



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Fourth Session

Standing Committee
on
Alberta's Economic Future

Ministry of Culture
Consideration of Main Estimates

Tuesday, March 7, 2023
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Fourth Session**

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

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Nilam Jetha, Assistant Deputy Minister, Status of Women and Strategic Integration

Rheal Poirier, Executive Director, Francophone Secretariat

Nathaniel Smith, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Creative and Community Development

9 a.m.

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

[Mr. van Dijken in the chair]

**Ministry of Culture
Consideration of Main Estimates**

The Chair: Okay. Good morning, everyone. I would like to call the meeting to order and welcome everyone in attendance. The committee has under consideration the estimates of the Ministry of Culture for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

I'd ask that we go around the table and have members introduce themselves for the record. Minister, please introduce the officials who are joining you at the table. My name is Glenn van Dijken. I'm the MLA for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock and the chair of this committee. We will begin starting to my right.

Ms Goehring: Good morning. I'm the deputy chair of this committee. I'm Nicole Goehring, the MLA for the beautiful Edmonton-Castle Downs. Welcome.

Mr. Rowswell: Hi. Garth Rowswell, MLA for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

Mrs. Allard: Good morning. Tracy Allard, MLA for Grande Prairie.

Mr. McIver: Ric McIver, MLA for Calgary-Hays.

Ms Rosin: Miranda Rosin, MLA for beautiful Banff-Kananaskis.

Mr. Stephan: MLA Jason Stephan, MLA for Red Deer-South.

Mr. Luan: Jason Luan, Minister of Culture, MLA for Calgary-Foothills. I'll take the chance, through you, Chair, to introduce my officials now. To my left is the deputy minister, Ms Heather Caltagirone. Further to her left is ADM Nathaniel Smith, and then further to the left is Nilam Jetha, ADM for status of women. To my right is ADM and senior financial officer, Jeff . . .

Mr. Dumont: Dumont.

Mr. Luan: . . . Dumont. Thank you.

Those are my officials. I also have a couple of ADMs in the gallery here: ADM for heritage, David Link, and a couple of others on this side. Yes. Our Francophone Secretariat, Rheal. Thank you for joining us.

Those are my officials.

Ms Renaud: Marie Renaud, MLA for St. Albert.

Member Irwin: Janis Irwin, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Eggen: Good morning. My name is David Eggen. I'm the MLA for Edmonton-North West.

The Chair: Hon. Ms Issik, if you could introduce yourself at this time.

Ms Issik: Good morning. Whitney Issik, MLA for Calgary-Glenmore.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd like to note the following substitutions for the record: Ms Rosin for hon. Ms Armstrong-Homeniuk, hon. Ms Issik for Mr. Walker.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Please note that the microphones are operated by the *Hansard* staff. Committee proceedings are live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and videostream and transcripts of meetings can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website. Members participating remotely are encouraged to turn their camera on while speaking and mute their microphone when not speaking. Remote participants who wish to be placed on the speakers list are asked to e-mail or message the committee clerk, and members in the room should signal to the chair. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

Hon. members, the standing orders set out the process for consideration of the main estimates. A total of three hours has been scheduled for consideration of the estimates for the Ministry of Culture. Standing Order 59.01(6) establishes the speaking rotation and speaking times. In brief, the minister or member of Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf will have 10 minutes to address the committee. At the conclusion of the minister's comments a 60-minute speaking block for the Official Opposition begins, followed by a 20-minute speaking block for independent members, if there are any, and then a 20-minute speaking block for the government caucus.

Individuals may only speak for up to 10 minutes at a time, but speaking times may be combined between the member and the minister. After this, speaking times will follow the same rotation of the Official Opposition, independent members, and the government caucus. The member and minister may each speak once for a maximum of five minutes, or these times may be combined, making it a 10-minute block. If members have any questions regarding speaking times or the rotation, please send an e-mail or message to the committee clerk, Aaron Roth, about the process.

