

# WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION BOARD

## MINISTERIAL BRIEFING BOOK – SPRING SESSION 2024

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## Session Briefing Note 1.1

Spring 2024

### Assessment Rates

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for the commitment and effort they invest every year in establishing assessment rates that are fair to employers and workers.
- The rates determine the amount of money that employers contribute to the Compensation Fund so that the Fund can support workers who are injured.
- Rates are about caring for the workers who fuel Yukon's economy.
  - Employers and workers can help lower those rates by reducing workplace injuries and supporting the successful return of injured workers to the workplace.
- Assessment rates remain stable for 2024 with only minor increases to four industry groups.
- The majority of employers see their rates remaining stable or decreasing.
- Prevention is key to reducing injuries and controlling rates.
  - The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board continues to work with stakeholders to enhance workplace injury prevention initiatives and support early and safe return to work.

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

- This may be an issue as assessment rates were announced in late summer 2023.
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#### Background:

- Assessment rates are driven by three factors:
    - Costs associated with caring for workers who are injured in Yukon workplaces, such as wage loss benefits and healthcare costs.
    - The performance of the Board's investment portfolio, which historically has been favourable.
    - Administration costs, including providing services to workers and employers.
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## Session Briefing Note 1.1

Spring 2024

## Assessment Rates

WSCB

- Assessment rates reflect industry performance over a 10-year period. Even if an employer is performing well, with a solid health and safety program and few workplace injuries, they may experience a rate change due to overall rate group performance.
- An assessment rate is the amount an employer pays for every \$100 of assessable payroll.
- Rate group assessment rates changed in 2024 as follows:
  - Resources and Transportation Low decreased from \$2.45 to \$2.30
  - Resources and Transportation Medium decreased from \$4.40 to \$4.15
  - Resources and Transportation High increased from \$7.43 to \$7.51
  - Construction Medium had no change at \$3.35
  - Construction High increased from \$4.92 to \$5.00
  - Services Low increased from \$0.76 to \$0.80
  - Services Medium decreased from \$1.59 to \$1.53
  - Services High decreased from \$2.27 to \$2.19
  - Government increased from \$1.84 to \$1.93
    - The government rate group includes the Government of Yukon, municipalities and First Nations.
- 1,858 employers saw decreased rates.
- 657 employers saw no change to their rates for 2024.
- 1,584 employers saw increased rates.
- No industries were reclassified in 2024

Approved by:

February 2, 2024

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President/CEO, WSCB\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 1.2

Spring 2024

### Funded Position of the Compensation Fund

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board on its prudent management of the Compensation Fund in the best interests of workers and employers.
- At the end of 2022, the Compensation Fund's funded position was 131%, which is slightly above the target range of 121%-129%.
- The Board's management has resulted in the Fund being well-prepared for the drastic drop in the markets that occurred in 2022.
- The Board of Directors will provide me with an annual report by April 30, 2024.
  - The annual report will outline the Board's financial position as of December 31, 2023
  - The annual report will also lay out the funded position of the Compensation Fund based on the Board's Funding Policy as of December 31, 2023.
- Any decisions on additional assessments, future rates or rebates rests with the Board of Directors.

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

- There may be questions about a rebate for 2023 in light of the funded position at the end of 2022 above the target range at 131%.

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#### Background:

- The safety and compensation systems are funded by assessments collected from employers who are registered with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
  - The Board's funded position is considered when determining assessment rate changes, additional assessments, rebates and subsidies.

## Session Briefing Note 1.2

Spring 2024

## Funded Position of the Compensation Fund

WSCB

- Worker benefits and prevention activities are not affected.
- Distributing the Compensation Fund's surplus reserves to eligible employers in the form of rebates accelerates the movement of the Fund towards its target levels.
- The Board of Directors is committed to maintaining the Compensation Fund at a target range of between 121% and 129% of total liabilities. The target range is established by terms set out in the Board's funding policy.
- At the end of 2021, the funded position was 143%, largely due to strong investment returns.
- With the drop in the markets in early 2022, the funded position dropped into the target range.
- By the end of 2022, the funded position was 131%.
- Maintaining the target range ensures rates charged to employers represent the actual costs of the system and reduces volatility in the rates.
- The Board has distributed rebates to employers as follows:
  - 2015 approximately \$10M
  - 2016 approximately \$10M
  - 2017 approximately \$10M
  - 2018 approximately \$5M
  - 2020 approximately \$10M
  - 2021 no rebate
  - 2022 no rebate

Approved by:

February 2, 2024

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President/CEO, WSCB\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 1.3

Spring 2024

### Minto Mine Assessments Owed

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- The workers' compensation system and the workplace health and safety system are funded by employers through the payment of assessments.
- When Minto Mine ceased operations, I am aware that there were unpaid assessment amounts owing to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- I want to take this opportunity to stress that although Minto Mine owes money to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, any injured employee of Minto Mine with an accepted claim will not have their compensation benefits affected.
- The health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- With Minto Mine currently in receivership, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has submitted a Proof of Claim outlining monies owing and will continue to work with relevant parties to recover outstanding monies.

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

- There may be questions about potential impacts on injured Minto Mine workers with the closure of the mines and assessment amounts unpaid.

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#### Background:

- The safety and compensation systems are funded by assessments collected from employers who are registered with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
  - Worker benefits and prevention activities are not affected if employers have not paid outstanding assessments.

