

# Leadership for a Better Yukon



Platform 2011

 **Liz Hanson**  
Yukon NDP

## **Contact Us!**

### **Mail**

PO Box 31516  
Whitehorse, YT  
Y1A 6K8

### **Come Visit!**

4040 4th Avenue  
Whitehorse

### **Phone**

*In Whitehorse:* 668-2203  
*Toll-free:* 1.855.VOTE.NDP  
(1.855.868.3637)

### **Electronically**

[www.YukonNDP.ca](http://www.YukonNDP.ca)



## Personal Message from Liz Hanson

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*September 2011*

*Dear friend,*

*The commitments we are making to Yukoners in this election reflect a new approach to government.*

*For too long we've lived with a government that doesn't listen and doesn't care about the needs of average Yukoners. It's a government that has pursued confrontation over cooperation, creating winners and losers instead of finding positive solutions to the challenges we face. It's a government that has promised but failed to take action on issues that matter.*

*The Yukon New Democrats are ready to do politics differently. We will take a principled and practical approach to government that brings people together instead of driving them apart. We will be motivated by our values of compassion, justice and equality and will work to build a better, stronger territory where no one is left behind. We will lead, but we will also listen. We will encourage respectful debate and dialogue and invite Yukoners to take part in their government again.*

*I am privileged to lead a political party that knows where it stands and that has a proud history of getting results in government. Our commitments are based on our progressive values and the voices and values of Yukoners from all of our communities.*

*You can count on the Yukon New Democrats to take leadership to support healthy people and healthy communities, care for our environment, support jobs and small business for an economy that works for all Yukoners, and practice good government where people matter.*

*I invite you to join me in bringing real leadership and positive change to the Yukon government. Together, we can build the kind of territory we want—for ourselves, and for future generations.*

*In the words of a late hero of mine, don't let them tell you it can't be done.*

*Sincerely,*

*Liz Hanson  
Leader, Yukon New Democrats*



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# Healthy Communities, Healthy People

## Housing for Everyone

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### Affordable and Available

Today, too many Yukoners are grappling with major housing problems – from having difficulty paying the rent or making the next mortgage payment or being homeless. Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats pledge to work with municipalities and First Nations, housing developers and financial institutions to find housing solutions for all Yukoners.

The lack of available, affordable housing is one of the most serious failures of the Yukon Party government. During their two terms in office, vacancy rates have remained low and the supply of land for any type of residential development continues to be in short supply. As a result housing prices have doubled and rental rates have skyrocketed. And this is not just a Whitehorse problem; it is a Yukon-wide problem.

This is hurting our economy as employers can't recruit and retain the staff necessary to run their businesses. Young people and families are leaving the territory to work in places where housing is available and affordable.

The current government has studied the housing issue endlessly but has failed to act on most of the excellent recommendations from various organizations and studies. We can do better. New Democrats promise no more studies, just action. The remaining \$16 million dollars, provided by the federal government specifically for housing, but banked to improve the Yukon Party government's balance sheet, will be put to immediate use.

Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will increase the housing options by implementing recommendations in the *A Home for Everyone* report and adapting them to apply to the whole Yukon.

*We will:*

- ✓ direct Yukon Housing (YHC) to enhance Home Ownership programs with low down payments and low interest loans, particularly for Yukoners who can't get bank financing. Interest rates should be at the government's own borrowing rate,
- ✓ direct YHC to increase the size of its mortgage portfolio in order to increase the numbers of people who may be eligible for its programs. The mortgage portfolio must be retained by YHC and not privatized,

- ✓ develop measures to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for both market rental and social housing. Such measures to include short-term incentives for developers to reduce land and development costs for a commitment to multi-units at below median rent,
- ✓ increase the supply of building lots by releasing more land for housing and encouraging the development of privately owned land and derelict lots,
- ✓ work with First Nations to develop options for housing on First Nations' settlement lands.

Working within the *Home for Everyone* report framework with partners in the non-profit, private sector, and other governments, we will

- ✓ create and increase the number of emergency, transitional, second stage and supported housing spaces for persons at risk including:
  - funding the operation of a permanent youth shelter,
  - creating new, safe emergency and second stage shelter spaces for women and families,
  - funding a building in downtown Whitehorse area to provide homes for the hard to house,
  - using the existing approved home model for persons with disabilities,
  - expanding supported housing to persons with mental illness and other vulnerable populations.

## **Housing Standards**

*Liz Hanson's New Democrats will:*

- ✓ re-establish the Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) as a pro-active agency and direct the YHC to expand social housing to address the long waiting list of eligible tenants including seniors and single-parent families,
- ✓ developing a more aggressive retrofitting program for YHC social housing holdings with annual and long term building construction, and acquisition targets,
- ✓ increase the rent subsidy program to support clients in private-sector rental units,
- ✓ develop a system of licensing and accrediting home inspectors,
- ✓ develop a Homeowners Protection Act that will enable new home purchasers to address building deficiencies and have a home warranty program,
- ✓ enhance programs for retrofitting older homes in the Yukon.

## **Landlord Tenant Act**

The report of the Select Committee of the legislature said the act should be revised to “incorporate best practices in residential tenancy legislation from across Canada.”

*A New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ enact a new Residential Tenancy Act in its first year following the recommendations of the Select Committee of the legislature to provide a legal framework for rental homes distinct from the rules for commercial or agricultural properties. The new act will clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants and will require basic health and safety standards be met in all rental units.
- ✓ ensure more education to help tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and institute a dispute resolution process which is easily accessible and avoids the use of courts to resolve conflicts.

## **Staff Housing**

Staff housing for government service providers is in short supply and/or of poor quality in too many of Yukon’s communities. A Liz Hanson New Democratic government will:

- ✓ direct Yukon Housing to meet with First Nations and communities, unions and managers to develop a strategic plan to address this issue.

## **Education & Training**

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Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats are committed to having an education system that is creative and flexible and that provides the relevant tools for Yukoners to succeed in their working lives and in their communities.

We will be guided by the *Education Act* which was passed by a New Democrat government:

*The goal of the Yukon education system should be to develop the whole person including the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural and artistic potential of all students to the extent of their abilities so that they may become productive, responsible, and self-reliant members of society while leading personally rewarding lives in a changing world.*

Yukoners can expect a government that will work to close the gap in educational outcomes, eliminate barriers to education, and support innovative programs that prepare the citizens of the future to build a prosperous, compassionate Yukon.

The Yukon Party has failed to provide Yukoners and their families with the kind of public education system they want and need. The Auditor General reported that the high school

graduation rate is lower in the Yukon than in most of Canada. She also noted that the Department of Education was unable to demonstrate that the public school system is adequately preparing students for the shift from high school to post-secondary education or training in trades.