With the concurrence of the committee I will call a five-minute break near the midpoint of the meeting; however, the three-hour clock will continue to run. Does anyone oppose having the break? We will try and do that about mid-meeting.

Ministry officials may be present and at the direction of the minister may address the committee. Ministry officials seated in the gallery, if called upon, have access to a microphone in the gallery area and are asked to please introduce themselves for the record prior to commenting. Pages are available to deliver notes and other materials between the gallery and the table. Attendees in the gallery may not approach the table. Space permitting, opposition caucus staff may sit at the table to assist their members; however, members have priority to sit at the table at all times.

If debate is exhausted prior to three hours, the ministry's estimates are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule, and the committee will adjourn.

Points of order will be dealt with as they arise, and individual speaking times will be paused. However, the speaking block time and the overall three-hour meeting clock will continue to run.

Any written material provided in response to questions raised during main estimates should be tabled by the minister in the Assembly for the benefit of all members.

The vote on the estimates and any amendments will occur in Committee of Supply on March 16, 2023. Amendments must be in writing and approved by Parliamentary Counsel prior to the meeting at which they are to be moved. The original amendment is to be deposited with the committee clerk with 20 hard copies. An electronic version of the signed original should be provided to the committee clerk for distribution to committee members.

Finally, the committee should have the opportunity to hear both questions and answers without interruption during estimates debate. Debate flows through the chair at all times, including instances when speaking time is shared between a member and the minister.

I will now invite the Minister of Culture to begin with your opening remarks. Minister, you have 10 minutes.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, hon. members. I am pleased to be here with you today to discuss the most recent budget for the Ministry of Culture. Budget 2023 is securing Alberta's future. When arts, culture, nonprofits, heritage, sports thrive in Alberta, Albertans thrive in a great place to live, invest, and do business. The Ministry of Culture increases opportunities for Albertans to tell their stories and live their dreams.

Whether fund raising for a cause, taking home a sports trophy, inspiring others through your art, from dinosaurs to soccer, from books to concerts to cultural events, all bring economic benefits to our province, from encouraging film and television productions that broadcast our beautiful province to the world to caring for and showcasing artifacts and places with great cultural significance to ensuring our young people have affordable access to sports and recreation that increases their well-being to helping making sure that Alberta is a place where all feel welcome and safe.

The key function areas that this ministry supports include arts, culture, sports, community development, volunteer support, status of women, and Francophonie, which emphasize the quality of life for Albertans. Budget 2023 maintained the core funding across all key functions of my ministry. That is the top message I want to deliver to you. With stable funding and an operating budget of \$307.1 million my ministry is working very hard to improve the quality of life for all Albertans as well as support initiatives that create jobs and build strong communities.

For the overall budget I would highlight a couple of points, and then I will move into my key message number two, which is that with the emerging issues and some priorities and some successes that we find, we increased some funding, but I'll talk about that in a second. For the overall budget I'll give you a couple of highlights showing the stability of our sector here, and then I'll move on to the second part.

We are providing \$174.2 million to community and volunteer support services because we know that local nonprofits form the backbone of strong, healthy communities. Much of the budget goes to organizations as grant funding. As many of you are familiar with, this is a matching grant. In my biased view, it is one of the best ways to spend taxpayers' money to support communities.

9:10

Budget 2023 also includes \$28 million in funding for arts. I'm pleased to report that funding to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts will remain stable at \$25.6 million. Within that part, there's \$7 million budgeted for Alberta's Jubilee Auditorium. Some of you may know this; these are the crown jewels of our live event sector.

We also have increased funding for the heritage division to \$50.7 million. This funding supports operations for 20 provincially owned historical sites, museums, and archives, all of which are starting to experience a return to pre-pandemic visitor volumes.

