

SUMMARY REPORT

Languages are important because they are about our identity — how we understand and interact with the world and with each other. The Northwest Territories (NWT) is unique in Canada and the world because we have 11 official languages. Our challenge is to maintain and strengthen these languages as working languages at all levels of our society. We are not unique in our efforts to value our languages. Many other countries and regions are struggling to preserve and revitalize the use of minority and indigenous languages. This report speaks to the importance of our NWT official languages. It provides a review of government policy with respect to the languages that we use in our northern society.

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories appointed the Special Committee on the Review of the *Official Languages Act* (SCOL) in the spring 2001. The Special Committee was honoured to carry out this important public policy review. But the Committee was also challenged by the scope and complexity of the work required. The Committee has worked hard and learned a great deal about languages. It has made a serious effort to establish a vision and recommend practical new methods of strengthening our northern languages. With the release of this report, the Special Committee urges all NWT citizens to open their hearts and their minds to reflect on the value of our languages and the cultures in which they are rooted. We must continue to invest in our languages as a means to building a healthy, sustainable society.

1. Introduction to the Review

The final report of the Special Committee on the Review of the *Official Languages Act* consists of five publications:

- A summary in all official languages
- A final report in English
- A translation of the final report in French
- A proposed draft Bill to amend the *Official Languages Act*
- A CD-ROM with the four publications.

This summary matches the chapters and the main sections of the final report. It addresses the following topics:

1. Introducing the review
2. Valuing our languages
3. Reviewing the history of language legislation and policy
4. Assessing the condition of our official languages
5. Identifying practical and effective ways to revitalize our languages
6. Assessing official language legislation, management, and service delivery
7. Considering options for change
8. Establishing a shared vision and recommending change.

Where differences exist between the information provided in this summary and the final report; the final report must be considered accurate. Throughout this summary, the *Official Languages Act* (1990) is sometimes referred to as the *Act* or the *OLA*.

The Spirit and Intent of the NWT *Official Languages Act*

The NWT *Official Languages Act* (1990) recognizes Cree, Chipewyan, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut (including Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun), and Slavey (including North and South Slavey) as official languages. The spirit and intent of the *OLA* is captured in a few key phrases from its preamble:

- Being committed to the preservation, development, and enhancement of the aboriginal languages
- Desiring to provide in law for the use of the aboriginal languages in the Territories including the use of the aboriginal languages for all or any of the official purposes of the Territories at the time and in the manner that is appropriate
- Desiring to establish English and French as the Official Languages of the Territories having equality of status and equal rights and privileges as Official Languages.

The *OLA* gives our official languages special rights and privileges within institutions of the Legislative Assembly and Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Carrying out the Review

To meet its terms of reference, the Special Committee studied a wide range of information on the value of language, language shift, language rights, language education, and language revitalization. It encouraged public dialogue and input by holding community and public hearings and hosting two territorial languages assemblies. During its visits to 17 communities, Committee members toured day-care centres, schools, and cultural centres. The Committee also met with special interest groups such as the Dene Nation leadership, representatives of the francophone community, and federal and territorial government officials.

In June 2002, the Committee published its Progress Report. This report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly and distributed to language communities and other interested organizations. The Progress Report and its preliminary directions for change were discussed in detail at the second territorial languages assembly, held on the Hay River (K'atâ'odeeche) Dene Reserve in October 2002.

The Committee then prepared its final report, including a proposed draft bill to amend the *Official Languages Act*. The Special Committee sent draft chapters of the report to language, legal, and political specialists to make sure the report was accurate and had not overlooked any important information. The Committee is confident that many of the opinions and ideas put forward by the language communities are reflected in the report.

SUMMARY REPORT

However, because language issues are sensitive and complex, the report may have some minor gaps or errors. These are the responsibility of the Committee.

Understanding Special Words and Phrases

A few words and phrases used in this summary report have special meaning with respect to language, so the following definitions are provided.

Language community refers to those people who identify themselves with and are historically connected to one of our official languages.

Language preservation refers to the steps taken to record and document a language while its fluent speakers are still alive. Preservation is the first step in language revitalization. Language preservation can also refer to terminology development, allowing a language to adapt to new situations.

Language revitalization refers to the goal of intergenerational communication and the steps taken to achieve this goal. A language is considered revitalized when grandparents and parents are once again passing their traditional language on to their children in the home, school, and community at large.

Language territory, language region, and language homeland all refer to the main geographic area in which a language community lives. However, language homeland refers specifically to the traditional land use areas of the NWT Aboriginal language communities, as determined through land claim and self-government agreements.

Sociolinguistics refers to the scientific study of the relation among language, culture and society.

2. Valuing Our Languages

The NWT has a long history of language and cultural diversity. This diversity is being undermined by the strong influence of Western culture and the English language. The Special Committee believes that this diversity, although challenging, provides us with many opportunities. We must view all our official languages as social, cultural, environmental, and economic resources that benefit our northern society as a whole.

The Social and Cultural Value of Our Languages

The Special Committee has learned that language contributes greatly to our personal and cultural identity, our history, and our collective knowledge. Many studies have concluded that language loss has contributed significantly to self-esteem and social problems within Aboriginal communities across Canada. NWT Aboriginal language communities and the recent NWT Social Agenda conference have stressed the social value of language and cultural renewal for the north. Language revitalization is seen as important to personal and cultural healing and survival. For Aboriginal communities, support for language revitalization is a way to overcome past injustices, restore social balance, and build social and cultural relationships from a place of self-worth, security, and pride. For the francophone community, strengthening the use of the French language will help to overcome cultural isolation and nourish the historic francophone identity in the NWT.

The Aboriginal languages are the source of much of our history as a northern people and are essential to the preservation of this history. These languages contain valuable information about historic events, environmental understandings, and spiritual teachings. Without this history, we become disconnected from the past and lose our collective identity.

Ecological diversity is a characteristic of the natural world and essential to the long-term survival of plant and animal species. Linguists are now exploring the important contribution that language makes to social diversity. Languages contribute to the sum total of human knowledge. Therefore, loss of language results in loss of knowledge, reducing our ability to fully understand the world. The Aboriginal languages in particular reflect a unique, spiritual worldview. This worldview has been effectively integrated into a variety of social and justice programs. Maintaining the Aboriginal languages allows us to continue incorporating Aboriginal ideas and practices into our contemporary society, for our mutual benefit.

The Environmental and Scientific Value of Our Languages

Aboriginal society has always valued traditional knowledge (TK). Recently, the scientific value of TK has been recognized at a broader social level, particularly in environmental research. Regulatory agencies such as the Beverly-Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency have begun adopting TK policies and supporting TK research. TK provides new environmental insights and can guide northern resource management planning activities. TK is dependent on language, because it is difficult to translate some Aboriginal teachings into English. As well, important knowledge about the land is contained in traditional place names or in the stories attached to those sites. If we are to benefit from traditional knowledge in environmental and resource planning, we must preserve and maintain the languages that hold and interpret that knowledge.