*Liz Hanson's Yukon New Democrats have a positive alternative. We will:*

- ✓ improve classroom education and outcomes by implementing the recommendations of the Auditor General to:
  - set specific targets for graduation rates and grade achievement levels for all students and closing the gap for First Nations students,
  - prepare students for the shift from high school to post-secondary education or training in trades,
  - implement a long-term facilities management plan that takes into account the condition and capacity of each school.
- ✓ restore the partnerships in education which featured respectful relationships with educators and the Yukon Teacher's Association (YTA), parents and students, First Nations, Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY) and school councils, and Yukon College,
- ✓ support circumpolar and University of the North initiatives,
- ✓ expand and improve Early Childhood Education programs which will improve school readiness, student experience and outcomes,
- ✓ increase and support community-based literacy and numeracy initiatives,
- ✓ develop new flexible training programs targeting those already employed so that they can upgrade their skills, improve wages and be more productive.

## **Public Schools**

*A Liz Hanson New Democratic government will:*

- ✓ work with educators, parents and school councils to provide the necessary resources and training to address the diverse makeup of all our classrooms – the class composition issues - in all schools, urban and rural,
- ✓ build upon various school-based initiatives such as the anti-bullying campaign, develop and implement a diversity policy in public and post secondary learning centres to promote understanding, reduce discrimination, combat violence and provide safe schools where all students feel safe and welcome,
- ✓ make special programs such as Music, Arts and Drama (MAD) at Wood Street, Outdoor Pursuits & Experiential Science (OPES), Plein Air et Sciences Expérientielles (PASE), Achievement Challenge Environment Service (ACES), Experiential Sciences (ES), and SASE more accessible and more broadly available, particularly to students from communities outside of Whitehorse,

- ✓ end the delays in building much needed school improvements such as those experienced at F.H. Collins High School in Whitehorse,
- ✓ improve staff relations between the department and the educators in the schools in order to support teachers and educational assistants at the classroom level,
- ✓ address staff housing issues in communities.

## **Post Secondary Education and Training**

- ✓ freeze tuition fees at Yukon College and review government funding levels,
- ✓ encourage and foster more post secondary education and training opportunities for Yukon people, both locally and elsewhere,
- ✓ strengthen and enhance Yukon College community campus training and learning opportunities by fostering better working relations with First Nations , employers, non-government organizations and other community interests,
- ✓ develop, as recommended by the Auditor General, a Community Training Fund Strategy to help address Yukoners' training needs. The strategy would bring together all the various initiatives and would support projects in trades and technology, literacy, basic job skills development, and heritage,
- ✓ develop new, flexible training programs targeting those already employed so they can upgrade their skills, improve wages and be more productive,
- ✓ support the School of Mining to train more Yukoners for good-paying jobs in mining and related industries by working with Yukon College, industry, unions, First Nations and non-government organizations,
- ✓ train more Yukoners, in the short and medium term, for entry level employment opportunities in expanding job sectors such as camp operations and environmental remediation.

## **Community Safety & Restorative Justice**

Liz Hanson's Yukon New Democrats will bring a positive approach to community safety and restorative justice. We will make sure victims of crime are heard. Public safety and security are paramount and only a long-term approach to restorative justice will bring about measureable results – a reduction in crime and victim impacts.

New Democrats believe that everyone must play a part in the solution if the root causes of crime are to be addressed. We stand behind our belief of personal responsibility and accountability.

## **Community Policing**

Community policing and greater visibility are two important elements to strengthen relationships at the community level between police and the communities and people they serve.

The policing contract should ensure that the RCMP meets the expectations of Yukon people and communities. There needs to be increased accountability and performance measures with outcomes built into the contract for services. And this needs to be matched with strong roles for the new police council and public complaints body.

*New Democrats will:*

- ✓ improve funding for non-government organizations working in the justice and restorative justice fields to improve social responses to victims of crime,
- ✓ develop an implementation strategy, in consultation with First Nations and women's groups, to respond to the recommendations contained in the report *Sharing Common Ground: Review of Yukon's Police Force (2011)*,
- ✓ ensure representation on the police council, and on boards and commissions that deal with justice issues, is balanced and includes one permanent representative nominated by Yukon women's organization and one nominated by aboriginal women's organizations.

## **Civil Forfeiture**

*We will:*

- ✓ honour the public commitment not to bring back the Yukon Party conservative's Civil Forfeiture Legislation in any form.

## **Dispute Resolution**

*As part of the commitment to restorative justice, we will:*

- ✓ increase opportunities to resolve civic and intergovernmental disputes outside the complex, costly court system, increase use of mediation and other non-adversarial, non-court processes.

# Healthy People

Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats believe we must create a Yukon where no one is left behind, where everyone--working men and women, seniors/elders, children and youth--participates in and receives the benefits of our prosperity.

Yukoners can expect practical investments focused on healthy people and healthy communities. The Yukon Party has done a poor job of addressing some of the basic needs of Yukon's people and communities.

## Health Care that Works for all Yukoners

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Our public health care system is one of our most cherished institutions. You can count on Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats to be competent managers of our health care system.

To make the system work for patients, clients, workers and the health care professionals. Yukoners can expect more emphasis on wellness and prevention, on client-centred approaches like collaborative care and action on the recommendations in the expensive reports and studies. Any public building project will be built based on the evidence and needs, not on political calculation.

*A Liz Hanson New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ ensure there are sufficient family doctors and other health care professionals to meet needs,
- ✓ increase the role of nurse practitioners and community based clinics,
- ✓ reduce barriers facing capable and competent professionals from other countries who want to work here,
- ✓ maximize the scope of practice to make best use of the skills of each profession,
- ✓ ensure good quality and adequate staff-housing is available to health professionals in the communities.

A New Democrat government will complete the assessment of the practice of using private agencies to meet health care personnel needs. We will work towards permanent placements for health care practitioners.

A New Democrat government will not re-introduce health care premiums.

## **Collaborative Health Care – A Team Based Approach**

New Democrats believe the Yukon’s health care delivery model should be founded on collaborative health care teams. This model needs a greater integration of health care services and team-based delivery to increase service and cost-effectiveness.

This model must include nurse practitioners, nurses and doctors, physiotherapists, midwives and other health care providers required to provide care for patients. Skills are matched to the need.

Health care should also be patient and client-centered so that they are involved in discussion and decisions about their care.

### ***Health Care at Home***

Most seniors and elders want to stay in their home as long as they can. Other Yukoners are confined to their homes or an institution because of a disability, serious illness or injury.

*A Yukon New Democrat Government will:*

- ✓ work with citizens, First Nations, and NGO communities to develop the most supportive system to meet the diverse needs of people in all communities,
- ✓ continue to invest in quality home care. More integration with the health care system—especially hospitals and community health clinics –will be a priority. Home and palliative care services in communities will be enhanced to meet growing needs,
- ✓ acknowledge and support the care given by family and volunteers by providing the necessary respite support so that families and friends can continue to care for seniors and elders at home.

