

NWT Private Sector Housing Solution --February 12, 2019

Mr Speaker, I rise today to speak of concerns raised by constituents and business community concerning the GNWT's market housing program. The framework is in effect shutting out local businesses and entrepreneurs from being able to enter and stay in the property rental and real estate business. It goes without question that the GNWT must have a strong housing policy which supports lower income residents and families, and yet there must be diversity in how this goal is achieved. Maintaining a government monopoly is clearly not effective nor does it ensure no one is left out to the elements.

The current structure prohibits businesses or private individuals from being able to get a fair return on their investment in the rental business or from being able to invest their time and energy into eventually flipping the property for market resale. What the NWT needs is a multifaceted approach, not more of a one size fits all approach.

To achieve this end it would be wise to ask the Housing Corp to work with local builders to allow for the framework of a housing economy to be established that is not influenced or controlled by the GNWT. This would be strengthened if the Housing Corp and other GNWT departments worked with the local builders to sign market lease agreements for up to 50% of the private housing inventory for GNWT employees. This would inevitably alleviate some of the pressure on the Housing Corp's demand on inventory as it would make it easier for the GNWT, local governments and the private sector to attract skilled labour and professionals into the communities through the availability of housing. The secondary and tertiary effects of which are boundless.

In short, it would allow people more freedom to pursue the lives they wish. This initiative would bring with it the added bonus of training and hiring local community members to build, maintain and refurbish these homes over the short and long term. Housing is in high demand in every community and the opportunity to have private enterprise build rental units and alleviate the demand for housing off the GNWT would be a "win win" for communities and the people who are in desperate need of housing.

Mr. Speaker, Regular members have often called for this government to do more to expand private sector opportunities, and today I am calling on the Minister to open this government's approach to addressing the NWT's housing needs with private sector solutions.

Thank you Mr. Speaker