The Economic Value of our Languages

The GNWT supports the continued development and expansion of the traditional economy and cultural tourism. These economic activities are rooted in the land, the language, and in the traditions of our Aboriginal peoples. The traditional economy requires an understanding of our spiritual relationship with the land and this relationship is best expressed through the Aboriginal languages. Maintaining a traditional economy, therefore, requires ongoing use of the Aboriginal languages.

Cultural tourism is increasing and is compatible with the traditional economy. However, a competitive tourism marketplace requires the development and marketing of special cultural activities and experiences. Our Aboriginal language and cultural diversity provides a distinct and natural advantage for tourism. As well, the existence of a vibrant francophone community allows for the development and promotion of the NWT as a tourism destination for French speaking tourists.

Few jobs within the GNWT or other agencies currently require the use of the Aboriginal or French languages, even where services are being provided directly to these language communities. Establishing more positions requiring the Aboriginal or French languages would provide an incentive to learn and use these languages. More employment opportunities for bilingual residents, particularly Aboriginal people in the regions, would immediately be created. Increasing bilingual program and service delivery would also lead to an expansion of the 'language economy'. Demand would increase for language materials, radio and television programming, language research, and language instruction. Some of these goods and services may be exportable to language communities outside of the NWT. Overall, by increasing the economic value of our languages, we can contribute to the diversification and strengthening of our economy.

3. Reviewing NWT Language Policy

We express value for our languages through public policy that supports and promotes these languages. Language policy is particularly important for indigenous and minority languages, because these languages are often threatened by a dominant language. Public policy can include legislation, written policies, programs, services, and management systems. Canada and the NWT have had Aboriginal and French language policies for many years. Reviewing the results of our past and current policies can provide direction for future policy decisions.

Language Policy Before the 1950s

Aboriginal Language Policy: During early contact among European settlers and First Nations in Canada, the Aboriginal languages were commonly used for trade and other purposes. This contact even resulted in a new people, the Métis, with a new language, Michif. However, since the late 1700s, the French and English in Canada have

SUMMARY REPORT

maintained policies to repress Aboriginal language and culture and assimilate Aboriginal people into mainstream society. The *Indian Act*, residential schools, treaties, and resource development undermined traditional languages and cultures. Governments tried to force Indian and Inuit peoples to adopt Euro-Canadian ways. These policies, particularly residential school, led to significant language loss and social disruption. Surprisingly perhaps, by the early 1950s a high percentage of Aboriginal people still claimed their traditional language as their mother tongue.

French Language Policy: The struggle between French and English language rights began in the 1700s with the defeat of French military forces and the establishment of British rule in North America. The British initially tried to assimilate the francophones, but eventually adopted a policy of linguistic duality and cultural tolerance. The *Constitution Act* (1867) guaranteed constitutional protection for French within the Parliament of Canada and the houses of the legislature of Quebec. The *North-West Territories Act* (1875) created a territorial legislature that published its laws in both French and English. However, in 1892, the legislature declared English to be its only official language. Use of the French language outside of Quebec generally declined throughout the 1900s. However, the influence of the fur trade and, especially, French-speaking Roman Catholic missionaries helped maintain French as a working language in the NWT.

Language Policy from 1950 through 1984

Aboriginal Language Policy: In the 1950s, the federal government increased its assimilation efforts in the NWT through mandatory schooling and the relocation of outlying families to permanent communities. The number of residential schools and hostels increased and the number of Aboriginal students attending school also increased significantly. School curricula did not reflect or respect Aboriginal language or culture. In 1969, the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy* (1969) (referred to as the 'White Paper'), called for the full assimilation of Aboriginal peoples across Canada. Aboriginal people actively opposed the White Paper and their efforts resulted in a resurgence of native culture and language. The 1970s saw the transfer of some reserve-based schools to First Nations, Supreme Court rulings supporting Aboriginal rights, and greater sensitivity toward Aboriginal language and culture in northern schools. However, by 1981, only 30% of Aboriginal people in Canada claimed a traditional language as their mother tongue, although this percentage was higher in some areas, including the north.

In 1982, existing aboriginal and treaty rights were recognized in the *Constitution Act* of Canada. In 1984, the federal government proposed to make French and English the official languages of the NWT. The GNWT objected to this proposal but agreed to pass the *Official Languages Act* (1984). The *OLA* recognized French and English as official languages but also provided legal recognition of the Aboriginal languages. The negotiation process between Canada and the GNWT included a 'cooperation agreement' that has continued over the years. This agreement has provided federal funding for French language services and Aboriginal language revitalization activities.

SUMMARY REPORT

French Language Policy: By the 1950s, much of the business of Quebec was conducted in English, even though French continued to be the majority language. Formal efforts to revitalize the French language in Quebec and across Canada began in the 1960s. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, established in 1963, recommended minority language education rights, a bilingual federal public service, and recognition of the distinct character of Quebec. These recommendations resulted in the *Official Languages Act* of Canada (1969) and led to the funding of French language schooling in the NWT. The *Constitution Act* (1982) provided constitutional protection of French and English language rights and minority language education rights across Canada.

Reviewing Recent Language Policy

Since the establishment of the *OLA*, the GNWT has worked to revitalize the Aboriginal languages and provide a reasonable level of services in all official languages. The Report of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages (1986) led to official language status for the Aboriginal languages, establishment of the Office of the Languages Commissioner, standardization of the Dene writing system, better training and certification for interpreter-translators, and greater use of Aboriginal place names. The *Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT* has primarily supported French language service delivery and Aboriginal language interpreter-translator services, teacher training, and materials development. The Agreement has also supported a wide variety of community-based language projects. Recently, the Aboriginal language communities have taken on greater responsibility for language activities at the regional and community levels.

The *Education Act* (1996) allows DEC's to choose the language of instruction for schools and requires them to offer second language instruction. However, instruction is dependent on demand, the availability of fluent teachers, and sufficient materials. These conditions have proven to be restrictive for the Aboriginal languages. The *Education Act* and regulations also provide for French language schools operated by French school boards, in accordance with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The GNWT published the *Official Languages Guidelines Manual* (1997a) and adopted the *Official Languages Policy* (1997b). At that time, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) was given responsibility for implementing the policy. Individual departments became responsible for official language service delivery. During the 1990s, the Office of the Languages Commissioner made numerous recommendations to the Legislative Assembly to improve official language program and service delivery, but few of these recommendations were acted upon.

Since the establishment of the *OLA*, three French language studies have been carried out. Each has concluded that French language service delivery is inadequate and identified the need for improvement. Recently, discussions have taken place on the possibility of a French language service center. ECE continues to play the lead role in official language

program and service management, guided by the Official Languages Policy and Manual. Although the *OLA* allows for the establishment of regulations to guide program and service delivery, none has yet been established. Overall, the most significant policy shift over the past decade has been the decentralization of official language program and service delivery and an expanded role for language communities.

4. Assessing the Condition of Our Official Languages: Cause for Concern

The NWT is rapidly shifting from a multilingual territory to an increasingly unilingual territory, with English as the dominant language. This shift has continued in spite of the *Official Languages Act* and current policies and funding. It is important to understand the nature and extent of this shift in order to develop effective revitalization strategies.