## **Health System Management**

The Auditor General recently reviewed the Yukon Department of Health and Social Services. In her published report, Ms. Sheila Fraser outlined the shortcomings of the management and administration of the Department of Health and Social Services and found the department had no idea if it’s providing the right programs to improve the health of Yukoners:

- it lacked clear plans and priorities;
- it routinely went over budget, in violation of the law;
- it failed to adequately collect, compile and analyze basic health data;
- it had no health human resources plan.

The department subsequently committed to address all of these most serious shortcomings; a New Democrat government can be relied upon to make sure it happens.

## **Accountability**

As required by legislation, New Democrats commit to submitting to the Legislature:

- ✓ a comprehensive report on the health status, at least once every three years. The report will include an assessment of social conditions of residents of the Yukon as prepared by the medical officer of health.
- ✓ a report, at least once each year, which updates the last comprehensive report.

## **New technology**

*New Democrats support:*

- ✓ the continued use and expansion of technology to provide better patient and client services,
- ✓ community-based delivery of quality services for prevention, diagnosis, treatment planning and aftercare.

We recognize that the introduction of technology involves major concerns about privacy and confidentiality that need to be addressed.

## **Pharmacare**

*New Democrats will:*

- ✓ reduce the cost of prescription drugs by cooperating with other jurisdictions on bulk buying of pharmaceuticals,
- ✓ introduce, as resources permit, electronic monitoring of selected prescription drugs as part of measures to prevent and control abuse of these substances,
- ✓ overhaul the 40 year old pharmacy legislation and act on recommendations of the recent review.

## **Hospitals**

The Yukon Party government has burdened Yukon taxpayers with poorly conceived and poorly planned hospitals in Dawson City and Watson Lake. These hospitals will not meet the health needs of people in these communities or region. Yukon New Democrats will turn these projects around.

*A Liz Hanson Yukon New Democrat Government will:*

- ✓ complete the basic construction of these buildings,
- ✓ conduct a thorough review of the planned service delivery model,
- ✓ consult with people in the communities and surrounding regions as well as the health care professionals about the best use of health care dollars to meet their health care needs,
- ✓ ensure that a revised design is flexible enough to meet future health care needs.

Whitehorse General Hospital staff provides excellent care to patients from Whitehorse, and all Yukon rural communities. New Democrats will support initiatives to improve diagnostic equipment and to address staff concerns raised during recent accreditation review processes.

### **Emergency Medical Services**

Liz Hanson New Democrats will engage in discussions with all volunteer, full time and air medevac Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responders throughout the territory about lasting, long-term improvements that will:

- ✓ ensure that essential services are provided “round-the-clock” in all Yukon communities,
- ✓ promote and respect the contributions of all responders as part of a team who can make valuable contributions to managing their work environment by involving them in planning about staffing arrangements, health and safety, training and supplies and equipment,
- ✓ consider creating an Ambulance Act and regulations to commit in law to a comprehensive service with a common base of skills and techniques including Yukon standards for training, certification and recertification,
- ✓ develop a territorial tax credit for EMS volunteer responders similar to a federal one for firefighters.

### **Mental Health**

New Democrats are committed to including mental health as part of the collaborative health care model. We will support an approach that assists people with mental health problems and illnesses to recover so that they have satisfying and hopeful lives.

*We will:*

- ✓ take a strengths-based approach to service delivery emphasizing personal responsibility and providing choice,
- ✓ address the fragmented way different departments and agencies seem to deal with this issue,
- ✓ improve access to clinical mental health and psychiatrist services by:
  - reducing wait times,
  - providing more services for children and youth as a priority,
  - expanding community-based support services such as street workers, day programs, rural outreach, and social workers,
  - ensuring services are provided in communities outside of Whitehorse.
- ✓ adopt a “housing first” approach to helping people with mental health problems,
- ✓ add housing support and assistance to the services for Mental Health clients.

- ✓ promote better public awareness of mental health issues to promote prevention and acceptance as part of all of our efforts toward a healthy, inclusive and compassionate society.

## **Addictions are a Health Issue not a Justice Issue**

New Democrats will ensure that intoxication and/or any addiction is dealt with as a health and social issue and not a justice issue.

*We will:*

- ✓ use evidence-based analysis to determine the appropriate service necessary, including prevention, harm reduction, medical detoxification services, counselling, residential treatment, and aftercare,
- ✓ expand residential drug and alcohol treatment services to include more frequent and diverse approaches, including land-based treatment and more frequent offerings.

Guided by the belief that all persons are to be treated with compassion and dignity in a non-judgmental manner, and by the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons Final Report (The Beaton/Allen Report), Liz Hanson and the New Democrats will:

- ✓ adopt a harm reduction approach,
- ✓ create a 24-hour accessible shelter near a sobering centre/detox facility,
- ✓ create a sobering centre in downtown Whitehorse where acutely intoxicated persons at risk are taken when they are detained,
- ✓ close the detox facility at Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

## **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**

The issue of FASD involves both prevention and support. Different needs need different approaches. Individuals with FASD need support teams. There is also a gap between youth and adult services that support teams could address.

*Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ increase supports for pregnant women and their families to reduce the incidence of FASD.
- ✓ develop supportive and assisted housing options for individuals with FASD.

- ✓ work with the federal, provincial and territorial governments to support the Canadian Bar Association resolution calling for policies to assist and enhance the lives of people born with FASD by:
  - allocating additional resources for alternatives to the current practice of criminalizing individuals with FASD,
  - supporting the amendment of federal criminal sentencing laws to accommodate the disability of those with FASD.

## **Residential Schools**

- ✓ New Democrats will work with First Nation governments and Canada on a cooperative strategy to provide healing services for Residential School survivors.

# **Accessible Public Services for all Yukoners**

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All Yukoners should have access to basic services adequate for their needs and not based on their income.

## **Child Care**

We support the delivery of child care services for Yukon families through both not-for-profit and small private operators with a range of programs.

*Liz Hanson and a Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ ensure programming meets the needs of all Yukon parents who require affordable child care services,
- ✓ ensure adequate financing so child care workers earn a living wage,
- ✓ review the child care subsidy system to ensure it's meeting needs,
- ✓ support flexible training options and provide incentives so that workers can upgrade their skills,
- ✓ promote rigorous health, safety and program standards and ensure all staff have criminal record checks,
- ✓ work with the child care sector to identify better facilities to house child care centres.

## **Seniors/Elders**

We're all living longer and our population of seniors and elders is increasing. Seniors and elders are playing a critical role in the fabric of our society, working as volunteers, caring for children, grandchildren, adults and friends in all our communities.

More seniors are choosing to stay in the Yukon at the end of their working lives. First Nations Elders have always chosen to remain closer to their community and families. Government services are provided to elders and seniors across a number of departments in government. From health care, to housing, taxes and recreation, it's sometimes difficult to know who's responsible for what.

Liz Hanson's New Democrats would like to re-engage seniors and elders in developing our communities. We want to tap into their experience and expertise.

