



**Thank you, Mr. Speaker.**

I am pleased to present our government's fourth budget – the Main Estimates for the 2020–21 fiscal year.

This budget represents a vision of a territory in which all communities have access to infrastructure and services that support healthy living now and into the future. It represents a vision of a territory with a



made our territory proud when he helped Team Canada win the World Junior Hockey Championships. That



Supporting Yukoners when and where they need it means helping those who have experienced violence and sexualized assault. We are providing funding this year to complete implementation of the Sexualized Assault Response Team, reaffirming our commitment to deliver integrated, wrap-around services focused on victim needs. This includes a 24/7 Sexualized Assault Support Line that will help to ensure that anyone who experiences sexualized assault and chooses to speak with someone or access services receives the support they need in a consistent and coordinated manner.

The budget includes funding to support the development of the Yukon Strategy on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls along with the Yukon Advisory Council. In addition, we are supporting violence prevention initiatives in Yukon communities through Prevention of Violence Against Aboriginal Women funding. We will also be proposing legislative changes this sitting to give victims of family or domestic violence additional leave to get the help they need.

It is vital that we ensure our territory is inclusive and free of discrimination. That is why our government will introduce legislation this sitting to ban conversion therapy in Yukon. We are also developing an LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan based on engagement with Yukon's LGBTQ2S+ community and providing operational funding to Queer Yukon Society. This will support capacity development in this sector and ensure local feedback and review of the LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan.

Mr. Speaker, our government is making significant investments across Yukon's housing spectrum. We have budgeted \$9 million this year for the 47-unit mixed-use housing project in downtown Whitehorse. This innovative project will increase the availability of affordable housing while promoting social inclusion. We also continue to support the Challenge Disability Resource Group by including funding for their Cornerstone project, which will provide affordable and supportive housing to Yukoners in need. The budget also includes money to plan for new multi-unit mixed-use housing projects in Old Crow and Carcross that will help meet community needs and support aging in place.

We have included \$3.6 million for the Housing Initiatives Fund, which has supported over 350 new housing units across the territory since we introduced it in 2018. It will continue to support First Nations governments and development corporations, developers, contractors, community organizations and individuals to build new affordable housing. The budget for the Municipal Matching Rental Construction Grant is also increasing to \$2 million this year to expand rental housing in Yukon.

Yukon's strong economic growth is generating increased demand for land in our territory. We have budgeted \$27 million this year to develop residential lots in Yukon communities. In Whistle Bend, we anticipate releasing more than 200 lots this year, including the first commercial lots in the neighbourhood. This year's budget includes money for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation's Marshall Creek subdivision development in Haines Junction. We are also working with the Teslin Tlingit Council and the Village of Teslin to support lot development in the Lone Tree area and planning for a mixed-use subdivision near the airport in Teslin. In the past 3 years our government has released nearly 300 lots across the territory, with many more to come this year. We will continue to work in partnership with municipalities to support rural land development throughout Yukon.

We will also be proposing legislative changes to allow for more registration of Category A and B Settlement Land in the Yukon Land Titles Office in a manner that does not impact Aboriginal rights and title. In 2018 the Kwanlin Dün First Nation received the first Certificate of Title for Category A Settlement Land from the Yukon Land Titles Office. Our government is committed to supporting more First Nations to register Settlement Land in order to increase opportunities for land and economic development across the territory while supporting the economic self-determination of Yukon First Nations.

## Letting businesses flourish

Yukon's economy is strong. We had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada for the past three years. Whether it be through the new pilot in the Yukon Nominee Program that allows workers to have multiple

Our government is working hard to ensure that Yukon's private sector can flourish. This year we will fulfill two significant commitments we made to Yukon businesses – cutting the small business tax from 2% to zero and modernizing the Business Investment Tax Credit. Cutting the small business tax rate will save Yukon businesses \$2 million per year and expanding the Business Investment Tax Credit will enable more investment to support Yukon businesses like Air North. Encouraging a stronger private sector with new opportunities remains a priority of our government and we are very proud to deliver on these commitments.