Understanding Language Shift

Language shift occurs when members of a language community abandon the use of one language or dialect, through choice or pressure, in favour of another language or dialect. Language shift includes ‘language de-acquisition’ where members of the language community, particularly youth, become less fluent. Language shift can also lead to ‘language obsolescence’, where a language is no longer used within home, school, and community. In extreme cases, shift can lead to ‘language death’, where no fluent speakers survive. Language shift is a common occurrence throughout the world, and is often a result of decreasing populations (due to war, famine, or disease) and cultural assimilation. Language shift has been increasing within the last century, mainly due to the influence of English on the world economy, communications, and technology.

Language shift is often measured through the home language to mother tongue language ratio. People who learned one language as their mother tongue but now use another language as the main language in the home have undergone language shift. If the parents’ mother tongue is not being used at home, children are not learning to speak it. This pattern can cause a rapid decline in language use because the most effective place for children to learn a language is in the home from their parents.

Census Canada gathers home language and mother tongue data that the NWT uses to assess language shift. However, the Census data does not provide specific reasons for language shift. Other research, such as sociolinguistic studies, must be carried out to clearly identify the causes of language shift. Some Aboriginal language communities have carried out research on language shift. Most have concluded that their language is declining in use, some more quickly than others. The Assembly of First Nations has identified two major reasons for Aboriginal language decline:

- Suppression in residential schools and forced integration into the provincial school systems

SUMMARY REPORT

- A general history of government suppression and oppression that has created negative attitudes about the value of Aboriginal languages among Aboriginal people themselves.

Language shift is a complex process, however, and normally includes a combination of economic, cultural, and social factors.

The following section provides a brief summary of the overall status of our official languages. Much of this information has been gathered from previous language studies because it is based on the 1996 Census and other existing GNWT data. Unfortunately, the 2001 Census data was not available in time for this report. The condition and status of Michif, the language of the Métis, requires further study.

Assessing the Condition of our Aboriginal Languages

Figure 1 below illustrates:

- The total number of people in the NWT who identified themselves as being members of a particular Aboriginal community
 - The number of people from this Aboriginal community who learned their traditional language as their first language or mother tongue and still understand it
 - The number of people who currently use the mother tongue as their home language.
- The current data does not separate North and South Slavey. The Inuktitut data include Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun but do not include the population of Nunavut.

This figure shows that less than half of those people who are identified as members of a particular Aboriginal language community have learned their traditional language as a mother tongue and still understand it. Fewer still use their traditional language as the primary language at home. The large differences between the population, mother tongue speakers, and home language users indicate that significant language shift is occurring. As can be seen from the figure, the rate of shift varies among the language communities. Dogrib shows the least amount of shift and Gwich'in the highest.

SUMMARY REPORT

Figure 1. Aboriginal language shift by language community (Source: SCOL)

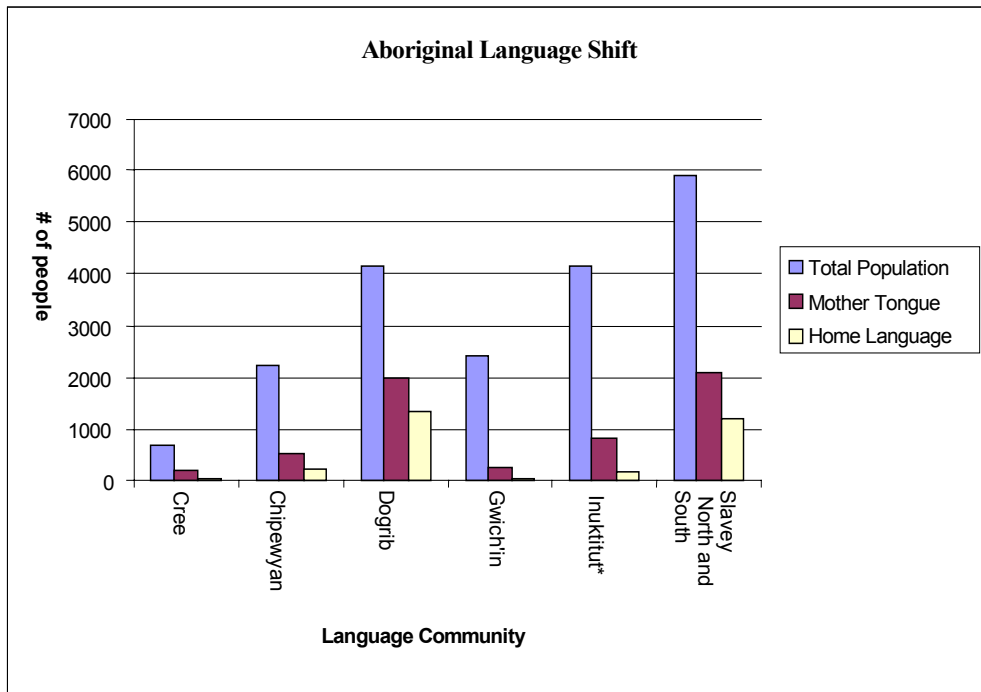


Figure 2 indicates the overall rate of language shift between generations by showing the percentage of people in each age group who can speak an Aboriginal language. Although the rates vary among the different language communities, the pattern is the same: young people are rapidly losing their traditional language. As well, according to the language communities, those youth that do speak the language are not as fluent as the older generations.

Figure 2. Intergenerational language shift for the Aboriginal languages (Source: SCOL)

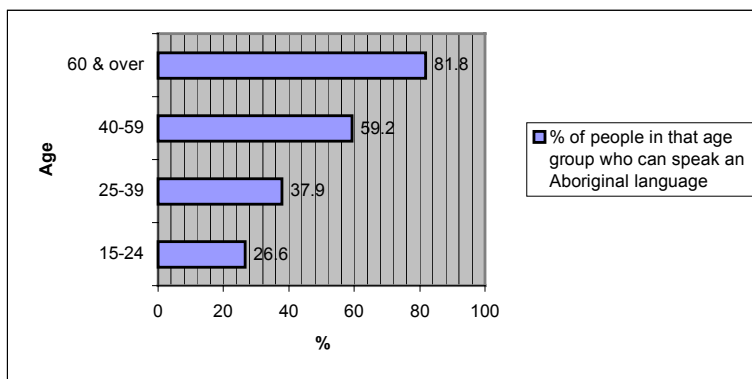


Figure 3 illustrates the pattern of language use within our communities. It shows that a relatively high percentage of Aboriginal people in the smaller communities speak their

SUMMARY REPORT

language at home (85%). A smaller percentage of Aboriginal people in the larger centers use their language at home (approximately 50%).