A Liz Hanson New Democrat government will:

- ✓ begin discussions soon after an election with seniors and their representatives, First Nations and Care Givers to:
  - determine short, medium and long term priorities,
  - provide advice about program delivery including identifying gaps and needed improvements.
- ✓ support a continuum of services to support changing needs as we age or suffer illness. They range from community-based home care to assisted living to long term care.
- ✓ promote a variety of options to ensure choice for individuals at each level of need.

## **Kinship Care**

Recognizing that kinship care is increasing, we will:

- ✓ support grandparents and extended family who are caring for children with a respite care system,
- ✓ look at ways to provide financial assistance to extended family members who are caring for children and to support those family members and volunteers caring for elders in their homes or seniors' residences.

## **Sports and Recreation**

The Yukon is blessed with great year-round outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities and opportunities. It's part of the reason why we live here and choose to raise our families in the territory. And thanks to all the great volunteers, we have so many amazing options of things to get involved in.

We want to ensure that all Yukoners have equal opportunity to get involved in health sport and recreation activities.

*Liz Hanson's New Democrats will:*

- ✓ develop a 10 year strategy involving organizations and users, outlining priorities for protection and possible expansion of current outdoor sports and recreation venues,
- ✓ develop a list of facility requirements, particularly in rural Yukon, that need to be established, expanded or refurbished,
- ✓ expand the Kids Recreation Fund to use both private and public funds to support recreation and healthy living activities for children and their families.

## Social Assistance and Poverty

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Poverty is consistently linked to poor health, lower literacy, poor school performance for children, more crime, greater public health care costs, increased policing costs, lost productivity, and foregone economic activity.

Poverty reduction is much less costly than allowing poverty to continue and paying for the consequences. Research has been done on the cost of poverty in the Yukon.

*A New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ expand involvement and engage the public through a more open and transparent process including public release of the research like the “What We Heard” and “Cost of Poverty” reports that were completed months ago,
- ✓ provide individuals and families in need with social assistance at rates that reflect real costs in all areas, not just food rates, and specifically ensure the housing allocation allows clients to live in safe modest accommodation.
- ✓ support programs for food security like the Food Bank and local growers contributing to the Food Bank.

## Volunteers

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Volunteers are part of the glue that holds our communities together. Without them many of the activities that make our communities amongst the best places to live in Canada, wouldn't happen. Volunteers take care of others with injuries, disabilities, illnesses or other health issues. Volunteers are fundamental to the success of our great sport, cultural and recreation events and activities. Volunteers provide valuable community input into government policy and program development.

*A Liz Hanson New Democrat Government will:*

- ✓ support training to help make volunteer organizations as effective as possible,
- ✓ assist organizations needing police record checks in a timely way,
- ✓ recognize the value of volunteer experience and promote flexible job and working arrangements to facilitate volunteerism.

# Caring for our Environment

## Yukon Wilderness – Our Legacy

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Yukoners know that our wilderness is unique in the world. We know that abundant wildlife, vast wild lands, and clean, fish-rich waters have supported us for millennia. They are an important part of our identity and our deep attachment to the Yukon's vast sprawling landscape from the Southern Lakes to the North Slope are an important part of our history. We also know that what we enjoy today should also be a vital part of our legacy for future generations.

Today, Yukoners throughout the territory are calling for greater respect for the values of conservation and protection, and for actions that are based on the sound and responsible management of the Yukon environment.

Yukoners support and seek sustainable development – development that knows and respects environmental limits and that will benefit all Yukoners today and in the years to come. Yukon New Democrats understand that. This is why a Yukon New Democrat government passed the Yukon *Environment Act* twenty years ago.

For the last nine years, the Yukon Party has managed the Yukon's economy at the expense of the Yukon's environment. The management approach has been simple: remove any and all obstacles to development where possible, including sound environmental controls, and ignore the voices of ordinary Yukoners, First Nations, and advisory boards calling for greater environmental responsibility and caution.

It's time for real change and positive leadership on the environment. We can do better.

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ act to build a sustainable economy of controlled development based on:
  - improved environmental stewardship,
  - more effective and efficient land use and conservation planning,
  - respect of the assessment process, and
  - a stronger regulatory and enforcement regime.

In short, we will implement a management approach for the Yukon's environment that belongs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Peel Watershed Plan – Implementing the Plan**

The Peel watershed, including the Wind, Snake and Bonnet Plume rivers and the lands they flow through, are among the world's great wilderness landscapes. Establishment of a special management regime for this area is long overdue.

The NDP supports and respects the land use processes that were negotiated in the UFA. We believe the Peel Watershed Planning Commission has found the right balance between preservation and development.

*New Democrats will:*

- ✓ Accept and act on the recommendations of the Final Report of the Peel Watershed Land Use Planning Commission to set aside 80 per cent of the watershed as "Conservation Areas". (A portion of the protected area is categorized as "Wilderness Area" – a region with interim protection - which can be reviewed periodically.)

## **Land Use Planning and Management – Making It Happen!**

Land use plans help avoid or resolve land use conflicts, manage uncontrolled development and bring certainty that land is used for the best purpose. This could be – certain types of development or conservation.

Special management areas, like Kusawa Park, the Lewes-Marsh Special Management Area and the Pickhandle Lakes Habitat Protection Area, establish unique management regimes for important wilderness areas and heritage sites. Both land use plans and special management areas are guaranteed instruments in First Nations land claims agreement for managing development and the environment throughout the Yukon.

After three terms in government, the Yukon Party has achieved little and alienated many. Land use planning and the establishment of special management areas, agreed to long ago in land claim agreements, are stalled due to a complete absence of political will. Worse, the Yukon Party has rolled back the clock to a pre-land claims colonial past. The result has been enormous public frustration and uncertainty, extensive land use conflicts and debate and a view by many First Nations that Final Agreement commitments have been broken.

*Liz Hanson and Yukon New Democrats can do better. In consultation with First Nations and affected communities we will:*

- ✓ make land use planning a government-wide priority by:
  - expediting the process at the municipal, local and regional levels with full public involvement in decision-making,
  - fully and effectively implementing the planning provisions of First Nations land claims agreements.

- ✓ commit to a timetable for the completion of regional land-use plans, in accordance with Chapter 11 of First Nations Final Agreements, identify approaches for land use planning where land claims are not yet settled,
- ✓ commit to a timetable for the completion of Special Management Areas, based on principles of co-management, in accordance with Chapter 10 of First Nations Final Agreements,
- ✓ provide additional resources for citizens, communities, First Nations and small business to participate in environmental assessment and land use planning processes including YESAB and the Water Board,
- ✓ develop the legislation and regulations needed to restrict the growth of trail networks in sensitive areas, close trails or overused areas as necessary and exclude off-road vehicles from specific types of lands or habitats,
- ✓ work with the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the Ta'an Kwach'an Council and Yukon College to assist them, where appropriate, in protecting the McIntyre Creek corridor in Whitehorse for its unique environmental, recreational and educational qualities,
- ✓ establish an immediate moratorium on mineral staking within municipal boundaries and other residential areas to reduce the potential for land-use conflicts,
- ✓ develop a comprehensive water strategy for the Yukon to protect the quality of ground and surface waters to ensure the careful stewardship of Yukon's water resources.