Now I'd like to highlight my key message number two. As I mentioned earlier, with emerging priorities and some of the early successes we found that we're expanding funding in that part. First, I'd like to highlight the sports, physical activity, and recreational areas. As many of you know, inflation has created some challenges for Alberta families, particularly for youth. A pandemic didn't help that at all. With that, we recognize the need for youth to have a greater access and participation in sports and recreation activities,

because that's directly linked to their physical and mental health well-being. With that, we're adding \$8 million new in that regard. Stay tuned; we have a great announcement coming.

The second one is another \$8 million injection to what we call build on our success. We have experienced an unforeseen economic boom in the creative industry, and with that we added another \$8 million there, which is a 35 per cent increase in investment under the name of Alberta media grant. For those of you who might not know the details of this, this is made-in-Alberta productions, and they are the supply chains for the big projects coming here, doing productions. Our belief is that through the support of this, this is not only creating made-in-Alberta jobs but also becoming an incubator for the big productions that come into Alberta. This is, again, based on the success we've seen in the last couple of years, and now we're going double to increase that capacity.

The third one I want to highlight is the increase of community grants like what I mentioned earlier, the matching grant. We have increased 17 per cent of CIP and CFEP grant to a total of \$80 million dollars, which is a historical high. As part of that, the community facility enhancement program has increased 30 per cent, bringing it to \$50 million. And as some of you know, as many of you advocated for your community, this program remains as one of the highest subscribed programs, always has more demand than available resources. We are very pleased to come through with this significant increase here.

The first point I want to mention is the 20 per cent increase in status of women's budget. In particular, we added a \$1 million investment into helping sexual assault victims particularly in rural and remote areas, and I highlighted this initiative in my first attendance in the federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meeting. It was well received.

The next one I'd like to highlight is that we added \$26.7 million in Budget 2023 for cultural capital infrastructure projects such as the one we announced two weeks ago, Citadel Theatre. Folks in Edmonton will be so familiar with that one. And last week I announced Telus Spark, a \$9.5 million investment in the next three years. Along that list we also have Badlands Amphitheatre in central Alberta and Reynolds Museum in central Alberta, too. So those are the additional resources that we intentionally increased for Budget 2023.

Let me sum it up from what I've highlighted to you here. Budget 2023 is great news for Albertans. Not only have we maintained the stability for the core funding across all sections of this ministry, but also we intentionally increased it for those emerging needs. I mentioned about inflation-induced greater needs, mental health because of COVID, and so on.

But, also, we didn't stop there for the creative industry. Many of you know, if you follow the news, that we are having a historical high in our province in terms of the number of projects and the amount of investment coming to our province. With that, for most of the big productions that come to Alberta, 80 per cent of their labour force is from locals here. And who supplies that? It's the small-budget, local productions. It's them that become the incubators for that. We had great success in that last year, and everywhere I go, that I've visited, people tell me about that. With that, we are following through with communities' requests. We doubled the budget, and now we're creating this made-in-Alberta media for that.

Hon. members, I want you to know that in this ministry not only are we anchored to support many parts of the improvement of quality of life for Albertans, but we also have economic benefits in mind. We take what we receive as success and expand that. At the end of the day, we want to create an Alberta as being the best place to live and raise a family.

The Chair: Good. Thank you, Minister.

For the hour that follows, members of the Official Opposition and the minister may speak. Hon. members, you will be able to see the timer for the speaking block both in the committee room and on Microsoft Teams. I believe we will begin with MLA Renaud. Would you like to combine your time with the minister?

Ms Renaud: Sure.

The Chair: Minister, will that work, combined time?

Mr. Luan: Sure. That is 10 minutes of block time, right?

The Chair: Yeah. Well, if you want to do block time – we can combine time, or we can block time.

Mr. Luan: Block time, please.

The Chair: Okay. MLA Renaud, you may proceed. You have 10 minutes.