Figure 3. Percentage of Aboriginal people who speak an Aboriginal language at home, work, and school (Source: Labour Force Survey)

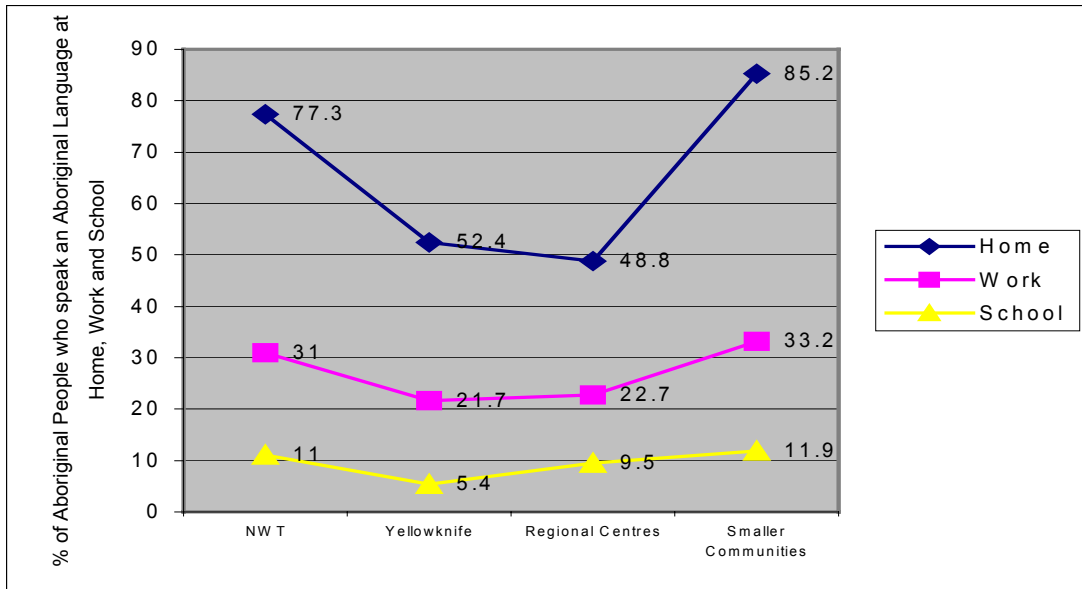


Figure 3 also shows that the Aboriginal languages are used mainly at home. Language use at work is much lower, even in the smaller communities (33%), indicating the dominance of English in the workplace. As well, a very small percentage of people use their Aboriginal language in the schools (from 5 to 12%). This data may indicate that a small percentage of teenagers speak their language, but may also mean that the opportunity to speak an Aboriginal language at school is low.

Literacy rates for the Aboriginal languages are also very low. Few people can read or write their traditional language, even though writing systems for these languages have existed for many years.

Overall, the pace of language shift in the NWT is increasing, with significant Aboriginal language loss among our younger generations. For some of our languages, the situation is critical. The NWT is one of the few homelands in the world for most of these languages. If we do not act, these languages may be lost.

Assessing the Condition of French and English

From a national and international perspective, French is a strong language, with approximately 6.6 million Canadians reporting French as their mother tongue and approximately 105 million speakers worldwide. In the NWT, over 3000 residents claim to speak French well enough to carry on a conversation. However, French is the mother

tongue of about 900 NWT residents and the primary home language for only 350 residents. This data indicates that approximately 61% of mother tongue francophones have shifted to English in the home, which is a very high rate of shift.

Aboriginal people and francophones are shifting toward the use of English, steadily increasing its use in all aspects of life. English has become the dominant language in the NWT, with 34 thousand out of a population of 40 thousand using English as their home language.

5. Identifying Ways to Revitalize Our Official Languages

With all of our official languages (other than English) in decline, what can we do that we have not already tried? And why does language use continue to decline in spite of the *Official Languages Act* and language programming? To answer these questions, the Special Committee reviewed a wide range of information regarding language revitalization theory and practice.

Understanding Language Revitalization

The Committee learned that there are no simple answers to the problem of language shift. However, one of the first and most important steps to reversing language shift is language planning. Effective language planning is based on five main stages:

- Establishing supportive policies based on recognition of individual and collective language rights
- Documenting the language before fluent speakers are lost
- Developing terminology so the language can adapt to changes in governance, technology, and the economy
- Actively developing and implementing programs and services that strengthen the everyday use of the language, particularly in the home
- Evaluating and adjusting the plan for effectiveness.

The condition of the language determines the types of activities that must be carried out. For example, if there are very few fluent speakers alive, then documenting the language is most important. If the language is relatively strong, then steps must be taken to ensure continued language use throughout the community — at home, work, and school.

Countries and language communities have used different methods to preserve and revitalize declining languages. For example:

- The Maori in New Zealand began ‘language nests’, where preschoolers and their parents could learn the language from volunteer elders at community-based language centres
- The Hawaiians used their sacred dances and songs as a basis for language revival
- The Navajo took control of their schools and offered immersion programming

SUMMARY REPORT

- The Sámi in Scandinavia established language homelands where special language rights exist
- The Welsh in Great Britain established a strong language board and actively promoted the language in home, work, and school
- Quebec enacted strong language laws, promoting the French language at all levels of society.

Canada's Aboriginal peoples have been struggling for many years to find effective ways to revitalize their languages. Two major reports — *Toward Linguistic Justice for First Nations* (1990) and *Toward A Rebirth of First Nation Languages* (1991) – concluded that language revitalization must include:

- Recognition and support for Aboriginal languages through legislation and policy
- Active support from First Nations governments and agencies
- Community-based control of language programming
- Promotion of the languages as an integral part of the healing process and to overcome negative attitudes that have arisen from past repression of the languages
- Aboriginal language instruction in the schools
- Language planning
- A focus on intergenerational transmission within the home and community.

Assessing Languages Legislation

Every country or language community that has had some success with language revitalization has used some form of protective and supportive legislation. In Canada, the French and English languages are protected through the *Constitution Act* (1982) and the *Official Languages Act* (1985) of Canada. Although the *Constitution Act* also recognizes inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights, which may include language rights, these rights have not been fully defined. Inherent Aboriginal language rights are more likely to be defined through self-government agreements.

Many of the provinces and territories have their own language legislation, primarily dealing with French and English. This legislation varies widely. As well, Quebec recognizes the right of Aboriginal people to maintain their own language, and the three northern territories have legislation to preserve, develop, and enhance Aboriginal languages. Nunavut is currently reviewing its Official Languages and Education Acts and may strengthen both. The NWT's *Official Languages Act* is currently one of the stronger pieces of provincial/territorial language legislation.

Developing an NWT Language Revitalization Framework

Through its research and consultations, the Special Committee identified the most promising language revitalization practices and grouped these into a framework with nine major categories: legislation and policy, management, financing, service delivery, human resource development, research and development, education, promotion, and media and

SUMMARY REPORT

technology. The framework suggests that the following actions must be taken in each of these nine areas.

A. Legislation and Policy: Effective language revitalization must include language legislation that recognizes the right of language communities to achieve some degree of cultural independence, particularly within their homelands. This legislation must be strong enough to ensure that governments and other agencies provide language services. The legislation must clearly state language rights, provide for clear roles and responsibilities, and have sanctions and remedies where rights have been violated. Importantly, legislation must provide for language rights within the education system. Finally, effective legislation establishes some form of language board to promote and monitor language revitalization efforts.

