

GNWT Traditional Knowledge Annual Report

*Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger
Tuesday, May 18, 2010
16th Legislative Assembly*

Mr. Speaker, later today, on behalf of the Interdepartmental Traditional Knowledge Working Group, I will be tabling the Traditional Knowledge Annual Report for 2009-2010.

The Report is a collaboration between the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment; Environment and Natural Resources; Municipal and Community Affairs; Public Works and Services; Justice; Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations; Transportation; Health and Social Services; Industry, Tourism and Investment; and Human Resources.

ENR, as the Department responsible for coordinating government-wide Traditional Knowledge initiatives, worked with the Interdepartmental Traditional Knowledge Working Group to compile each Department's Traditional Knowledge initiatives undertaken during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Traditional Knowledge is an essential component of program management within the Government of the Northwest Territories, and we are committed to incorporating TK into the appropriate programs and services.

The GNWT recognizes the need to consider both Traditional Knowledge and scientific knowledge in the decision-making process and that the inclusion of TK is vital to the development of sound management plans and programs.

The integration of Traditional Knowledge into government decisions and actions is outlined in our Traditional Knowledge Policy.

The Traditional Knowledge Policy was first established in 1997 to protect and promote Traditional Knowledge, and ensure it played a significant role in government programs and services. The Policy defines Traditional Knowledge as knowledge and values, which have been acquired through experience, observations from the land or from spiritual teachings, and handed down from one generation to another.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud to recognize the extent to which government Departments have strived to include Traditional Knowledge in various programs and services. Education, Culture and Employment demonstrates its commitment to Traditional Knowledge by fully supporting culture and language-based education in early childhood education and in the school system. Traditional Knowledge plays an integral role in Municipal and Community Affairs' involvement in sport, recreation and community government.

Public Works and Services incorporated Traditional Knowledge when developing and updating the 2009 edition of Good Building Practice for Northern Facilities. Wilderness camp programming through the Department of Justice helps renew an offender's connection with the land and their cultural values, through various traditional activities.

Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations protects, promotes and uses Traditional Knowledge through land claim and self-government negotiations and government to government relations. Local people and elders provide the Department of Transportation with their Traditional Knowledge of freeze/thaw cycles and permafrost locations which proves invaluable when conducting road maintenance and repairs.

An Aboriginal Wellness Program and language interpretation services are just a few of the Traditional Knowledge initiatives offered by the Department of Health and Social Services. Industry, Tourism and Investment uses elder's Traditional Knowledge in the creation of interpretive signs and displays in NWT parks.

Human Resources developed a framework for a government-wide Cross Cultural Training Program to increase Aboriginal cultural awareness and diversity in the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the programs and services provided by this Government.

Those Departments not having direct responsibility for TK Implementation supported the Working Group by providing advice and expertise while tracking the implementation of TK Policy across the government.

The GNWT is dedicated to working with all northerners to build a strong and independent north, taking advantage of the unique experience and knowledge all partners bring to the table.

The Traditional Knowledge Annual Report will update Members on our Government's progress in formally implementing Traditional Knowledge into our programs and services. TK will remain an integral part of Government-wide operations.

Mahsi Cho.