Our government is also working hard to make life more affordable for Yukoners. We will be proposing amendments to the Yukon Basic Personal Amount under the *Income Tax Act* to align with recent changes made by the Government of Canada. Phased in over four years, these changes will result in Yukoners saving around \$2.4 million in taxes per year – up to \$9.6 million total – by 2023. These changes geared towards low and middle-income earners will mean more money in the pockets of those who need it most.

Yukon's minimum wage will be increasing on April 1, 2020 from \$12.71 per hour to \$13.71 per hour. This increase will support Yukoners who need it most, while ensuring that Yukon businesses remain competitive in a tight labour market. Overall, Yukon workers' average weekly earnings have increased over the last few years, reaching a record-high for Yukon in the fall of 2019, and are now fourth-highest in Canada.

From decreasing taxes on small businesses, to putting more money in the pockets of Yukoners who need it most, our government is working hard to make life more affordable in Yukon and help Yukon businesses flourish. We remain committed to supporting a diverse, growing economy that provides good jobs for Yukoners in an environmentally responsible way.

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infrastructure in Dawson City, improvements to Faro's water, sewer and road networks, and the Pelly Crossing Water Distribution Project. We have as well included money for the public works facility in Mayo and for Teslin's public works facility. We are also making significant improvements to the North Klondike Highway to improve safety and increase capacity on one of our territory's busiest highways. This initiative will see \$157 million spent over the next ten years, including more than \$13 million in this year's budget.

Living in the North, we know climate change is much more than a theory. It is the cracks in our highways and the shifts in the foundations of our buildings. It has real impacts in the communities we call home. Our government recognizes the urgency of the climate change crisis. This is why we are supporting the creation of climate resilient communities through funding for energy retrofits and infrastructure that can withstand changing permafrost and extreme weather events.

Following extensive public engagement, we are finalizing a Climate Change, Energy and Green Economy Strategy for Yukon. This strategy is ambitious, and it is necessary. We have budgeted \$1 million to begin implementation of this 10-year strategy in addition to \$29.6 million for climate change, energy and green economy projects. Our government will spend more than \$120 million over four years, starting in 2019, for energy efficient retrofits for residential, commercial and institutional buildings throughout Yukon. This works out to an average of \$30 million annually and means our government has achieved a vital goal that we set for ourselves in 2016.

Our retrofit programs are delivering measurable benefits by relieving pressure on our energy-generation needs, reducing our collective greenhouse gas emissions and creating green jobs that stimulate Yukon's economy. Still, we need to do more. This budget includes funding for several specific projects that will help communities move towards this goal, including green energy retrofits for the Teslin Municipal Center, and energy upgrades for the City Hall in Whitehorse. We are also helping communities support active transportation, including more than \$2 million to improve the public transit service in Whitehorse as well as expand the city's compost facility.

Our government is changing the way we fund wildland fire management to make sure we can access the funds and resources we need to fight longer and more intense fire seasons, as we saw in 2019. We are investing more towards prevention. This year \$5 million in new funding is allocated for wildfire suppression in addition to funding for fuel management, fire mitigation projects and to extend the season for First Nation crew members.

We have also started developing wildland fire protection plans with Yukon communities. By being proactive, we can mitigate forest fire risk while creating jobs in communities in areas such as timber harvesting and supporting Yukon's growing biomass industry. The community of Teslin presents a great example of this. They are now heating 13 major buildings in the community through a district heating system with 10 biomass boilers fueled by locally harvested waste wood. This has also created employment opportunities for 18 people in the community. What a great example of a community-driven solution with positive impacts that reach beyond their community.

Our government is also prioritizing biomass as a heating option in government buildings. This year's budget includes \$3.7 million to expand the Whitehorse Correctional Centre's existing biomass heating system. This will be the largest biomass project yet in Whitehorse and another major step towards supporting Yukon's biomass industry.