B. Management: Effective language revitalization requires good management, with decisions guided by policy. Affected language communities must be part of the decision-making process. Comprehensive planning must be done based on valid linguistic information. Implementation must include ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

C. Financing: Base funding must be allocated for language activities to ensure that program and service needs can be met. As well, governments can partner with language communities to establish special language funds, as needed. Funding must be flexible and stable enough to allow for the involvement of language communities and ensure consistent programming.

D. Service Delivery: A broad range of services must be offered and available to indigenous or minority language speakers, particularly within their language territories. These services should be available even where clients are bilingual.

E. Human Resource Development: Effective language revitalization requires trained and certified interpreter/translators and language instructors. Training must be provided and tied to meaningful employment opportunities. Second-language training should be available to non-speakers who provide services to a specific language community.

F. Research and Development: Ongoing language research and development must be carried out. This work would normally include language documentation, including the use of oral histories, preparation of dictionaries and other resource materials, and terminology development. It can also include the mapping and use of traditional place names. Elders and language specialists should be used for all these activities.

G. Education: Threatened or minority languages must be part of the education system. Members of an indigenous or minority language community must be able to access language education from preschool through high school, with proper curricula and adequate resources. Language education should incorporate different approaches, including first-language, second-language, immersion and bilingual education. Language training should be provided to parents, so that language education is reinforced at home,

and vice versa. Language instructors and teachers must have proper training and certification.

H. Promotion: The value of the threatened or minority language and culture must be positively promoted throughout society, particularly among youth. The language must be modernized so that it can be used in all situations and must be visible throughout the community. Speakers must role model the use of the language and new speakers should be encouraged rather than criticized or teased.

I. Media and Technology: Media and technology must provide exposure for the language in contemporary situations. Support for locally-controlled radio, television, newspaper, and other media must be provided. Efforts must be made to adapt the language to word processing, publishing, and mapping applications, among others. Media training for speakers should be supported.

The language revitalization framework suggests that where careful attention is paid to all of these actions, and where these actions are elements of a broader strategic plan, revitalization efforts will be more successful.

6. Assessing Official Languages Legislation: Is it Working?

The Special Committee was asked to assess the provisions and implementation of the *Official Languages Act* and other languages legislation and policy in the NWT. The Committee used the language revitalization framework above as a guide for this assessment. For this summary, the Committee's main observations and conclusions are presented under three headings: Legislation, Management, and Program and Service Delivery.

Assessing NWT Languages Legislation

The NWT *Official Languages Act* is very useful and important because it recognizes and grants rights to the Aboriginal and French languages, along with English. However, the *OLA* appears to be weak in the following areas:

- Definition of language rights
- Acknowledgement of the rights and responsibilities of language communities, particularly for the Aboriginal languages within their homelands
- Accountability for the *Act*
- Application of the *Act*

The effectiveness of the Office of the Languages Commissioner is also limited. This situation may be due to several factors, including the weak definition of language rights and the Commissioner's limited authority under the *OLA*. As well, the Legislative Assembly has often not responded to the Commissioners' recommendations. Importantly, the dual 'language watchdog' and 'language promotion' role of the

SUMMARY REPORT

Commissioner may be too broad for the Office to be effective. The role and responsibilities of the Languages Commissioner must be reassessed. The establishment of a language board or some other promotional agency must be considered.

Although the *Education Act* (1995) provides for Aboriginal first- and second-language instruction, the *Act* places conditions on the delivery of language programming. These conditions may be proving to be too restrictive — program delivery to date is limited and often inadequate.

Aboriginal self-government agreements will effectively provide constitutional recognition of Aboriginal language and cultural rights. The *OLA* will not affect these rights but can complement them by acknowledging the collective language rights of our Aboriginal peoples.

Assessing Official Languages Management and Funding

For the purposes of this review, language management was assessed under four main categories: policy and guidelines, management structures, planning and accountability, and funding.

Policies and Guidelines

The GNWT's *Official Languages Policy* states that the public shall have “reasonable access to its programs and services in the official languages.” The policy also lists the government boards and agencies that must follow the policy. The Minister of ECE is responsible for coordinating the implementation of this policy, and individual Ministers are responsible for implementation within their own departments.

The *Official Language Guidelines Manual* provides a description of service delivery expectations. It establishes designated areas and offices for certain official languages, and also addresses translation, advertising, and signage expectations. The Guidelines state that government departments are required to let the public know that official language services are available. Notifying the public of these services is called ‘active offer’.

The Special Committee has learned that many government departments and agencies are not following the Policy and Guidelines consistently. The GNWT has not maintained the ability to delivery official language services in all designated areas. “Active offer”² procedures are often not in place. Significantly, it appears that a majority of departments do not monitor the application of the *Act*, Policy, or Guidelines. Few departments have an implementation plan regarding official language service delivery. The Special Committee has concluded that the Policy and Guidelines are inadequate to ensure proper implementation of the *OLA*.

Management Structures

Responsibility for the *OLA* rests with the Legislative Assembly rather than with a Minister, as is the case with other legislation. The Minister of ECE is only accountable for implementing government policy, not the *Act* itself. The Languages Commissioner can advise government on language issues but cannot enforce compliance. Day-to-day responsibility for official language implementation is therefore spread out over many departments and agencies. Many departments and agencies have “official languages coordinators”, but in most cases these duties are minor, attached to another position, and of low priority. Within ECE, which manages the majority of official languages funding, language responsibilities are spread throughout the department and often appear to overlap. This management structure provides limited accountability and made it difficult for the Special Committee to access information and data regarding official language services.

Effective language revitalization calls for the active participation of language communities in decision-making. The current management structure provides for minimal input and involvement by the language communities.

Planning and Accountability

A comprehensive official languages implementation plan does not exist, even though this type of plan has been recommended in numerous studies since the late 1980s. Government responses to language recommendations have generally been uncoordinated. Most departments and agencies do not include official language activities or objectives in their annual business plans. The lack of coordinated and regular planning indicates that official languages are a low priority within government. In 1999-2000 the GNWT did fund the development of language plans by each of the Aboriginal language communities and these plans have been used to guide regional language activities.

Effective planning includes an evaluation or accountability system. However, the government is not regularly gathering and reviewing the data and information required for proper evaluation. The evaluation that does occur is based on “outputs” (the actions that have been taken) rather than “outcomes” (the results of these actions), so it is difficult to determine which activities are most effective.

Funding

Since 1985, the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement has provided an average of approximately \$3.3 million per year for the Aboriginal languages and \$2.0 million per year for French. Cooperation Agreement funding has provided a valuable base for consistent official language programs and services and should be continued.

French funding from the Agreement has been primarily used for French language service delivery by GNWT departments. Aboriginal language funding has been used for interpreter/translator training and services, teacher training, development of language

SUMMARY REPORT

materials, and Aboriginal language broadcasting. For many years, the GNWT's Language Bureau, which provided interpreter/translator and terminology development services to departments, absorbed a major share of the Aboriginal language funding. Some funding has always been allocated to community-based language projects. Recently, a higher percentage of the funding has been transferred to the Aboriginal language communities through contribution agreements. This funding is used to carry out the work in language plans which include a wide variety of community-based language activities.