## **Wildlife Management – Making It Right!**

Yukon wildlife is one of our most treasured resources. Our management of wildlife is the topic of local kitchen-table conversations and the subject of scrutiny by international organizations around the globe.

The Yukon land claims agreements radically altered our approach to wildlife management in the Yukon. They established a partnership between the Yukon government and First Nation governments. They guaranteed a strong voice for local people and an important role in decision-making for local communities through Renewable Resource Councils.

For the last nine years, the Yukon Party has paid only lip-service to this partnership and the advice that it provides. The acquisition of scientific and traditional knowledge, so vital to good wildlife management and controlled development, has been underfunded and heavily ignored.

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will change that. We will:*

- ✓ improve public involvement in wildlife management decisions through direct public participation and a greatly improved partnership with Yukon First Nations and with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and Renewable Resource Councils,
- ✓ make better use of First Nation governments and boards and councils in decision-making and fully recognize their role and responsibilities as established in the Final Agreements,
- ✓ update the *Yukon Wildlife Act* to give effect to the land claims agreements and best practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,
- ✓ introduce, within the first term of a New Democratic government—and in consultation with First Nation governments, boards and councils, and the general public—a *Species at Risk Act*,
- ✓ restore balanced decision-making within the Yukon government on resource development by requiring the informed advice of Yukon’s Department of Environment in resource management decisions,
- ✓ encourage and support good scientific research and the use of traditional knowledge in resource management decision-making.

## **Monitoring & Enforcement – Making it Effective!**

Controlled development helps ensure responsible development that respects environmental limits and protects environmental conditions.

For nine years, the Yukon Party has paid only lip-service to environmental monitoring and enforcement of controls on development. Under-resourced government monitoring of land and water use and inadequate enforcement of permit conditions has created the potential for long-term adverse environmental impacts.

Liz Hanson and Yukon New Democrats are committed to environmental monitoring and enforcement that meet 21<sup>st</sup> century standards and practices. We will:

- ✓ establish effective and efficient environmental monitoring and enforcement standards and practices that anticipate and keep pace with development so that Yukon people can be confident that regulations are followed and that significant environmental problems are avoided or effectively managed,
- ✓ work co-operatively with industry to enhance government’s capacity to monitor and inspect industrial, commercial or recreational uses of land and water, to better ensure compliance with the regulatory regime and to implement best practices.

## **Recycling & Waste Management – Making it Better!**

Yukon communities and municipalities have made great strides in the management of waste and recycling through local and private sector initiatives and the efforts of volunteer and non-profit organizations.

Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats are committed to supporting and enhancing these efforts and will:

- ✓ work with municipalities, First Nations, NGOs and the private sector to achieve maximum recycling and composting through enhanced solid waste management programs and systems,
- ✓ focus on commercial, hazardous waste and new housing waste diversion programs.

## **Land Management**

A Liz Hanson New Democrat Government will ensure the best use of land for development, recreation or protection:

- ✓ find ways to discourage “fast buck” rezoning of land intended for one purpose and then is changed to another use,
- ✓ encourage cooperative and community-based uses of land to meet community needs,
- ✓ recognize the value of subsistence based economic activity.

## **Climate Change - Demonstrate Leadership**

The Yukon is a global hot spot. We are experiencing the effects of climate change such as: extreme and unpredictable weather, fast-melting permafrost, altered wildlife habitat and behaviour.

The Yukon must become a leader in the research and development of approaches and tools to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the effects of climate change on our roads and other infrastructure, buildings and landscape.

## **Government as role model**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats are committed to strong and active leadership on climate change. We will:*

- ✓ introduce new programs and approaches for the Yukon government to become a role model and leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on government vehicles and building standards for new government buildings,
- ✓ adopt an emissions target for the Yukon with pragmatic and publicly supported incentives to achieve realistic goals,
- ✓ require that all new Yukon government buildings are designed to new energy and environmental design standards in order to improve energy savings, water efficiency, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction, and indoor environmental quality.

## **Government as innovator**

*We will:*

- ✓ expand local research efforts on climate change that would improve mitigation and adaptation efforts,
- ✓ support and champion new efforts of cooperation with national, provincial, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments through innovative programming.

## **Government as supporter**

*We will:*

- ✓ enhance the Yukon Climate Change Action Plan by developing new measures to adapt to, and mitigate our contribution to, climate change, including improved road and building standards, reducing government emissions and promoting public transit,
- ✓ introduce fiscal instruments that enable individuals, corporations and governments to receive tax credits for investing in Yukon projects that are carbon neutral or that reduce carbon emissions,
- ✓ review and introduce measures to support public transport in the public and private sectors, across the territory,
- ✓ continue support for the Cold Climate Innovation Centre at Yukon College.

# An Economy that Works for all Yukoners

## Supporting Jobs & Small Business

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Due to high commodity prices, the Yukon economy is experiencing rapid growth in all industrial sectors. The challenge for any government with an eye on the future is to take advantage of the current growth and plan for the future. Our current growth is spurred on by increased activity in the mining sector; we must prepare for the inevitable downturn in world metal prices.

We should be taking this opportunity to diversify our small economy. The risk with being too dependent on one industry such as mining is all too well known to the Yukon. The inevitable bust is destructive and harmful to people in every community.

We need to ensure that more people actually benefit from our current economic upturn. Unfortunately, too many people are being left behind. They are on the sidelines looking for affordable housing or have jobs that pay little more than a minimum wage. What we need is the positive alternative offered by Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats.

*We will:*

- ✓ implement an aggressive economic strategy, linked to a strong community and social strategy, that strengthens our local economies, creates opportunities for Yukon-based businesses during the current boom and seeks out opportunities for diversification,
- ✓ recognize First Nations and their development corporations as an integral part of Yukon economy,
- ✓ develop collaborative partnerships on strategic economic initiatives and on social and economic issues such as housing.

### **Diversification – Making it happen**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ invest in programs to increase economic diversification in sustainable fields – environmental services, the knowledge-based industries, cultural industries, renewable resource industries, tourism, agriculture, small manufacturing, non-government organizations and education,
- ✓ provide new leadership in programs to and services to develop small businesses, helping them get access to risk capital and support services while cutting red tape,

- ✓ rejuvenate business development and resource access programs to assist in diversification in all of the Yukon's natural resource sectors,
- ✓ continue to invest in transportation infrastructure to
  - support existing and future economic activities and diversification initiatives and
  - get our products to market.

## **Internet Connectivity – Making it better**

Yukoners want and need to be connected to the world; the world is our market and only Liz Hanson's New Democrats will guarantee a strong connection for Yukon people to the outside world.

