

NWTAC QUESTIONS FOR MLA CANDIDATES FOR 2019 ELECTIONS  
RESPONSES BY: LILA FRASER ERASMUS

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?

We continue to hear of the funding short fall with the way that NWT communities are funded by the GNWT and the infrastructure gap. The GNWT has made small efforts to close the gap, however, it will be important to continue to ensure that the issue remains a priority in the next assembly. I would require to stay informed and aware of the priorities of local leadership within communities of Łútsël K'é, Ndilq, Dettah, Deninu K'ue.

It will be important to encourage that MACA continue to work in partnership with the NWTAC on this strategy to reduce the infrastructure deficit. As well as work to be kept up to date on the new funding policy work related to O&M and waste and water management and the strategy development at MACA.

Ensuring that community governments have the adequate funding to deliver their core services and manage all their community public infrastructure efficiently would be of interest to me and the ongoing capacity building that is required to support communities.

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?

As I understand the NWTAC continues to work with the GNWT/ MACA on this funding shortfall and that I would support this partnership to continue and feel strongly that committing the funding is needed to ensure that residents receive adequate services and have well maintained facilities for health and safety, supporting quality of life in the communities.

I feel I will need to be better informed and engaged on some of the research and analysis related to the current formula and the strategy going forward, as I understand there are a number of variables and differences of opinion with respect to sizes of communities and funding needed to maintain and replace community public infrastructure.

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?

Yes, I will absolutely commit to working on these issues. This is an important issue for our communities and I believe that it will be important to engage with the communities, elders and leaders in order to come up with solutions that work for the people affected.

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?

NWT community governments are already experiencing impacts that can be linked to the changing climate conditions such as increased wildfires occurrences, ground movement from thawing permafrost and erosion along shorelines which are vulnerable to flooding. I am aware that the NWTAC has been involved with developing educational tools with Ecology North with linking climate change to municipal decision making and a strong advocate for hazard mapping through their community members.

The NWTAC is continuing to advocate and work with the GNWT to develop mapping tools to support community decision making with their land use planning and infrastructure development. I would continue to support the need for these tools in association with engaging community elders and leaders to create solutions for future planning.

As for the territorial government finding solutions and taking leadership role, climate change crisis is a challenging, complicated, but REAL issue, or opportunity depending on how you look at it

- Our communities are on the front lines, but working together in partnership can assist with accessing resources and the expertise that will be needed to identify and implement adaptation and mitigation measures to prepare and manage the associated anticipated risks.
- Communities will continue to become fully aware and to take the leadership role to be prepared for emergency situations and the associated impacts that changing climate will have on infrastructure in and around communities.

Communities are doing their part and investing their capital funding in constructing and enhancing infrastructure incorporating in the design's climate change anticipated impacts (proper foundations) and green energy technologies such as solar panels on garages, hamlet offices, recreation centers.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/lutsel-ke-power-business-1.3602415>

NWT communities are making efforts to adapt and mitigate, to be prepared and better understand what to expect from the changing climate, incorporating climate change impacts into decision making in all types of planning.

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?

This is a serious issue for our children and needs to be addressed as it is only the children who are suffering. Children deserve to have the same level of schooling no matter where they live, however, many young people in the communities are continually having to upgrade after graduation.

I am aware that ECE is working to mitigate this issue however, to be more effective it may want to engage with the Elders and communities identify solutions that are based upon cultural teachings. We cannot continually force Indigenous children into colonial regimes as it is obvious that is not working for them. Indigenous children learn differently, they are more visual and less text-based learners. Many scholars have spent their entire careers helping people understand these differences: we need to do more research in this area and work towards changing the way we teach.

Yes, I would support an auditor general review that is done in association with the Indigenous community.

5. 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?

I do feel that communities have been and are on the front lines with the impacts associated with cannabis and alcohol related issues. This is a potential revenue stream that could assist with managing the impacts of cannabis and we should be also considering alcohol taxes as well. It is likely still early in the implementation and understanding what the long-term impacts of the legalization of cannabis have on communities and another phase of the federal legalization is expected in the winter with cannabis Edibles being introduced.

I am interested in how people are being impacted: of utmost importance would be to involve the Indigenous and community governments to find solutions specific to their own community needs.