The GNWT has provided approximately \$6.5 million per year of base funding for the Aboriginal languages. This amount rose to over \$8 million in the current year. Most of the GNWT funding has gone to the District Education Councils (DECs) for Aboriginal language education. The GNWT provides per-student funding to French language schools and receives approximately \$1 million per year from the federal government for minority language schooling.

The Special Committee is concerned that some \$2.5 million of the 2000-2001 funding allocated to DECs for Aboriginal language education was reallocated for other educational purposes. Although the DECs currently have the authority to do this type of reallocation, the Committee does not support this approach, especially when language loss among children is so high.

The GNWT also funds the Office of the Languages Commissioner. This has averaged approximately \$350 thousand per year, but rose during the past year to \$450 thousand.

Overall, the Special Committee has concluded that existing funding could be used more effectively, although more funding would be beneficial. The Committee has also concluded that the GNWT is not in a good position to determine the cost-effectiveness of its programs, due to inadequate planning and evaluation systems. The current funding might be better utilized by involving language communities in programming and budgetary planning, ensuring that official languages funding (particularly education funding) is used for the intended purposes, and establishing "outcome" based evaluation methods. To increase the funding available for language revitalization activities, other approaches, such as partnerships and support for language endowment funds, could be considered.

Assessing Official Language Program and Service Delivery

The GNWT cannot, on its own, protect or revitalize minority or threatened languages. However, the government can ensure that members of a language community have reasonable access to programs and services in their indigenous language. This section reviews Aboriginal and French language programming along with official language services delivery as a whole.

SUMMARY REPORT

Aboriginal Language Programming

GNWT legislation and policy emphasizes the need for preservation and development of the Aboriginal languages. Service delivery is considered a lower priority. The GNWT and language communities have therefore put considerable effort into a variety of Aboriginal language programs, including:

- Standardization of writing systems and ongoing terminology development
- Aboriginal place name research and mapping
- Interpreter/translator (I/T) and language instructor training
- Aboriginal language education
- Language promotion
- Support for Aboriginal language media.

The highlights of this programming include:

- The development of dictionaries and terminology lists for most of the Aboriginal languages
- The recording, transcribing, and/or video-taping of elders' histories and stories
- The production of a wide variety of language resources, including texts, booklets, and videos
- The identification and mapping of over 2000 Aboriginal place names
- The training and certification of I/Ts, particularly in the areas of health and justice
- The ongoing training of language instructors
- The production of signage in all languages as a promotional tool
- The ongoing funding of Aboriginal language radio and television productions, managed by Aboriginal broadcasting organizations.

Although many of these activities have been successful, the Special Committee has also identified some key issues that need to be addressed:

- Aboriginal language literacy rates remain low in the NWT and dialect differences continue to pose problems within language communities.
- No central "clearinghouse" facility for Aboriginal language materials exists, so these materials have often been inadequately circulated or shared. In some cases, duplication occurs, and in others, valuable materials have been lost.
- The training of interpreter/translators has been irregular. Minimal training has taken place over the past few years. The absence of proper I/T certification continues to pose problems, particularly within the justice system. ECE is currently working with language communities to develop an I/T certification process. Ongoing I/T training must be tied to meaningful employment opportunities if it is to be successful.
- The number of Aboriginal teachers within the education system continues to be low. Many language instructors are uncertified and have limited access to resource materials.
- Aboriginal language programming in the schools is not being properly or seriously implemented.
- Access to second-language training in the Aboriginal languages is limited for parents, GNWT staff, or other adults who wish to learn the language or improve their skills.

SUMMARY REPORT

- Language promotion activities are not coordinated or evaluated for success.
- The GNWT is not utilizing available Aboriginal font software on its computer systems.

Each of these issues is addressed in the Special Committee's final recommendations.

French Language Programming

Federal and GNWT legislation and policy emphasizes French language service delivery. However, a small amount of funding is provided to the francophone community to support cultural and community development. This funding has been used for youth immersion programming, language promotion, pre-school programming, support for French language media, and artistic events.

Official Language Service Delivery

The GNWT is required to deliver services in all of the official languages, according to certain provisions of the *OLA* and the Official Languages Policy and Guidelines. The Special Committee used three main indicators to assess the effectiveness of GNWT official language service delivery: bilingualism within the public service, service delivery data and information from departments, and descriptions of service delivery activities.

- Although the GNWT has “bilingual bonus” and “language allowance” policies, very few positions are designated as bilingual. In 2001, approximately 4% of public servants received either a bilingual bonus or language allowance. No assessment has been done of these policies or the impact they have had on service delivery. The Special Committee believes that the effective use of bilingual staff can significantly improve official language service delivery.
- Minimal official language data and information are being gathered or reviewed by departments, so the Special Committee found it difficult to accurately assess service delivery demand or use. However, the research indicates that the provision of services in the official languages is not a priority within most departments.
- The main services being provided by the GNWT include:
 - ✓ Translation of bills and other legal documents into French
 - ✓ Provision of court interpreter services (\$19 thousand was spent in 2001-2002)
 - ✓ Interpreter services for front-line health and social services delivery
 - ✓ Translation of materials for the public.

Overall, few departments appear to have been making any serious effort to provide services in the official languages, other than English.

7. Considering Options for Change

Through its research and consultations, the Special Committee concluded that the current legislative, management, and program/service delivery system for official languages is inadequate and needs strengthening. In its 2002 Progress Report, preliminary directions for change were identified. Language communities reviewed these directions at the Second Territorial Language Assembly held in October 2002. Following this Assembly, the Committee developed options for further review, ranging from basic change to a highly regulated language environment. In developing its options, the Special Committee paid attention to the need for a ‘horizontal’ or shared governance model and to the issue of accountability. The Committee estimated and considered both the benefits and costs of the various options available. The complete range of options is detailed in the Final Report. The Committee’s final recommendations are presented below.

8. Establishing a Vision and Recommending Change

In presenting its final recommendations, the Special Committee recognizes that language revitalization in the NWT is a challenging task. Existing funding must be used more effectively and new funding must be found. Governments, industry, and agencies must find better ways of working together to support language activities. Attitudes about the use of our Aboriginal and French languages must change. We must promote the resource value of our language for all northern residents, and work to reestablish a multilingual society, consistent with our historical and cultural fabric. We must recognize that our earlier policies resulted in significant loss of language and cultural practices among Aboriginal peoples, leading to social disruption. We must acknowledge these losses and work to rebuild relationships based on equality, respect, and acceptance. We must view language revitalization as an essential element of northern community development.

In our efforts, we must remember that the definition and goal of language revitalization is sustainable transmission of the language between generations — elders, parents, and children. We must therefore focus on doing those things that most effectively increase the functional and fluent use of our languages within our homes, schools, and communities. Finally, we must establish a clear, collective vision. The vision established by the Special Committee in its final report can be summarized as follows:

Over the next 25 years, all of our citizens embrace the multilingual, multicultural fabric of our territories and commit themselves — personally, professionally, and collectively — to maintaining and nurturing our diverse and dynamic characteristics as a northern society. We recognize the inherent right of Aboriginal peoples to maintain and promote their languages and cultures within their own homelands. English and French speakers maintain their current constitutional protection throughout the territories and also have the opportunity and support to learn the language and culture of our indigenous peoples.