*We will:*

- ✓ invest in internet and cell phone infrastructure, in cooperation with private and public sector providers, to eliminate service delivery and bandwidth problems,
- ✓ ensure there is affordable, reliable and up-to date technology for all communities,
- ✓ encourage the development of distance government services and education,
- ✓ examine ways to use the technology to improve services and lower costs.

# **Supporting our Economic Sectors**

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## **Small Business – Helping them grow**

Small businesses are the heart of our economy. They supply the necessary goods and services for our daily lives. They provide services to industry and government. They are integral to the tourism, retail and arts and culture sectors. They are important to a strong and vital economy.

Most small businesses just want government to get out of the way and make their lives easier with less bureaucracy. Some want a helping hand to get started and sometimes some assistance with the inevitable ups and downs of our economy. New Democrats are prepared to assist where needed and asked.

New Democrats will strengthen support of small businesses and micro-economic initiatives by:

- ✓ helping Chambers of Commerce and small enterprises with:
  - developing business and marketing plans
  - reducing insurance rates,

- ✓ developing distributed training models for small business owners who do not have time to travel or take time from work for professional development,
- ✓ targeting new training programs for those already working to increase their skills and productivity,
- ✓ working together with other agencies/partners that offer programs that assist small businesses so that such support may be accessed smoothly with less red tape,
- ✓ implementing the positive suggestions from the government procurement review with a view to increasing the purchasing of Yukon goods and services and improving the contracting processes so that they are transparent and fair,
- ✓ collaborating with all levels of government to establish public transportation infrastructure and business opportunities so that Yukoners can access job opportunities and so businesses, both small and large, can get their products to market.

### **Access to Capital – Providing options**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ develop a new “access Yukon” program to identify potential sources of venture capital for new business ventures,
- ✓ explore options to increase Yukoners' ability to invest in the Yukon, such as the Yukon Investment Tax Credit that has been so very successful with Air North and other businesses,
- ✓ negotiate enhanced banking services in rural communities,
- ✓ bring forward legislation to enable the formation of credit unions in the Yukon and to allow a credit union incorporated in a province to operate in the Yukon.

## **Mining**

Yukon New Democrats know mining inside and out. Many New Democrat MLAs have worked in the industry and have proudly represented miners, their families and their communities. We will do so again.

### **Working with industry**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ work with industry and communities to create sustainable, responsible mining where environmental and safety standards are paramount, where jobs and business opportunities are created locally and where Yukoners are not left holding an environmental liability when the mine closes,

- ✓ continue the Yukon Mining Incentive Program and Prospectors Assistance as founded by previous Yukon New Democrat governments,
- ✓ continue to undertake geo-mapping to ensure that resources are better identified,
- ✓ involve industry in future planning for roads and energy infrastructure aimed at:
  - assisting mines with the transportation of ore haul through tidewater ports
  - finding the lowest cost, preferably renewable, energy sources for their operations,
- ✓ assist with marketing Yukon mining opportunities to investors,
- ✓ support the Mine Training Fund.

### ***Saving for the future***

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ create a Yukon Resource Legacy Fund from royalties to help diversify the economy, increase local value added and build a sustainable Yukon for decades to come,
- ✓ ensure Yukoners get their fair share of mining revenues by bringing in a royalty regime for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We will increase royalties and other revenues to a level on par with the rest of the country.

### ***Best Practices***

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ convene a resource extraction best practices summit involving First Nations and other governments, industry, labour, non-government organizations, communities and the interested public,
- ✓ review environmental protection and occupational safety standards and practices,
- ✓ foster ways to maximize local employment and business opportunities,
- ✓ set a moratorium on fracking in the oil and gas industry unless environmental concerns can be addressed,
- ✓ implement a permanent prohibition on uranium mining.

## **Tourism**

The Yukon's tourism industry has emerged over the last two decades as a vital sector and an important foundation of the Yukon economy. It has proven to be a good investment of public funds with a strong economic return to Yukon communities and businesses. And this sector has much untapped potential that will allow it to expand.

A Yukon New Democrat government will work in close partnership with the tourism industry to support its continued and growing contribution of economic benefits to the

territory. Successful tourism depends on good infrastructure, healthy communities and a clean environment.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ build business capacity and competitiveness
- ✓ develop high-end attractions
- ✓ develop more direct support services for small operators and work with them to address labour shortages.
- ✓ support tourism through increased marketing programs aimed at diversifying the market and increasing the profile of the Yukon as a year-round destination.
- ✓ support marketing which targets high return markets while continuing to maintain existing markets,
- ✓ increase and enhance destination attractions for meetings and conventions,
- ✓ utilize our sports infrastructure to attract tournaments and training camps,
- ✓ further develop attractions and events that benefit all Yukon communities,
- ✓ work with First Nations to increase their tourism initiatives and development,
- ✓ support increased training for all elements of the diverse tourism sector,
- ✓ ensure that operators have a strong voice and are well represented at land and environmental decision making forums.
- ✓ support government policy development that will provide increased land certainty for wilderness tourism operations.

## **Agriculture**

New Democrats will place an increased emphasis on food security and local food production, community-based agricultural initiatives and community green houses.

*We will:*

- ✓ develop a long-term strategy for increased incentives for food production and the greater use of existing agricultural land for agricultural purposes,
- ✓ support local agriculture through increased purchases by Yukon government agencies and departments,
- ✓ support local youth education initiatives in agriculture with the goal of offering agriculture diplomas at Yukon College and degrees through a University of the Arctic,
- ✓ support agricultural research focused on sustainability and recognizing climate change,
- ✓ address abattoir and inspection issues,
- ✓ encourage organic food production where feasible and appropriate,
- ✓ support urban agriculture and permaculture.

## **Arts, Culture and Heritage**

The Yukon is a special place where we can enjoy diverse cultures, a rich heritage and a vibrant arts community. We are able to enjoy the art of a tremendous variety of performers, artists working in a range of media forms: musicians and sound producers; theatre actors; film and television workers; visual artists; artisans; storytellers; writers; photographers; and sculptors. This sector is supported by great administrators and has a number of excellent venues to help profile our historical and modern art and culture. The sector is important to both our social and economic well-being.

### ***Culture as an industry***

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ recognize arts and culture as a viable, vibrant and important part of Yukon society and economy,
- ✓ increase support for arts and culture through a cooperative planning process with the art, crafts and culture communities. This will include the development of a Yukon-wide arts and culture strategy as an early priority
- ✓ partner in developing and presenting Yukon cultural industries as a celebrated ingredient stimulating growth and diversification of a recession-protected economy for Yukon communities.
- ✓ celebrate and promote Yukon arts, crafts and cultural products.

### ***Promoting the Yukon***

*We will:*

- ✓ increase promotion of Yukon talent through new talent development and marketing strategies,
- ✓ increase efforts to link cultural activities and products to tourism.

### ***Capacity Building in Cultural industries***

*We will:*

- ✓ support the establishment of post-secondary arts, crafts and cultural development programs offered by KIAC and Yukon College, including
  - arts administration and management, potentially leading to a diploma,
  - internship/co-op placements providing career opportunities and
  - essential infrastructure that will help Yukon's arts and cultural sector flourish.
- ✓ recognize, promote and invest in the development of attractions associated with Yukon arts, crafts and culture and First Nations as drivers for sustainable, cultural tourism.