Ms Renaud: Okay. Thank you. So we are doing 10-minute blocks, correct?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Renaud: First of all, before I begin, I'd just like to recognize that it is francophone month this month and just wish everyone happy francophone month and also recognize that we are on Treaty 6 territory, important territory for the Métis people of Alberta.

Okay. In the 2023-24 government estimates, page 59, I see that total spending on the Francophone Secretariat is up slightly from last year. What precisely does this increase cover? What are the total FTEs in the Francophone Secretariat? Is there a division between the two lines, so between the Francophone Secretariat and the French language services? If there is a split – they're almost even in terms of budget – I would like to know about the FTEs. That is my first question.

The second one. Line 5.2, French language services, involves managing the Canada-Alberta agreement on French language services. What is the total federal transfer amount for the Francophone Secretariat and French language services in these particular estimates, in the 2023-24 estimates? Just for your reference, on page 64 there is an amount listed, the total amount, so I'm looking for that breakout.

My third question is also on page 64 of the government estimates. The transfers from the government of Canada show a \$9.9 million difference between the 2022-23 budget and the '22-23 forecast. I would like to know what the discrepancy is in that number. Is this an unspent amount, money that was, you know, left in Ottawa? If you could explain that to this committee, that would be most helpful.

My next question. Alberta has a growing and thriving francophone community. I think that probably this minister and some of his officials have certainly heard from the ACFA talking about the new census information and how important that information is for future planning. The French Policy 2020-23 Action Plan certainly has a lot of unfinished work, and this government increases French language services and the Francophone Secretariat by a minuscule amount.

9:20

In my first question I noted the slight increase on page 59 of government estimates, the tiny, little increase in the Francophone Secretariat and French language services. I wouldn't mind if the minister or an official would somehow explain why this tiny, little

amount is sufficient to do the work, the unfinished work, that's not only outlined in the annual report, that was just tabled in February, but is also in this report. I think the census information itself would indicate that there is a lot of work to be done, yet in this budget amount I see this tiny, little, minuscule amount that is supposed to, I guess, augment the work of this ministry.

Then I look in comparison – and I'll hear the government say, "Well, you know, we have to tighten our belts and be careful," but in the same budget we just saw this government dump millions into an already bloated Premier's office. If the minister could explain what his role was, really, in talking up at cabinet the need for additional dollars in this ministry, in this particular area, that would be helpful. If not, if the minister thought the money was sufficient and the work was going along just as planned and there's no need for anything else, I would certainly like him to explain that.

You know, I just want to add one more comment. As I was reading through the business plan and particularly on page 28 of the Culture business plan, I noticed again – and this is the language that this government uses probably daily – that they're going to stand up to Ottawa to get a better deal. This applies to this ministry, for sure, in this department or this area of French language services or the Francophone Secretariat. There's a lot of talk about standing up to Ottawa, getting the best deal from Ottawa, yet I see this provincial ministry not really doing that much more, leaving money on the table or unspent dollars yet talking about standing up to Ottawa. So it doesn't quite line up.

You know, the other thing I would add is that I have heard from some Franco-Albertans or from the francophone community their disappointment, actually, that the minister after the budget was unwilling to do an interview with French language media to answer some questions about the budget. So I'm just putting that on the record, that that was incredibly disappointing.

Okay. Let's see. I'd like to talk a couple of minutes about the Franco-Albertan flag. First of all, I've heard over the last few years – and different ministers have said different iterations of the same thing – that, you know, we can't leave the flag up past 24 hours because it's a policy. It's a policy. I'm wondering if the ministry would table that policy, just for clarity for this committee, so that we can understand exactly what they're referring to.

I also notice on page 13 of the most recent annual French . . .

Mr. McIver: Point of order.

The Chair: A point of order has been called.

Mr. McIver: This is all interesting, and I know that the member has probably a litany of complaints – and I have no opinion on that – but several of the questions are well outside the budget, particularly asking questions about a media interview, about a flag policy. There are probably other opportunities where the member can ask these questions, in question period and other places. If I could ask for the member to respectfully deal with what we're all here for, the budget of this ministry.

