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FINAL PHASE UNDER WAY FOR NEW *CHILDREN'S ACT*

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers and Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Andy Carvill today announced that the new *Children's Act* has entered its final phase.

“Targeted consultation will take place over the next two months and we expect to table the new legislation in the House in the spring,” Cathers said. “This new act will reflect what was heard over the past three years and recognizes clearly the role of family and extended family in caring for children, along with the best practices in child protection and adoption.”

“We committed to our citizens that we would return to seek their views with respect to the draft legislation and we now look forward to working with them,” Carvill said. “This new legislation will deal primarily with our children and we need to ensure that our citizens are supportive of the proposed changes.”

The draft bill will now be reviewed by First Nations and key stakeholders. Once that review is completed any final changes will be incorporated and the new bill will be tabled in the legislature in the spring session.

“We have taken the time to draft legislation that we believe directly responds to the concerns of Yukoners,” Cathers said, “and we have done this in a way that demonstrates our commitment to creating a piece of legislation that reflects the importance of working together with First Nations to ensure support and protection of children and families.”

Carvill added he appreciates the number of individuals who have been involved with the project since its inception.

“I am pleased so many people have participated and have shared their experiences and knowledge of the child welfare system in the Yukon, and in other places. This openness has been very valuable and very useful in advising the drafting of the legislation to better reflect First Nations cultural values and processes,” Carvill said.

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