## Session Briefing Note 1.3

Spring 2024

## Minto Mine Assessments Owed

WSCB

- Minto Metals, which operated the Minto Mine, announced in May 2023, that operations at the mine ceased.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has filed a Proof of Claim with the receiver outlining assessment amounts owing in the amount of \$275,488.04.

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

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February 2, 2024

Date Approved



## Session Briefing Note 2.1

Spring 2024

## Prosecutions Before the Courts

WSCB

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## Recommended response:

- The health and safety of workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- I am aware of one case currently before the courts where charges have been laid under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- I will not make any comment on a matter that is before the court.

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Context—this may be an issue because:

- This case may attract media attention as it progresses through the courts.

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Background:

- There is one case currently before the courts:
  - Fatality at km 551 on the Klondike Highway, close to Moose Creek Lodge.  
Employer is [Personally Identifiable Information] .
- Where there are serious infractions, administrative penalties and prosecutions before the courts can arise.
- Under the previous *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the maximum administrative penalty was up to \$5,000 for a first offence and a further \$500 penalty for each additional day the offence continued.
- The maximum administrative penalty was up to \$10,000 for a second and subsequent offence and a further \$1,000 penalty for each additional day.
- Fines (resulting from prosecution through the courts) were not to exceed \$150,000 on the first offence and up to \$15,000 per day for each day the offence continues.
  - For second or subsequent offence, not to exceed \$300,000 and up to \$25,000 for each day the offence continues.
- Under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, administrative penalties and fines (resulting from prosecution through the courts) are as follows:
  - Administrative penalties
    - Not exceeding \$250,000 per offence, and \$15,000 per day for each day the offence continues.

## Session Briefing Note 2.1

Spring 2024

## Prosecutions Before the Courts

WSCB

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- Fines
  - Not exceeding \$500,000 on the first offence, and \$50,000 per day for each day the offence continues.
  - Not exceeding \$1,000,000 on second or subsequent offences, and \$100,000 per day for each day the offence continues.
  - Where a person is convicted of an offence, in addition to the above fines, a person may be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years.

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

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February 2, 2024

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 2.2

Spring 2024

## Minto Mine Maintaining a Safe Workplace

WSCB

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## Recommended response:

- The health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board. Every worker has the right to work in an environment where hazards are appropriately identified and controlled to the greatest extent possible.
  - This is what workplace health and safety officers work to support.
- With the sudden closure of the Minto Mine in spring 2023, safety officers have visited the site to ensure the workplace remains safe.
- Workplace health and safety officers are actively working with those still on site at the Minto Mine to ensure compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

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Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about ongoing care and maintenance of the Minto Mine after its closure in May 2023.

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Background:

- Minto Metals, which operated the Minto Mine, announced in May 2023, that operations at the mine ceased.
- Workplace Health and Safety officers are working with Boreal Engineering, Yukon Government's designated prime contractor, to ensure the mine's transition into care and maintenance is done in compliance with the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

February 2, 2024

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Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 2.3

Spring 2024

### Victoria Gold Dust Collection Systems

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- I am aware of orders issued by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board at Victoria Gold Corp. arising from dust collection issues with the crusher at the Eagle Gold Mine.
- The health and safety of all Yukon workers is important to this government and a priority for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- Every worker has the right to work in an environment where hazards are appropriately identified and controlled to the greatest extent possible.
  - This is what workplace health and safety officers work to support.
- Workplace health and safety officers are actively working with Victoria Gold Corp. to ensure compliance with the orders issued to them.
- As Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, I do not become involved in workplace safety investigations.

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

- Safety officers with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board conducted an inspection at Victoria Gold Corp.'s Eagle Gold Mine and issued a stop use order for the crusher after observing the dust collection system for the secondary crusher was not operating. Victoria Gold has since met compliance.

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#### Background:

- Under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, Part 3, section 65(a), a safety officer may make an order to stop the use and supply of equipment at a workplace if the safety officer is of the opinion that the equipment is not in safe operating condition.
- Safety officers visited the site on December 19, 2023. Two orders were written on December 21, 2023.

## Session Briefing Note 2.3

Spring 2024

## Victoria Gold Dust Collection Systems

WSCB

- Victoria Gold developed a plan to return the ventilation system to compliance.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states a Minister shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the determination of a claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

Approved by:

February 2, 2024

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President/CEO, WSCB\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 3.1

Spring 2024

## Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

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## Recommended response:

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

## Additional response:

- The presumptions for cardiac arrest and PTSD apply equally to all firefighters including wildland firefighters.
- While there remains a lack of evidence of a relationship between wildland firefighting and an increased risk of occupational cancers this government recognizes that there is a trend towards applying a more inclusionary approach in the cancer presumptions.
- Applying precautionary principles and taking measures to reduce exposures for all firefighters is a prudent approach to prevent injury and our government will reach out to other governments and agencies as we examine how they have applied it to presumptive cancer coverage.
- At the request of this government, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board continues to monitor the research regarding the link between cancers and wildland firefighters.

