

Arlene Hache Candidate for MLA Yellowknife Centre

In reply to NWT Association of Communities – Questions for MLA Candidates Election 2019:

(Answers in number sequence to each question received)

1. A \$40 million shortfall still exists for community governments. What is your position on the funding formula for community governments and the significant shortfall not being addressed over the past five years?

I have a long-standing history of demanding that the GNWT move decision-making and resources into the community. The GNWT has an equally long-standing pattern of deliberately underfunding community governments and agencies, then demanding they live within their means. The GNWT fails to apply that principle to themselves, consistently spending above their means and increasing taxes or user fees to recoup the cost. My focus has been and will remain on resourcing the communities and as MLA for Yellowknife Centre, I commit to follow-up on revising the funding formula to address the shortfall.

2. What steps will you take to ensure that communities funding shortfall as identified by MACA is addressed and do you commit to prioritizing funding?

I would adopt the four Vote Growth recommendations proposed by the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce. They recommend that the GNWT:

- Develop an implementation plan to close the underfunding gap over the term of the 19th Legislative Assembly;
 - Increase the overall amount of funding provided to community governments, based on demonstrated need in the 2020 budget;
 - Modernize the community government funding formulas, based on recommendations from the 2014 funding review undertaken by MACA with support from the NWTAC; and,
 - Commit to indexing community funding.
3. Homelessness, mental health and addictions are serious issues in the North. Are you willing to work to ensure these issues get addressed and potential solutions put in place in a timely manner?

As MLA for Yellowknife Centre, addressing homelessness, mental health and addictions in the NWT will be my priority focus. With over 30 years of experience working in the field, I have the knowledge it requires to move forward on this issue in an effective way.

4. How do you think communities can prepare for the climate change crisis that is presently occurring in many communities and what is your position on the Territorial Government finding solutions and taking a leadership role with funding?

Solutions to address climate change exists, primarily because Indigenous and community-based organizations picked up the challenge when the GNWT dropped the ball. This is one scenario in which the GNWT should respect the work that is being done and play a support role through funding allocations.

5. What are your views on the issue of the early childhood education deficiency in the NWT and how it relates to post-secondary success of students and do you support an Auditor General Review of the education system?

Many studies have shown that adulthood health is heavily dependent on early childhood factors. High-quality education during early childhood could not only improve cognitive skills, but also improve access to social and economic resources in adulthood life, reduce health risk behavior, and alleviate mental stress. The lack of investment in the area of early childhood education is self-evident. I fully support an Auditor General Review of the education system.

6. The 2018 Federal Budget affirmed that its expectation is that a 25% portion of the revenues from cannabis excise taxes provided to the Territory and Provinces be transferred to municipalities and local communities. What is your view of the GNWT deciding that there will be no revenues passed on to the municipalities from the Territorial Government?

In keeping with my response to question #1, I am committed to moving resources to the communities so no, I would not support the decision by the GNWT not to pass on revenues from cannabis sales.