Mr. Eggen: If you don't mind. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mean, we are debating the Culture budget generally. Francophonie is part of that ministry, and each of the questions that the hon. member is bringing forward is in regard to the francophone part of this ministry, which is inherently part of the budget as well. It should be noted as well that we are using block time here, so each of us develops our line of questioning through a series of points that we build during the 10-minute period. I think that the member's comments and questions are on point, and I look forward to hearing the rest of her time.

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't believe this is a point of order. I believe that the lines of questioning and the comments are related to the Ministry of Culture. What I will say is that I encourage all members to recognize that we are in budget estimates, ministry plans, and the like and to try and focus as much as possible on the documents we have before us without extrapolating too far outside of those documents.

So at this time I will not rule a point of order here, and I will allow you to continue now, MLA Renaud.

Ms Renaud: It is difficult to do these blocks because we're not able to go back and forth and actually get answers. It is difficult when there are, you know, ridiculous points of order called and the clock keeps going.

Let me go back to the Franco-Albertan flag, and it does relate specifically to outcome 2 in the business plan. I'm asking about this policy because the Franco-Albertan flag, which is an official flag of the francophone community in Alberta, is integral to their identity and culture in this province, so I think these questions are important. Here's my question to the minister, and it talks about it at length in a number of reports. After raising the Franco-Albertan flag on March 1, 2022, in celebration of Mois de la francophonie, how long did that flag fly during francophone month in Calgary and Edmonton? That's my question.

Now, does the Culture ministry have any plans whatsoever – and, again, Mr. Chair, this isn't the first time that we have heard from communities. It's not just the francophone community that have had issues with a policy of the Culture ministry when their business plan is very specific about encouraging and enhancing culture throughout Alberta. I think I've established that the Franco-Albertan flag is an important symbol for this community, as are other flags important symbols, yet this government refuses to leave these flags up for more than 24 hours.

But that's not for all flags, Mr. Chair, because I have seen a couple, and rightly so, where for whatever reason the government is choosing to leave them up for months on end. That's great. I'm not disputing the validity of leaving another flag up. I am just saying that the Franco-Albertan flag also needs to fly for the entire month of March. So that is my question.

How much time do I have left in this block, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Two and a half minutes.

Ms Renaud: Okay. Perfect.

My next set of questions are on the French parliamentary secretary. My simple question for the minister is: why was the francophone parliamentary secretary eliminated from this particular budget? It was there last year. What was the cost last year, and what is the cost saving this year? And if there are no cost savings at all for eliminating the position of parliamentary secretary, could you please explain to this committee why that was done? Is there no desire to engage the community? Was the last person just useless? What was the point? Why was this position eliminated?

I would like to give you some reference. There are currently 12 parliamentary secretaries. There are parliamentary secretaries from status of women, small business, all the way to civil liberties. There are 12 of them. I'm not saying that they're not important – they're probably all very important – but a parliamentary secretary for the francophone community is also important. I'd like this minister to explain the decision-making process here for not including that.

Let me go back briefly, because I'm sure the minister will pick and choose which questions to answer. I'd like to know why the increase to francophone services was so small. If the minister could explain why that is. I would like to know why the federal funds last

year were unspent, why there were some funds unspent. Maybe give us some information about what this ministry is doing to make life better going forward. I would also like to know about the flag policy; I would like that to be tabled. I would like to know how long the flag flew in Calgary and Edmonton during francophone month.

Finally, I would like some explanation about the parliamentary secretary. I'm quite sure that the ministry has received, I think, the report that goes to the policy action plan from ACFA that goes to 2028. I think they were very clear in each ministry about some of the things that they'd like to see. Some of the things really line up with the annual report from this ministry, but on a couple of things, around the flag and the parliamentary secretary, they were very, very clear that they would like the flag flown, at minimum, for the entire month of francophone month, and they would also like a Franco-Albertan flag flown year-round in front of francophone public schools in Alberta.