## Session Briefing Note 3.1

Spring 2024

## Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

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

- Ontario is introducing legislation to expand the list of occupational cancers and include wildland firefighters in the cancer, cardiac and PTSD presumptions.
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**Background:**

- Yukon enacted presumptive legislation for firefighters in 2011.
  - Full-time, part-time, volunteer and wildland firefighters are entitled to compensation benefits if they suffer a cardiac arrest whilst participating in an emergency response or within twenty-four hours of the end of actively participating in an emergency response.
  - Full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters were covered for ten different types of primary site cancer, subject to a minimum service period.
- The ten cancers originally covered through the presumptive legislation were:
  - primary leukemia
  - primary non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
  - primary site bladder cancer
  - primary site colo-rectal cancer
  - primary site esophageal cancer
  - primary site kidney cancer
  - primary site lung cancer
  - primary site brain cancer
  - primary site testicular cancer
  - primary site ureter cancer
- The additional cancers included as part of the new *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*, enacted in July 2022 are:
  - multiple myeloma
  - primary site breast cancer
  - primary site cervical cancer
  - primary site ovarian cancer
  - primary site pancreatic cancer
  - primary site penile cancer

## Session Briefing Note 3.1

Spring 2024

### Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

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- primary site prostate cancer
  - primary site skin cancer
  - primary site thyroid cancer
- There are now nineteen cancers included as part of the presumption.
- Wildland firefighters are excluded under presumptive work-related cancer legislation in several jurisdictions including Yukon.
- British Columbia and Manitoba both include wildland firefighters under their presumptive cancer legislation; Ontario is introducing legislation to include wildland firefighters under their presumptive cancer legislation.
- There is a large body of research papers on the subject of the prevalence of cancers amongst firefighters.
- There is significant evidence that firefighters develop mesothelioma at more than double the rate of the general population.
  - Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos fibers; asbestos is common in older buildings and firefighters could be exposed when battling fires in these locations.
- For other forms of cancer, the evidence of increased prevalence amongst firefighters is not as strong.
- Wildland firefighters are currently excluded from the cancer presumption.
- There is little evidence of an increased risk of cancer for wildland firefighters.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) continue to monitor the research and share any new information to inform future decision making.
- Wildland firefighters in Yukon are not typically exposed to burning manufactured materials that structural firefighters deal with.
- The IAFF has raised concerns that manufactured materials release significant amounts of carcinogenic chemicals when they burn, thereby increasing cancer risk.
- Research remains ongoing with regards to the link between certain cancers and wildland firefighters.



## Session Briefing Note 3.1

Spring 2024

## Wildland Firefighter Cancer Presumption

WSCB

- The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) published their report in spring 2023 on the relationship between firefighters and cancer.
- The results are as follows:
  - There is evidence of cancerous occupational exposure for firefighters, specifically mesothelioma and bladder cancer.
  - There is positive association of occupational exposure for firefighters for colon cancer, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, malignant melanoma of the skin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
  - Overall, occupational exposure as a firefighter is carcinogenic.
- This study concluded that its evaluation of occupational exposure as a firefighter should be presumed to apply to all firefighters, including men and women, and to all firefighting settings (e.g., municipal, wildland, vehicular) and employment arrangements (career, part-time, volunteer).

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

May 1, 2024

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Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 3.2

Spring 2024

### Workplace Violence and Harassment

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

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

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

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

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#### Background:

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

## Session Briefing Note 3.2

Spring 2024

## Workplace Violence and Harassment

WSCB

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

Approved by:

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

February 2, 2024

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

## Session Briefing Note 4.1

Spring 2024

### Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

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

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

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

## Session Briefing Note 4.1

Spring 2024

## Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

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**Background:**

- The regulations for preventing workplace violence and harassment received assent on September 4, 2020.
- Two areas of change are:
  - A new regulation that addresses violence and harassment as workplace hazards; and
  - Enhancements to existing regulations about hazard assessment.
- The PTSD presumption came into effect when the amendments made to the *Workers' Compensation Act* in Bill 8 received assent on November 27, 2017.
- Claims for psychological injury may be denied because the worker does not have a diagnosed psychological injury, as required by the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and policy, or the injury was found to be caused by something other than work duties.
- Introducing the PTSD presumption increased awareness of psychological injury in the workplace. The numbers of claims for PTSD and other psychological injuries leveled off in 2019.
- Costs for psychological assessment and treatment are leveling off as well, but represent a significant percentage of overall medical claims costs. Use of early and safe return to work interventions and a supportive, collaborative case management approach have been found to enhance success and reduce costs.
- Ongoing treatment, case management, and workplace support are often required long-term for workers with psychological injuries.
- Mental health has been affected with COVID-19 and we see an impact in treatment costs, which are increasing and the duration of claims is extending.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has created an after-school running program to promote mental health for girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people aged 9-16.
- The goal is to build psychological resiliency through education and self-esteem development and prevent psychological injury at an early age.
- The aim of the program is to equip youth with resiliency so that recovery is swift should an injury occur.

## Session Briefing Note 4.1

Spring 2024

## Psychological Injury Claims Including PTSD

WSCB

- Northern Safety Network Yukon (NSNY) offers courses on workplace harassment and violence prevention.
- CCOHS likewise offers courses on the psychological health and safety of workers.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) offers courses on the national standards for psychological health and safety in the workplace.