Through the interchange of information, knowledge, beliefs, and practices, we collectively broaden and deepen our understanding of the human condition. We are able

SUMMARY REPORT

to identify, develop, and implement a range of creative and culturally-rich approaches to address social, political, and economic issues, while nurturing tolerant, supportive, and respectful relationships among all of our diverse language groups.

Recommending the Changes Required

In order to fulfill our mandate, we, the members of the Special Committee, present the following recommendations. These recommendations represent our preferred combination of benefit and investment, based on our research, consultations, and conclusions. We believe that these recommendations will strengthen all official languages of the NWT and provide a solid basis for achieving the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*.

A. to clarify and strengthen official languages legislation and policy, we recommend that:

- A1. The current version of the *OLA* be updated to remove repealed sections and correct spelling, terminology, and translation errors.
- A2. Dene terms be used in the *OLA* for North Slavey, South Slavey, Dogrib, and Chipewyan, with the advice and consent of the affected language communities.
- A3. North and South Slavey (as such, or using Dene terms) and Inuvialuktun and Inuinnaqtun be listed as separate languages in Section 4 of the *OLA*, and removed from the Interpretation section, with the consent of the affected language communities.
- A4. Michif research be funded with the intent of determining an appropriate designation for this language.
- A5. The Preamble be amended to recognize the important role of language communities in preserving and developing their own languages and to acknowledge shared responsibility for language enhancement.
- A6. Section 14 of the *OLA* be clarified and defined through a combination of regulation and policy. Regulations be established for service delivery relating to occupational health and safety, health, and social services. Other services be defined through policy rather than guidelines.
- A7. Departments and agencies required to comply with the *OLA* be listed in regulations, along with provisions for compliance where these services are being provided by other agencies.

SUMMARY REPORT

- A8. The *OLA* designate a Minister responsible, with the authority to implement the *Act* and the obligation to submit an annual official languages report to the Legislative Assembly.
- A9. An Aboriginal Languages Board be legislated through the *OLA* to advise the Minister responsible regarding planning, promotion, coordination, and resource allocation. This Board will provide a legislated accountability link between the language communities and the GNWT.
- The terms of reference for this Board -- along with its structure, appointment process, consultation functions, and other necessary matters -- be established through regulation.
- A10. Aboriginal Languages Board members be nominated by their respective language communities, recommended by the Minister responsible, and appointed by the Legislative Assembly.
- A11. Concurrent with the establishment of the Aboriginal Languages Board, the broad promotional mandate of the Languages Commissioner be reduced through the repeal of the last phrase in Section 20(1) and Section 20(3) of the *OLA*. The Commissioner's promotional role is transferred to the Minister responsible and the Aboriginal Languages Board. The Commissioner continues to ensure compliance with the strengthened *OLA*.
- A12. Section 19(2) and 19(3) of the *OLA* be repealed, allowing the Office of the Languages Commissioner to be independent of the public service. The Assembly review the Office of the Languages Commissioner to clarify its management systems and administrative support relationships.
- A13. A provision be added to the *OLA* to allow for the appointment of an "acting" Languages Commissioner between appointments or where the Commissioner is otherwise unable to perform his/her functions.
- A14. A provision be added to the *OLA* requiring the Legislative Assembly to respond to the Commissioner's annual report within 180 days of the tabling of that report.
- A15. The *OLA* provide for recognition of the collective language rights of Aboriginal peoples within their homelands, consistent with current and pending land claims and self-governance agreements.
- A16. The *OLA* [Section 29(1)] be amended to require smaller-scale evaluations every five years, beginning in 2008 (concurrent with the release of the 2006 Census Canada language data), to ensure the provisions and implementation of the *OLA* and other official language initiatives are effective.

SUMMARY REPORT

B. to improve official languages management and accountability, we recommend that:

- B1. The Minister responsible consider establishing a small Official Languages Secretariat (OLS) by reprofiling existing resources. The OLS would provide a single point of access regarding official language matters and a focus for accountability within the GNWT .

The OLS would report directly to the Minister and would carry out the following management and policy functions:

- Liaison with the French and Aboriginal language communities
 - Preparation, monitoring, and evaluation of the official languages implementation plan and evaluation framework
 - Liaise with the Bureau of Statistics (see B4)
 - Negotiation and management of the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement
 - Management of contribution agreements with the official language communities
 - Operational support for the Aboriginal Languages Board
 - Operational and leadership support for the establishment of one-window service centres
 - Support the development of official languages regulations and policies
 - Intergovernmental relations regarding languages.
- B2. The Minister responsible develop a GNWT-wide official languages implementation plan and evaluation/accountability framework, based on the Treasury Board (2001) model, that calls for the identification, gathering, and ongoing analysis of output-and outcome-based data.
- B3. The Minister responsible ensure that language communities are fully consulted on the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement action plan and evaluation framework.
- B4. The Bureau of Statistics be tasked to gather and analyze data from Census Canada, a modified Labour Force Survey, and current sociolinguistic studies, and incorporate this data into a language report every five years, beginning in 2003 with the release of the 2001 Census Canada language data.

C. to ensure effective and adequate financing, we recommend that:

- C1. The Minister responsible for the *OLA* ensure that all funding allocated for official languages be used for that purpose.
- C2. Funding for official languages initiatives be increased as required to implement the recommendations contained in this report.

SUMMARY REPORT

- C3. The Minister responsible take steps to ensure that the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement is maintained and maximizes federal participation.
- C4. The GNWT enter into multi-year, flexible-funding agreements with the language communities to provide more certainty and program stability, with appropriate accountability mechanisms.
- C5. The GNWT support language community initiatives to generate other sources of language revenue, including endowment funds and business activities that support language enhancement.

D. to enhance official language service delivery, we recommend that:

- D1. 'Active offer' with respect to occupational health and safety and health and social services be defined through regulations, and through policy for all other services.
- D2. The Minister responsible ensure that all departments and agencies properly implement 'active offer', with procedures and measures for tracking demand and service delivery.
- D3. The GNWT evaluate the bilingual bonus directive, with the intent of prioritizing and increasing the number of bilingual positions for front-line service delivery.
- D4. The Minister responsible work with stakeholders to provide communities with cost-effective access to basic translation equipment for government, industry, and public information meetings and gatherings.
- D5. The Minister responsible work with the federal government and francophone community to support the establishment of a pilot French language service centre for Yellowknife. This centre would provide one-window access to government services in French and would include a 1-800 line for outlying communities.
- D6. The Minister responsible consult with the Aboriginal language communities and the Aboriginal Languages Board regarding the possible establishment of a pilot Aboriginal language service centre.
- D7. The Minister responsible evaluate the pilot service centres after two years to determine their viability and make recommendations accordingly.
- D8. The Official Languages Secretariat publish an updated public registry of French and Aboriginal language interpreter/translators.

