \$58.7 million.

Environmental and health impacts:

- The Department of Health and Social Services is monitoring impacts on human health. This includes ongoing review of any technical information and water sampling results, as well as situational reports, as they become available. Results from surface water samples taken show that the regulated drinking water system serving the area continues to meet the guidelines for drinking water quality.
- Water is sampled both at the site and downstream of Victoria Gold's Eagle Gold Mine. Water samples are collected regularly at select sites to monitor water quality. The results of the testing will let us know the

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Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

ECO-FIN-EMR

impacts and inform next steps.

- Technical experts from the Government of Yukon, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans are working closely together to monitor the fish and wildlife in the surrounding areas of the Eagle Gold Mine.

Economic and labour market impacts:

- Operations ceased at Eagle Gold Mine after the heap leach failure occurred. This situation has changed the outlook for mineral production in the Yukon and resulted in a notable downward revision in the medium-term outlook for the Yukon's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The 2024-25 Interim Fiscal and Economic Update released in early October includes the latest forecasts for real GDP.
- At the close of 2023, Victoria Gold had 471 direct hires and another 134 on contract.
- Of the more than 600 employed, the company reported that about 34 per cent were local, amounting to approximately 200 local workers. This represents about 0.8 per cent of the territorial labour force.
- Any possible negative impacts on the labour market are expected to be short-lived, as many displaced workers are likely to be reabsorbed into what is currently a tight labour market. The Yukon's unemployment rate is about half the national figure and the local job vacancy rate has been among the highest in the country throughout

Fall 2024

Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

ECO-FIN-EMR

2024.

- Monitoring of labour market data, such as the number of unemployed and the number of Employment Insurance claimants, for potential impacts of the mine closure is ongoing.
- As the Eagle Gold situation continues to unfold, we should have a better understanding if there may be longer-term impacts for the local economy.

Context — this may be an issue because:

- The June 24, 2024 heap leach failure at the Eagle Gold Mine affects the environmental and socio-economic wellbeing of Yukoners – from an environmental and business perspective.

Background:

- On June 24, 2024, a failure occurred at the heap leach facility of the Eagle Gold Mine operated by Victoria Gold Corporation.
- On July 30, 2024, the Premier provided remarks to the Council of Yukon First Nations' General Assembly on a variety of topics including mining and the incident at Eagle Gold Mine
- On August 5, 2024, the Premier provided a statement on mining activity in the Traditional Territory of First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun.
- On August 14, 2024, the Government of Yukon with First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, submitted an application for receivership of Eagle Gold Mine.
- On August 16, 2024, the receivership was granted. It was appointed to PricewaterhouseCoopers. Implementing a receiver is an established process under federal bankruptcy legislation. Decision making and responsibility has

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Eagle Gold Mine - Impacts

ECO-FIN-EMR

shifted from Victoria Gold to PricewaterhouseCoopers, with direction from the Yukon government.

- As of September 20, 2024, the Government of Yukon has done 10 technical briefings to continue to keep Yukoners informed with up-to-date information.
- The Yukon.ca website is updated on a regular basis along with weekly information bulletins to inform the public on the Victoria Gold heap leach failure's current situation.

Approved by:

Justin Ferbey

October 9, 2024

Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

[Date approved]

Lauren Haney

October 9, 2024

Deputy Minister, Energy, Mines and Resources

[Date approved]

Jessica Schultz

October 9, 2024

Deputy Minister, Finance

[Date approved]