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

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February 2, 2024

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 5.1

Spring 2024

### Enforcing the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

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

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

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

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#### Background:

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

## Session Briefing Note 5.1

Spring 2024

Enforcing the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*WSCB

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

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

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February 2, 2024

Date Approved



## Session Briefing Note 5.2

Spring 2024

## Inquiries About Issues to the Minister's Office

WSCB

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## Recommended response:

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

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

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

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

February 2, 2024

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Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 5.3

Spring 2024

### Reconsideration and Appeal Opportunities for Workers and Employers

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WSCB

#### Recommended response:

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

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

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

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#### Background:

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

## Session Briefing Note 5.3

Spring 2024

### Reconsideration and Appeal Opportunities for Workers and Employers

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WSCB

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

Approved by:

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

February 2, 2024

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

## Session Briefing Note 5.4

Spring 2024

### Reprisals Against Workers

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

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

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

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

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#### Background:

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

Session Briefing Note 5.4

Spring 2024

Reprisals Against Workers

WSCB

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Approved by:

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

February 2, 2024

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

## Session Briefing Note 5.5

Spring 2024

### Replacing the Mine Rescue Station

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board's mine rescue station is a base for the delivery of important health and safety services.
- As mining activity increases in the Yukon, it is essential to have a building to house critical equipment that would be needed in an emergency.
- The current building's lifespan is at an end and it no longer satisfies operational requirements.
- The Board of Directors purchased land on Wasson Place and approved replacing the current building.
- A tender was issued in 2023 and a contract has been awarded for construction of the new mine rescue station.
- The building is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2024.

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

- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is responsible for delivering mine rescue training and the mine rescue station is an essential component. Stakeholders may have questions about the new construction.

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#### Background:

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

## Session Briefing Note 5.5

Spring 2024

## Replacing the Mine Rescue Station

WSCB

- The exact age of the existing mine rescue station building is unknown, but is estimated to have been built in the late 1950s.
  - In 2008, the property value was assessed and the building given another 10 years of economic life.
- In 2016, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board contracted an engineering firm to conduct a hazardous building materials assessment.
  - The assessment determined demolition will be safer and more cost-effective than renovation.
- Currently, the building is used to store mine rescue equipment.
- A tender for design work was issued in the first quarter of 2019 and awarded to local design firm, Kobayashi + Zedda.
- Construction started in June 2023.
- The impact on assessment rates is expected to be minimal.

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

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February 2, 2024

Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 6.1

Spring 2024

## Summary of Accomplishments

WSCB

Accomplishment	Significance	Priority	In mandate letter?
December 2023 Creation on an online fillable Employer Payroll Report (EPR) form	The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has heard for many years from employers that the EPR form should be an online fillable form rather than part of a paper package sent through the mail. The latter option is still available for employers if they so desire but the majority of employers are completing and submitting their EPR forms online.	Medium	No
April 2023 to present Social media presence on timely and relevant workplace health and safety issues (e.g. working outside in summer heat, working with presence of wildfire smoke)	The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has heard from stakeholders that they want timely workplace safety information delivered in real-time through social media.	Medium	No
January 2023 New App: Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment	This new app is a resource to deliver accurate workplace violence and harassment prevention information to Yukoners in an easy-to-access and secure manner. The app is designed to work from any mobile device.	Medium	No
January 2022 to present Facilitated the coming-into force of the <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i> with stakeholder communication sessions, outreach, updated policies, website, IT systems and forms	Implementation of <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i> required substantial internal and external updates to existing materials.	High	Yes



Session Briefing Note 6.1  
Summary of Accomplishments

TAB 15  
Spring 2024  
WSCB

Accomplishment	Significance	Priority	In mandate letter?
January to July 2022 Policy Engagement to align statutory policy instruments with the new Act	Amendments to policies are required to fully implement the new Act on July 1, 2022.	High	Yes
December 2021 Assent of Bill 8, <i>Workers' Safety and Compensation Act</i>	Modern, clear legislation that recognizes and addresses the nature of work in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century, streamlines administrative processes, and enhances workplace safety through combined emphasis of workplace health and safety and compensation.	High	Yes

Approved by:

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

February 2, 2024

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

## Session Briefing Note 1.4

Spring 2024

### Employer Payroll Report (EPR) Form Online

WSCB

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#### Recommended response:

- This government commends the Board of Directors of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for the effort they invest every year in improving services for clients.
- This year the Employer Payroll Report (EPR) form is available electronically for employers to complete.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board heard from employers that it would be much easier to have the ability to complete the EPR form online.
- The online EPR form consolidates three separate forms into one form.
- This form also includes detailed instructions to help employers understand the information being sought.
- The EPR form was tested by local employers and bookkeepers with their feedback for improvements incorporated.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board has heard from many employers who have completed the online EPR form who are satisfied with this new way of submitting their employer information.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board continues to work with stakeholders to enhance their service offerings, including transitioning to services available electronically.

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

- This may be an issue as the new online EPR form is longer than the previously mailed-out paper form.

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#### Background:

- This year is the first year that the EPR form is available for employers to complete online.
  - Previous EPR forms were mailed to employers.

## Session Briefing Note 1.4

Spring 2024

## Employer Payroll Report (EPR) Form Online

WSCB

- Employers who are not able to complete the form electronically are still able to complete the form and submit in paper-format.
- The online EPR form breaks out standardized questions into multiple separate questions; e.g., name of employer, address, postal code, and city.
- The online EPR form includes drop-down questions, meaning additional questions may be posed dependent on the answer to a previous question.
- The online EPR form combines three separate forms into one form. This amalgamation makes it easier for employers to submit their information but does result in one longer form.
- As the EPR form was designed to be completed online, when printed out, the form does look longer as all questions are printed out regardless if they are relevant to the employer.
  - The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is continuing to modify and improve the online and printable EPR forms to enhance client satisfaction.
- The online EPR form also includes detailed instructions to provide further guidance to employers in completing the form,
- New questions included on the online EPR form pertain to director information who are considered workers under the new *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

Approved by:

February 2, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/CEO, WSCB\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

## Session Briefing Note 4.2

Spring 2024

### Injured Workers Website

WSCB

#### Recommended response:

- I am aware of a website that is soliciting feedback from injured Yukon workers about their experiences with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board values input from all stakeholders in pursuit of continuously improving services for clients.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board follows the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* and policies when making decisions.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* strictly prohibits me, as Minister responsible, from getting involved in any claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

#### Additional Response:

- Workers who are not satisfied with the decision made on their claim are encouraged to reach out to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for further discussion.
- The Workers' Advocate is also available to workers to provide assistance in the claims process.
- If an injured worker remains in disagreement with a decision, I would encourage them to take advantage of the comprehensive reconsideration and appeal process provided by the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.