SUMMARY REPORT

E. to build human resource capacity in the official languages, we recommend that:

- E1. The Minister responsible work with the Aboriginal language communities to expand the development of regional and/or territorial certification standards for interpreter/translators and provide I/T training in regions. The initial focus be on health, social services, justice, and other areas of regional priority. Training is tied to forecasted employment and business opportunities arising from increased official language service delivery.
- E2. The Minister of ECE consolidate and increase the regional delivery of Aboriginal language instructor training according to standards set jointly by the language communities and ECE. Training is tied to forecasted employment opportunities arising from a strengthening of Aboriginal language provisions in the *Education Act* (1995).
- E3. The Minister of ECE develop an Aboriginal second-language curriculum for adults and promote and support language training for GNWT employees, parents, and other interested adults.
- E4. The Minister responsible and the Minister of ECE meet with Aurora College, Aboriginal language communities, and cultural institutes to review the development and delivery of I/T, language instructor, and adult language training, to improve cost-effectiveness and the overall success rate.
- E5. Aurora College and other public agencies providing language training submit an annual report of their activities to the Minister responsible and the Aboriginal Languages Board.

F. to support research and development for official languages, we recommend that:

- F1. The Minister responsible work closely with the Aboriginal language communities, the respective cultural institutes, and Elders' Councils to identify terminology needs, fund terminology development, and establish regionally-endorsed terminology approval processes.
- F2. The Minister responsible work closely with the Aboriginal language communities and cultural institutes to establish a coordinated cataloguing and distribution process for Aboriginal language resource materials.
- F3. The Oral Traditions (now Cultural Projects) and Geographic Place Names programs be evaluated and considered for increased funding.

SUMMARY REPORT

G. to increase and improve Aboriginal language education, we recommend that:

- G1. The Minister of ECE issue a Ministerial Directive requiring education authorities to use Aboriginal language funding for the purposes intended. This Directive is a necessary first step in improving Aboriginal language programming in the schools.
- G2. The Minister of ECE clarify interpretation and strengthen implementation of Section 73.3 of the *Education Act* (1995), which directs education authorities to provide Aboriginal language instruction.
- G3. The Minister of ECE issue a Ministerial Directive regarding the minimum number of instructional hours for Aboriginal languages. This Directive strengthens the provision of Section 73.3 of the *Education Act* (1995). Minimum hours of instruction would subsequently be addressed through regulations, consistent with other subject areas.
- G4. The Minister of ECE amend the *Education Act* (1995) to rebalance the authority of the Minister and education authorities with respect to Aboriginal language programming to improve accountability.
- G5. The Minister of ECE oversee the development of a comprehensive Aboriginal language arts curriculum in consultation and cooperation with the language communities and education authorities.
- G6. The Minister of ECE oversee the development of early childhood immersion programming in consultation and cooperation with language communities and education authorities.
- G7. The Minister of ECE work closely with the Aboriginal language communities, College, and other agencies to actively recruit, train, and certify Aboriginal language instructors and teachers. This task would include a review of pay scales and training/recruitment incentives.
- G8. The Minister of ECE prepare a strategic plan for Aboriginal languages in education, early childhood through grade 12, including the introduction of Aboriginal language instruction in core subject areas. This plan would include partnerships with language communities and the need to link language development in the school and at home.
- G9. The Minister of ECE amend the *Education Act* (1995) to grant Aboriginal parents the right to petition for Aboriginal immersion schooling, beginning at the primary level, within their language homelands (see A15), and where numbers warrant.

SUMMARY REPORT

- G10. The Minister of ECE work with the education authorities to increase the role and capacity of TLCs to develop resource materials and to enhance partnerships with language communities.
- G11. The Minister of ECE submit an annual report on the status of curriculum development and Aboriginal language education to the Legislative Assembly and the Aboriginal Languages Board.

H. to promote official languages, we recommend that:

- H1. The Minister responsible develop an Aboriginal languages social-marketing plan in consultation with the language communities, to be implemented jointly by the Minister and the language communities. The Aboriginal Languages Board, once established, would play a lead role in ongoing language promotion activities.
- H2. The Minister responsible provide support to the French language community to develop and implement a social-marketing plan.
- H3. Community leaders and other prominent role models take responsibility for using their traditional languages wherever possible.
- H4. The Minister responsible and language communities encourage the federal government, industry, and other agencies to use and profile the Aboriginal and French languages, particularly in regions and areas where the languages are commonly used.
- H5. The Minister responsible increase funding for promotional activities targeting youth.
- H6. The GNWT promote and offer cross-cultural and language training for staff as an orientation and professional development activity.

I. to increase the use of official languages in media and technology, we recommend that:

- I1. The GNWT expand its support for, and utilization of, Aboriginal and French language media, along with support for other communication initiatives, including the use of the internet, digital technology, and emerging media technologies.
- I2. The Minister of ECE and other agencies support media and technology training for Aboriginal language speakers through scholarships and other incentives.
- I3. The Minister responsible ensure current Aboriginal languages fonts are available to GNWT staff and encourage their use. The use of these fonts becomes more

SUMMARY REPORT

important as Aboriginal organizations and communities increasingly adopt traditional place names incorporating specialized fonts.

- I4. The Minister responsible assist Aboriginal language communities to incorporate Aboriginal language fonts on specialized software applications (such as GIS programs) and address other technical issues, as needed, to support the use of Aboriginal languages in a wide range of technical applications.

J. to ensure that the recommendations and implementation/costing schedule proposed in this report are advanced, we further recommend that:

- J1. The Premier appoint a Minister responsible for the *OLA* within 60 days of the acceptance of this report by the Legislative Assembly.
- J2. The Government introduce the Proposed Bill to Amend the *Official Languages Act* during the term of the current Assembly.
- J3. The Minister responsible report to the Legislative Assembly within one year of the acceptance of this report. This report will address:
- The status and progress of the implementation of the recommendations
 - The status of the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement
 - Business plans and budgetary provisions for 2004-2005 and beyond.

Carrying Out the Recommendations

We believe that these recommendations can be achieved, but not all at once. We have therefore included an implementation and investment schedule in our final report that uses the following approaches:

- Invest in efforts that will have long-term results, such as early childhood and bilingual education
- Make full use of existing funding by ensuring that language funding is used as intended, particularly within the education system
- Evaluate programs for cost-effectiveness
- Establish stronger working relationships between programs, such as the schools and language communities
- Reduce administrative costs through multi-year funding arrangements, cost sharing, and partnerships
- Make use of materials developed in other territories or provinces.

This schedule uses existing funds for the first year, phases in costly activities over five-years to reduce annual costs, and stresses good planning to ensure success and accountability.

Conclusion

The members of the Special Committee acknowledge and are grateful for the support we received during this review. We believe we have developed a plan that is meaningful and practical. The plan calls upon every member of our northern society to care for and respect our languages and our cultures. We recognize that the NWT faces enormous and unique challenges as we strive to preserve and revitalize our official languages and ensure that these languages continue to contribute to a healthy and sustainable society. We are one of only a few homelands to many of these languages. We should be proud of the historic, current, and future value and benefits these languages bring to us all. The vision is clear and the challenges are many. We must accept them with enthusiasm.