### **Collaborative development**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ develop a ten year cultural initiative that fosters collaboration amongst music, theatre, dance, visual arts and other participants in Yukon's cultural life to share regionally, nationally and internationally,

### **History & preservation**

*We will:*

- ✓ develop a new Heritage and History Strategy,
- ✓ support new initiatives for curatorial activities,
- ✓ ensure the preservation of the Yukon's oral traditions by supporting initiatives of First Nation governments, Yukon Archives and others.

## **Working People**

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The Yukon Party has failed to address the needs of Yukon people who are not benefitting from the economic situation. Many are being left behind because they lack the experience or training required and/or don't have access to affordable housing or transportation.

Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats have a positive alternative.

### **Job Strategies**

*Liz Hanson's New Democrats will:*

- ✓ promote local hire and reduce the need for companies to recruit from outside the Yukon.
- ✓ increase use of socio-economic participation agreements to achieve local hire goals especially for people in under-employed groups including First Nations,
- ✓ create incentives to stimulate job creation in the private sector, particularly around green jobs, to provide more value-added products here in the territory.

### **Training**

*We will:*

- ✓ develop a renewed Yukon Training Strategy, with First Nations, Yukon College, employers, unions, communities and NGOs, to increase employment and training opportunities for Yukon people

- ✓ develop new flexible training programs for those already employed so they can upgrade their skills, improve wages and be more productive,
- ✓ create new training opportunities through partnerships on infrastructure and community development projects that will lead to job creation for First Nations citizens,
- ✓ increase Yukon's commitment to trades and apprenticeship training for all who wish to pursue a trade certificate, particularly First Nations and women,
- ✓ support non-profit trades training centre to be established by labour, industry and First Nation governments.

## **Health and Safety**

*The Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ ensure the independence of the Workers Advocate by establishing a mandate and organizational review through consultation with affected workers, labour, business and other affected groups,
- ✓ bring in legislation within the first year to protect young workers from injury and death on the job through minimum age requirements in certain occupations, and through mandatory training and oversight of young workers.

## **Foreign Workers**

*Liz Hanson's New Democrats will:*

- ✓ prohibit the exploitation of foreign workers by providing more oversight and safeguards,
- ✓ ensure that new Yukoners have access to language and settlement services so they can fully participate in our society and economy and have the communication skills necessary to work safely.

## **Minimum Wage**

*We will:*

- ✓ immediately increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour with annual increases tied to the Consumer Price Index.

# Energy - Affordable, Reliable and Green

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Securing new sources of energy is an environmental and an economic issue. Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats want to limit and minimize energy generation from dirty sources and increase energy from renewables.

One of the biggest scandals of the Yukon Party was the attempted secret sale, at a discounted, fire sale price, of the Yukon Energy Corporation (YEC) assets to ATCO, a large multinational private corporation based in Alberta.

Meanwhile, system and infrastructure problems have not been addressed sufficiently – there are simply too many power interruptions and outages. And measures to encourage conservation have gone by the wayside. It's time for change. We can do better.

Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats are committed to the continued public ownership of the YEC and its assets; it is a public resource owned by Yukoners and is simply not for sale. Yukoners can expect affordable and reliable electricity for home and business, and positive leadership to move our territory to a new energy future.

## **Public control of energy- keeping it ours**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ Pass legislation to prevent any Yukon government from selling, leasing or disposing of the electrical generation and transmission assets of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Development Corporation.

## **Public benefit over long term**

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ invest, through our crown corporations, in projects that will generate electricity that is affordable, reliable, renewable and clean.
- ✓ develop a conservation strategy, that will achieve results in the short and long-term, by promoting and rewarding conservation through a range of programs and incentives including new building standards and incentives, district heating and other measures for new construction,
- ✓ encourage interest and investment by First Nation governments and municipalities in increased conservation and new renewable energy production.

## **System reliability – making it better**

*We will:*

- ✓ improve system reliability through new investments to upgrade the electrical infrastructure,
- ✓ recognize the unique needs of rural communities for reliability,
- ✓ ask the Public Utilities Board or a similar agency to conduct a public review of recurrent outages and recommend solutions to YEC and government.

## **Development of renewable energies – making them green**

*The Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ pass a comprehensive *Green Energy Act* to increase conservation and meet future demand by developing alternative energy sources such as geothermal, wind and solar,
- ✓ provide energy options focused on conservation and renewable energy for new off-grid industrial users,
- ✓ provide support for demonstration projects,
- ✓ Support a precautionary principle position to oil and gas exploration in the Beaufort

# Good Government: Where People Matter

## Partnership, Integrity and Trust

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Liz Hanson and Yukon New Democrats believe that democracy is a day-by-day process, built on partnership, integrity and trust—not something that only happens on election-day.

*Partnership* means working with people to set common goals—not dividing to conquer. *Integrity* means dealing honestly and openly. And *trust* is built upon mutual respect and can only be earned over time.

New Democrats recognize that much must be done to restore faith in the Yukon government. We believe good government means elected members listen to people and work responsibly with other governments, the public service and public advisory boards for the good of all Yukon people.

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ be respectful and accountable to the public and to the safeguards that protect the public interest,
- ✓ govern with respect and integrity to build trust,
- ✓ conduct government business in an open and transparent manner,
- ✓ improve relations with all First Nation governments.

## Yukon First Nations – Working Partnerships

Yukon New Democrats believe that First Nations governments are partners in improving the lives of all Yukon people.

Whether they are one of the 11 Yukon First Nations with final land claim and self government agreements or the three Yukon First Nations under the federal *Indian Act*, a Yukon New Democrat government would establish new working relationships with all Yukon First Nation governments.

We also believe that the land claim and self-government agreements have improved life for all Yukon people. These agreements should be the basis for continuing cooperation – not adversarial legal wrangling. Over the last nine years, the Yukon Party has rolled back the clock to pre-land claims, colonial relationships with Yukon First Nations.

*Liz Hanson and the Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ honour and respect the land claim and self-government agreements and restore respectful, working relationships between Yukon and First Nation governments,
- ✓ implement agreements recently signed with First Nations such as the partnership on residential land development with Kwanlin Dun,
- ✓ improve working relationships with those First Nations without treaties,
- ✓ review, in cooperation with First Nation governments, the purpose, mandate and operations of the intergovernmental Yukon Forum to help address the political, social, environmental and economic priorities of all governments.

## **Alternate Dispute Resolution**

New Democrats believe that adversarial processes such as expensive court disputes with First Nations, school boards and businesses create winners, losers and bitterness. We believe in the principles of partnership, collaboration and respect.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ encourage the use of alternate dispute resolution and mediation processes to encourage lasting “win-win” outcomes in disputes that cannot be resolved through the new relationship we are committed to.