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

- A website has been created to solicit feedback from injured workers (yukoncynic.ca). The website author claims that problems exist with claims decision-making that negatively impacts upon injured workers.

#### Background:

- In early 2024, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board became aware of a website created to gather feedback from injured Yukon workers.

## Session Briefing Note 4.2

Spring 2024

## Injured Workers Website

WSCB

- The website includes a short survey, space for workers to share their own experiences in their interactions with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, survey results from the 2018 and 2021 Yukon Government engagement survey, and resources for workers when interacting with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.
  - Statements on the website include that the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board does not have worker best interests in mind, policies in decision-making are not being followed, and the workers' compensation system lacks accountability.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board is interested in hearing from all stakeholders with a mindset towards continuously improving client services.
- If statistically reliable data from the website can be provided to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, such data will be reviewed and taken into account.
- Each claim is considered on an individual basis.
- The Workers' Safety and Compensation Board encourages any worker who has questions or concerns about their claim to reach out to their case manager for further discussion.
- If a worker is not satisfied or disagrees with a decision made about their claim, they have the right to request a reconsideration.
- A reconsideration decision can be appealed to the Appeal Tribunal, an independent tribunal.
- All workers are entitled to a copy of information that is contained on their claim file, upon written request.
- Workers are able to reach out to the Workers' Advocate Office for assistance about their claim or possible reconsideration or appeal.
- The *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* states a Minister shall not be directly or indirectly involved in the determination of a claim for compensation, an assessment matter or in any workplace health and safety matter.

Approved by:

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President/CEO, WSCB

February 9, 2024

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Date Approved

## Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

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### Recommended response:

- Many Yukoners continue to face challenges across the housing continuum, including:
  - 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 rising interest rates are creating significant challenges for both Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners.
- The corporation's new strategic plan, Creating Home, will help transform affordable housing service delivery through the adoption of a more client-centred and collaborative approach that integrates supports and leads to better outcomes for Yukoners.

### Additional response:

- Across government, 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.

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### Context:

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

## Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

### Rental pricing

- As of October 2023, the median rent for units in Whitehorse in all types of buildings \$1,368. This is 5.1% higher than it was in October 2022. For rental units in buildings with three or more units, the median rent was \$1,250, and the vacancy rate was 1.2%. Within the renter population in Whitehorse:
  - 22.7% live in unaffordable housing;
  - 17.9% live in unsuitable housing; and
  - 10.5% live in inadequate housing.

### Rental and vacancy rate, Yukon (YBS)

	<a href="#">April 2022</a>	<a href="#">October 2022</a>	<a href="#">April 2023</a>	<a href="#">October 2023</a>
Median rent (all types)	\$1,300	\$1,301	\$1,325	\$1,368
Vacancy rate (all types)	1.6%	1.7%	2.2%	1.9%

### Housing Construction

- Residential building construction declined by 19.3% over the same period. There was \$81.9 million in residential building construction in Yukon in 2023. This figure represents a 7.5% decline from 2022.
- Labour shortages contribute to higher construction costs and are leading to lower residential construction output.<sup>1</sup>

### House prices

- Yukon Bureau of Statistics real estate reports show that average prices for single detached and condos have fallen for three consecutive quarters; however, house prices remain high and many Yukoners face affordability challenges due to rising mortgage rates.
- Average House Prices (YBS)

Type	Whitehorse Average House Prices		
	<a href="#">2022 Q3</a>	<a href="#">2023 Q3</a>	Change
Single-detached house	\$701,200	\$664,600	(-5.2%)
Condominium	\$459,400	\$426,600	(-7.1%)

<sup>1</sup> Northern Housing Report, 2023

### Yukon Housing Corporation Accomplishments

#### Creating Home – YHC new strategic plan

- Creating Home is the corporation's new 5-year strategic plan that will transform affordable housing service delivery through the adoption of a more client-centred and collaborative approach that integrates supports and leads to better outcomes for Yukoners and communities.
- The plan 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 experience
    - 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:

- 60 units completed between 21/22 and 22/23 by YHC
- **February 2024** 10 units in Old Crow (with HPW)
- **March 2024** accessible duplex in Faro
- **January 2024** – 3-unit mobile home delivered and prepared for occupancy for RRDC staff to help improve social conditions in the community.
- **August 2023** – two accessible, affordable duplexes in Mayo and Carmacks, YHC
- **July 2023** – a 12-bed men's shelter, Jëje Zho, in Dawson City, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
- **May 2023** – 9-unit Elders' complex, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
- **January 2023** – 87-unit rental development in Whitehorse by Boreal Commons
- **January 2023** – 47-unit build for in Whitehorse YHC
- **December 2022** – 84-unit Seniors' Supportive Housing Facility, Normandy Living.
- **July 2022** – 45-unit multi-use building, Cornerstone: Opportunities Yukon
- **June 2022** – triplex in Whitehorse, YHC
- **Summer 2022** – 20-unit, Whistle Bend: Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
- **March 2022** – triplexes in Mayo and Watson Lake, YHC



## Housing Issues

## Yukon Housing Corporation

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### Underway or Upcoming housing capital projects for YHC and partners

#### YHC- Underway (12 units)

- 10-unit Watson Lake Housing First building
- 2-unit affordable duplex in Dawson

#### YHC – Upcoming (112+ units) Community housing:

- 34-unit building with 8 accessible units in Dawson
- 45+ unit building with 9 accessible units on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Whitehorse (formerly Ryder Apartments)
- 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

#### Staff housing:

- Accessible duplex in Destruction Bay
- Accessible duplex in Pelly Crossing
- Duplex in Burwash Landing

### 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 YHC 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 April 2024, 177 clients are receiving monthly support.

### Support for homeowners:

- March 2024 – CYHB Homeowners stream
- June 2023 the Yukon government launched an \$8.25 million flood recovery program for residents and businesses affected by flooding in the Klondike Valley. (Tab #19)

### Housing Issues

### Yukon Housing Corporation

- April 2023, YHC launched the expanded Yukon Home Ownership Program which provides mortgages for qualified households to build and buy their homes across the territory, including Whitehorse.
  - The program is currently under review and scheduled for revision in the coming year.
- In 2020, YHC 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 2023:

- June 2023, the Government of Yukon partnering with the Government of Canada and the City of Dawson to develop [four new residential lots in Dawson City](#).
- 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 Mayo and the Logan and Whistlebend subdivisions of Whitehorse made available through public lottery.
- November 2022, signed a loan agreement with Kwanlin Dün First Nation's (KDFN) arm's-length development corporation Chu Níkwän Limited Partnership (CNLP) 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.

#### Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Yukon Housing Corporation

April 30, 2024

Date approved

## ENV #1 / EMR #33

Spring 2024

## Session Briefing Note

### Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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#### 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 December 2023, we released the third Our Clean Future annual report outlining the progress we made responding to climate change in 2022.
- The report announced the addition of 42 new actions to help us reach our climate goals. 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.
- The 42 new actions implement 15 recommendations from the Yukon Climate Leadership Council and three recommendations from the Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change.
- Additionally, several of the new recommendations put forward by the Yukon Climate Leadership Council align with existing Our Clean Future actions.
- We will continue to work together to advance our efforts to reduce emissions as we assess our progress year-to-year, consider new research and the input of others, and increase our resilience to climate change.
- We have also revised 19 existing actions to better align with our efforts to reduce the Yukon's greenhouse gas emissions and build a climate resilient territory.

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

**Spring 2024**  
Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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**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.
- We legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets and associated reporting through the Clean Energy Act in 2022.
- We installed electric vehicle chargers in every road-accessible community in the Yukon, enabling zero-emissions travel throughout the territory. (See EMR BN #29)
- We launched the five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership in 2023 which will enhance the agriculture sector's resiliency and adaptation to climate change.
- In collaboration with the Yukon's public utilities, we met our target to install seven megawatts of renewable electricity capacity through the Micro-Generation program by 2030. (See EMR BN #38)
- We launched the Better Buildings Program to offer affordable financing for energy retrofits to Yukoners' homes and buildings in 2022.
- We established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
- We advanced emergency preparedness as we progressed the Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, the Town of Faro and the Kluane Lake Region.
- We have begun work to develop flood hazard maps for all flood-prone Yukon communities. We expect to release flood maps for the Southern Lakes, Carmacks, and Teslin in 2024. Flood hazard mapping

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

**Spring 2024**  
Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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for Old Crow and Dawson and the Klondike Valley will begin in 2024 and 2025.

- In May 2023, we completed the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse.
- In January 2024, we passed an electric vehicle charging station regulation under the *Public Utilities Act* to allow First Nation governments, private businesses and municipalities to sell electricity through electric vehicle charging stations.

**Third response:**

- Of the original 136 actions released in Our Clean Future in 2020, we have completed 45 actions. Eighty-seven actions are in progress and four are yet to begin.
- The ambitious addition of 42 new actions in 2023 puts 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.
- We are working with industry to establish a path to implement the mining intensity target of a 45 per cent reduction in 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.
- We will continue to find opportunities to reach our targets as we work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond.

## ENV #1 / EMR #33

Spring 2024

# Session Briefing Note

## Our Clean Future Implementation

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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

- Climate change is of high interest to Yukoners.
- The government's progress in delivering on Our Clean Future commitments will be of interest.

### Background:

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020.
- Our Clean Future 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. Three Annual Reports have been published to date, with the latest report released on December 20, 2023.
- The Our Clean Future website was launched in December 2023, allowing Yukoners to see our commitments and successes towards fighting climate change.

### Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
A/Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

2024-02-09

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

February 12, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date approved

**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing  
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

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**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.
- The Department of Environment and the Department of Finance work closely to ensure that 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.
- Our two departments 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.
- It also includes excluding carbon price from electricity generation or aviation, in recognition of the unique constraints of our northern jurisdiction.