# **Government Accountability**

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## **Fiscal Responsibility**

Yukon New Democratic governments, under both Premiers Tony Penikett and Piers McDonald, had strong and enviable records of responsible fiscal management.

*A new Yukon New Democratic government will maintain the tradition of strong fiscal management by:*

- ✓ engaging in a participatory approach to budget-making—from the bottom up to involve Yukon people, First Nations, NGOs and community organizations in identifying community priorities for capital and program expenditures,
- ✓ providing more information, in a timely way, about budgets and spending,
- ✓ committing to no new personal or small business tax increases because we understand there is a higher cost of living in the Yukon,
- ✓ managing your money within the requirements of the *Taxpayer Protection Act*.

## **Strong oversight, independent voices**

Yukon New Democrats believe that the agencies and individuals charged with watching over the operations of government and warn all of us of abuses of power, are allies of good government – not enemies. Government should listen to and heed their input.

### ***The Auditor General and Public Accounts Committee***

New Democrats recognize that the Auditor General applies high standards of fiscal accountability in the public interest when it reviews Yukon government operations and reports to the legislature through the Public Accounts Committee.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ act on the recommendations the Auditor General to improve fiscal accountability – not brush them off as “opinions.”

### ***Human Rights Commission***

A Yukon New Democrat government introduced the Yukon *Human Rights Act* more than twenty years ago and we believe that the work of the Human Rights Commission is still a fundamental force for fairness in Yukon society.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ support the independence of the Commission so it can do its work in an effective and timely manner,
- ✓ require that the Commission report directly to the legislature,
- ✓ address recommendations of the Select Committee on Human Rights and the law reform consultation,
- ✓ adopt legislation to eliminate all legal barriers for same sex spouses.

### ***Child and Youth Advocate***

New Democrats believe that children and youth are vulnerable members of society. How they are treated affects whether they will contribute to society as adults or become continuing clients of social and corrections services.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ have the Advocate report to the Yukon Legislature-- not a Minister – to ensure our efforts to meet the needs of children and youth are subject to independent oversight.

### ***Ombudsman and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner***

A Yukon New Democrat government established the offices of the Ombudsman and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner. We believe that oversight of bureaucratic procedure, access to information and protection of privacy are essential elements of a working democracy.

*Yukon New Democrats will:*

- ✓ make the position of Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner a full-time position to ensure:
  - adequate responses to public demands for service,
  - sufficient time to find solutions to problems,
  - public access to records in a more timely manner,
  - prevention of the unauthorized collection, use and disclosure of personal information.
- ✓ amend the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to bring it up to current Canadian standards and increase access to information while protecting privacy.

### **Openness and Transparency**

Yukon New Democrats believe that openness and transparency make for better government.

*We will:*

- ✓ make government business more public by proactively disclosing documents and public information across government.

### ***Conflict of Interest Commissioner and a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists***

New Democrats recognize that lobbyists are part of the political system. However, we also know that the public has a legitimate fear that lobbyists being paid by private interests to influence government decisions may have an excessive or unfair impact on government decisions.

*We will act on the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's recommendation and:*

- ✓ introduce legislation to govern lobbying activities,
- ✓ require the registration of lobbyists,
- ✓ set out a code of conduct,
- ✓ impose penalties for violations.

### ***Whistleblower protection***

New Democrats understand that wrongdoing may at times occur in government, despite the measures in place to safeguard democracy. If public servants become aware of wrongdoing in the public service, we believe they should be able to report it without fear.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ as a priority, enact effective whistleblower legislation to protect employees who report wrongdoing from retaliation from superiors, co-workers and others.

### **And a Legislature that works...**

New Democrats believe that open and respectful debate in the Yukon Legislature can contribute to better government. Our goal is a more open, respectful and businesslike legislature, and a more fiscally accountable government.

*New Democrats will:*

- ✓ model more respectful behaviour in the assembly and introduce a *Legislative Accountability Act* to:
  - establish notice periods for legislative sittings,
  - create opportunities for the public to speak to the legislature and committees,
  - provide for an automatic legislative sitting within 30 days of any Special Warrant authorizing additional spending.

We also believe that any MLA wanting to leave the party of their election should either sit as an Independent or resign. There should be no more “floor-crossing”.

## **Public Participation**

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### **Public advisory bodies**

Yukon New Democrats believe that the commissions, boards, committees and advisory councils set up under Yukon law can provide vital advice to a responsive and responsible government. They were set up by law for valid reasons and their input must be given fair and due consideration.

*To get the best advice possible we will:*

- ✓ establish an open process for making appointments to boards and committees,
- ✓ make public advisory bodies representative of the full range of Yukon people: women and men; First Nations; young and old; urban and rural.

## **A Voice for Youth in Government**

Liz Hanson's New Democrats believe that youth need to be part of our economy, our political life and our plans for the present and future. Their energy, vision and passion for justice are inspirational.

*A Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ develop a representative Youth Council to involve youth, and their organizations and representatives, to identify priorities for government action.

## **Respect for Views of Government Employees**

New Democrats value the work of government employees. We respect their contribution to the development of public policy and their participation in the operations of government.

We also recognize that government employees are entitled to a life outside of work where they may have opinions that differ from those of the government of the day.

*New Democrats will:*

- ✓ work with public service unions and managers to address the “culture of fear” that has developed in recent years which may have smothered employees’ ability to express their views to the political level within government and also limited their involvement in public issues outside of government.

## **Electoral Reform**

Elections are recurring opportunities for democratic renewal, and democracy is strongest when votes are truly representative.

*New Democrats will:*

- ✓ establish an Electoral Reform Commission to develop options for better representation. Its mandate will be to:
  - review methods used in territorial elections including enumeration,
  - consider fixed dates for Yukon general elections,
  - consider proportional representation and recall legislation,
- ✓ require a public referendum to approve proposals for electoral reform,
- ✓ amend the *Elections Act* to require by-elections for ridings without a MLA within 90 days of a vacancy.

## **Municipal governments**

Yukon New Democrats believe in a cooperative and collaborative working relationship with all Yukon communities. It was a Yukon New Democratic government that passed the *Municipal Act* that established greater autonomy and fiscal responsibility for local governments.

The *Municipal Act* review process is not formalized and leads to confusion and misunderstanding. Municipal officials and citizens would benefit from a clear understanding of the process and timeline for future *Municipal Act* reviews.”

Yukon New Democrats believe further changes are required in the *Municipal Act* to better guarantee public participation in decision making and accountability for decisions by elected officials.

*Liz Hanson and a Yukon New Democrat government will:*

- ✓ amend the *Municipal Act* in consultation with local governments and local people to enhance accountability and participation,
- ✓ address annual funding issues including timeliness and timeframes.







**Liz Hanson**  
Yukon NDP

- ✓ 867.668.2203 or toll-free 1.855.VOTE.NDP
- ✓ [www.YukonNDP.ca](http://www.YukonNDP.ca)