**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing  
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

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**Additional 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
- Our government continues to stand by carbon pricing as sound, evidence-based policy on climate change, but we share concerns about equity; specifically, for those Yukoners who do not use heating oil for their homes.
- The policies in Our Clean Future, as well as carbon pricing, are intended to incentivize Yukoners to make the switch to low carbon energy sources, like electric heating or heat pumps. Despite this change to the federal carbon levy, Yukoners continue to lead the way to support this low carbon transition.



**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing  
(Corporate Note)**Environment & Finance

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- 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.

**Third response:**

- 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, and businesses 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 four rebate groups who receive more, on average, than they pay in carbon pricing levies.

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

- 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).

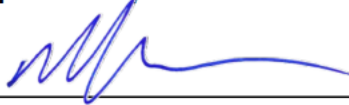
**Session Briefing Note****Spring 2024****Carbon Pricing  
(Corporate Note)**

Environment &amp; Finance

- 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).

**Approved by:**Michael Prochazka, Deputy Minister of  
Environment

March 1, 2024

Date approved



Deputy Minister of Finance

February 26, 2024

Date approved

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Spring 2024**

Finance

**Recommended:**

- Inflation has continued to improve in recent months, but all 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 track 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:**

- This year's Budget continues to support Yukoners by making sure they can access essential services at prices they can afford.
  - o The Budget includes massive investments to advance affordable housing projects across the Yukon. From the Housing First Project in Watson Lake, the Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse, and the Korbo Multiplex in Dawson, the Yukon government will be taking action to build more affordable homes for Yukoners, especially those in vulnerable situations.
  - o There is also over \$42 million in continued funding for early learning and child care in this Budget. This includes funding for the universal child care program, which has reduced child care fees to less than \$10 per day on average.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Spring 2024**

Finance

- o We are also making life more affordable and leading the nation with our Yukon-wide dental program, which will see \$5.4 million in continued funding for 2024-25.
  - o To make sure that more people have the option of staying home when they are sick, we have extended the Temporary Paid Sick Leave and included the necessary funding to do so in this Budget. We have also extended the Interim Electrical Rebate, which will provide welcome relief from power bills to Yukoners across the territory.
- These are just a few examples of the many programs and initiatives that will continue to support Yukoners this year.
- The Yukon's minimum wage has also been responsive to price changes, as its annual change is tied to inflation in the year prior. After growing 6.8 per cent in 2023, the minimum wage is scheduled to grow a further 4.9 per cent to \$17.59 per hour as of April 1, 2024. The new minimum wage would represent the second highest wage in Canada, behind only Nunavut's minimum wage of \$19.00 per hour.
- Higher inflation impacts various Government of Yukon programs through indexation, including:
  - o Subsidies for medical travel
  - o The Yukon Child Benefit
  - o Social Assistance Payments
  - o Student Financial Assistance
  - o Seniors' benefits
  - o The Pioneer Utility grant

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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Spring 2024

Finance

- o The Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation
- o The minimum wage
- o Residential rent caps
- o The tobacco tax rate

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

- Inflation has fallen from historical highs but remains elevated in Canada and in the Yukon.
- While improved, energy prices remain elevated, and food and shelter costs continue to be prominent drivers of overall inflation. These are all areas where higher prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- After more than a year of local inflation being among the highest in Canada, growth in the Whitehorse CPI trended down throughout 2023 and was once again below the national inflation in the last three months of 2023 [and the first two months of 2024](#).
- Higher earnings were reported across most industries in 2023, and several industries reported earnings growth more than 2023's average inflation of 4.9 per cent. Even as some industries had earnings gains outpace inflation, earnings growth of 2.8 per cent in the industry total fell short of the overall increase in prices in 2023.

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Spring 2024**

Finance

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#### **Background:**

##### **Inflation – Recent performance and outlook**

- Early in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, some price pressures were slower to materialize in the Yukon than in other parts of the country, as inflation for Whitehorse was amongst the lowest in Canada in the first half of 2022.
- Robust price growth in the CPI components of food, shelter and recreation, education and reading material were key drivers of overall inflation in 2023.
- Actions taken by the Bank of Canada to rein in inflation by cooling the Canadian economy appear to be having the desired effects. The national labour market has softened, consumer spending has slowed, and real GDP has leveled out. Following ten increases in the overnight rate since March 2022, discussion among many analysts has shifted towards the timing of rate cuts.
- The Bank's efforts to tame inflation look to have set the stage for a soft landing for Canada, as inflation is trending down without an accompanying sharp downturn in economic activity. Weaker energy prices and improving supply chains have also helped contribute to a much-improved national inflation picture.
- Prior to the recent period of elevated inflation, prices in the Yukon had generally tracked close to the national trend. After averaging 3.9 per cent in 2023, the Bank expects national inflation to fall to 2.8 per cent in 2024 and 2.2 per cent in 2025. As price pressures continue to recede, a similar story is expected locally with growth of the Whitehorse CPI forecast to fall from 4.9 per cent in 2023 to 3.0 per cent in 2024 and 2.5 per cent in 2025.

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### PROGRAMS AND OTHER MEASURES THAT SUPPORT AFFORDABILITY

Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan supporting housing affordability (Yukon Housing Corporation)

- The **Old Crow 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing** facility will be completed and will be ready for residents to start moving in by March 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 are scheduled to be complete in early 2024.
- The **Korbo Multiplex in Dawson** is in the design phase. This project will deliver approximately 34 new housing units.
- The old **Ryder Apartments in Whitehorse** was demolished in December 2023 and plans are underway to replace it with a new multi-family affordable housing complex. The project is in the design phase and 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.

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.

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## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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### Paid sick leave program (Economic Development)

- On April 1, 2023, Economic Development launched the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program will run 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.

### Yukon Child Benefit (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, starting in the 2023–24 budget year.

### 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 is 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.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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- 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 has been extended to March 2025.

#### **Other Government initiatives**

##### Initiatives under Health and Social Services:

- Engagement on the Yukon's Social Assistance rates started in late summer 2023 with clients on Social Assistance.
- While the review is underway, the department is providing a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.
- To offset inflationary cost of living increases and provide sufficient financial resources to meet the needs of children placed in their care, the department is providing a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care, on top of the annual indexed increase.
- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, a 16.46 per cent rate increase for community and extended family caregivers was provided. The rates are as follows:
  - o Whitehorse: \$46.86 per day
  - o Rural Communities: \$50.16 per day
  - o Old Crow: \$86.40 per day

##### 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.

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## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- The high inflation seen in 2022 (6.8 per cent) will increase the grant payments to be provided in April 2024. This will result in a \$2.3 million increase for Yukon municipalities with overall contributions of over \$24.5 million for fiscal year 2024/25.

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

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- Energy efficiency 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 December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, 221 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.

### Support to the forestry industry (Energy, Mines and Resources)

- To help increase the supply of firewood, over the past two years the Yukon government has offered an incentive to timber harvesters. In 2022-23, the Government of Yukon distributed \$315,000 to 33 Yukon businesses. The program has contributed to an increase in timber harvest volumes.

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### **Inflation and Affordability**

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- In fall 2023, the Government of Yukon and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency combined financial contributions to launch the \$200,000 Forestry Support Program. The program is helping to enhance operational safety and resilience by allowing commercial harvesters and retailers to purchase or repair things like harvest equipment, vehicles, trailers, and personal protective equipment.
- We have distributed over \$170,000 through this program and anticipate exhausting the funds by the application deadline of March 31, 2024.

#### Temporary Landlord Assistance Program (Economic Development)

- Vacancy rates in the local rental market remain very low. The Government of Yukon is committed to encouraging landlords to remain in the residential market. To help support this, the department of Economic Development introduced a temporary Landlord Assistance Program in November 2023.
- The program is available to all Yukon residential landlords who rent out accommodations to which the Yukon's Residential Landlord and Tenant Act applies and who rented out accommodation in 2023. The program provides a one-time, per-unit payment of \$338 for 2023.

#### **Government initiatives indexed to inflation**

- Higher inflation impacts various Government of Yukon programs through indexation, (indexation is updated each April unless otherwise noted), including:
  - o Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation (with a one-year lag)
  - o The minimum wage
  - o Subsidies for medical travel
  - o Pioneer Utility grant
  - o Residential rent caps
  - o Seniors benefits (updated each October)
  - o Social Assistance Payments (updated each November)

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- o Student Financial Assistance (updated each school year)
- o Tobacco Tax is updated each January
- o Yukon Child Benefit (July)

### **Covid-19 and other temporary inflation relief measures no longer in place:**

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

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

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Yukon acted quickly and decisively by implementing one of the most robust business relief programs in the country. This began with the Yukon Business Relief Program (YBRP) in 2020, which was open to any business from any sector that experienced at least a 30 per cent revenue loss due to the pandemic.
- In that same year, Tourism and Culture (T&C) also launched the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which was reviewed and endorsed by the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB) and industry.
- The Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan committed \$15 million over 3 years to support the tourism sector and was focused on 4 key themes:
  - o Providing tourism sector leadership;
  - o Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
  - o Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
  - o Refining the brand and inspiring travelers to visit.
- Through the TRRP, various financial support programs were rolled out during the course of the pandemic to sustain the tourism industry and prepare it for the eventual reopening of borders, including:
  - o Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
  - o Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
  - o Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;

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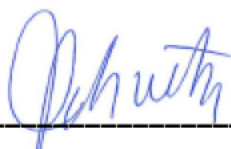
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- Great Yukon Summer (GYS) program;
- Great Yukon Summer Freeze program;
- ELEVATE program; and
- A top-up to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

**Health and Social Services:**

- a one-time \$150 payment to social assistance recipients;
- a one-time payment of \$150 to Yukon Seniors Income Supplement recipients;
- a one-time 10 per cent additional payment to Pioneer Utility Grant recipients;
- a 6-month extension of \$500 per month to caregivers of children in out of home care; and
- a commitment of \$100,000 to Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to continue to support food security across the territory.

**Approved by:**



Deputy Minister, Finance

March 19, 2024

Approved

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

Executive Council  
Office

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**Recommended response:**

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility of all governments and individuals in our society.
- Our government is deeply committed to advancing reconciliation through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments.
- While there is still work to do, our efforts are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- In 2023, on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we shared our progress toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through the release of the Pathways magazine and an accompanying report.
- The magazine and report provide an update on the actions being taken across the Yukon government and in close collaboration with First Nation governments and organizations 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.
- 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.

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

- The 2023 mandate letters include a commitment to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.

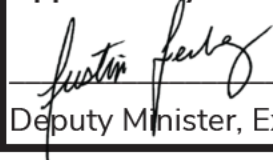
### Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council  
Office

#### Background:

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in June 2015. It contains 94 Calls to Action focused on redressing the harms resulting from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. Thirty-two of the Calls to Action relate directly to YG.
- YG and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) 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.
- YG 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:



Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

2024.02.02

Date