There were some other things under arts that were in this report that other people will cover. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Renaud. That concludes the 10-minute block.

Minister, you have 10 minutes to respond to comments.

9:30

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, hon. member, for lots of questions there. I'm going to attempt to address them all. I recognize some of your questions are overlapping each other, so I might combine some of the questions there.

I want to begin by saying that I echo what you started with. This March is Alberta Francophonie Month. I'm delighted to be involved in several events, including yesterday, where the second flag-raising ceremony happened here in the capital city. Last Friday, on the first day of March, I was there raising the flag with a special guest, Minister Roberge from Quebec. Now, we happened to have a business meeting scheduled a long time ago. What could be better than that he was there with us when we raised the flag? It was terrific. I very much enjoyed that.

Let me begin by saying – your question about: what's our budget for the Francophone Secretariat position, and what are the full-time total positions there? That is a very easy question. The total budget is \$1.4 million for that office. They have five full-time positions. We have two temporary staff assisting that, so seven people is the total workforce there. They do lots of great work. Some of the questions – after I give you some high-level directions, I'd love to invite our French secretary to answer some of the further detailed questions to help you with that. So that's about question 1.

The other part you mentioned: with that amount, is that enough? The short answer is no. Even in my speech in raising the flag, we acknowledged that the French language is the second largest in Alberta after English, and we have over 200 years of history here of francophone Albertans that have contributed to our province. But the federal transfer money to this part is way out of proportion from where they give. I have worked with my colleagues in Executive Council, in particular the Minister of Indigenous Relations and others, to advocate to the federal counterparts that we need our fair share.

I'm very pleased to share with the hon. members in this committee that our significant community partners, including the ACFA and others, are one hundred per cent on par with us in terms of advocacy work. My invitation is to our opposition. Why don't you work with your federal Justin Trudeau-Jagmeet allies to join us to advocate for Alberta to have our fair share of the French federal transfer? I don't see any of you anywhere advocating for that, yet you come to this committee making that demand. I'm actually

wanting to direct your energy to the right part. Join us on collectively advocating for getting our right portion of the federal transfer for that one.

I'll carry on to the other questions. In the French policy reviews I am very pleased to share with the committee that when we released that five-year review, by and large the conclusion is stakeholders saying that the direction we've been working on and accomplishments we have received to today is what the community worked for. There are a lot of affirmations of the work that's done there. Along with that, of course, our job is not done yet. We want to continue to strengthen that sector with resources, with added services there.

This unfair, improper proportion of federal contribution to this was recognized in that consultation, in that paper there, along with other recommendations. With the current economic boom that we're experiencing here in Alberta, we want to make sure francophone Albertans, French-speaking Albertans benefit equally, not less, from that economic great momentum. So there are some elements added there for future work.

I want to give my Francophone Secretariat a chance to elaborate. Is there anything more regarding the francophone policy and the reviews and action plan, further details that you can help me to elaborate?

Mr. Poirier: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess the question that I'd be able to add . . .

The Chair: Excuse me. I would ask that you introduce yourself for the record . . .

Mr. Poirier: Of course.

The Chair: . . . and then you can proceed to answer the question.

Mr. Poirier: Rheel Poirier, the executive director of the Francophone Secretariat at the Ministry of Culture. I'd like to address the question of the flag-raising policy. The flag-raising policy that we refer to is the Flags and Flag Use: Half-Masting Guidelines in appendix 3, related to the courtesy pole rules and process. The display of flags and banners on the courtesy pole "shall be determined by the Chief of Protocol" and would be "for one day from sunrise to sunset." So the Franco-Albertan flag would have been raised at McDougall Centre and the Queen Elizabeth II Building from the moment of the event to sunset on the day of the flag-raising ceremony.

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much, Mr. Poirier.

I also want to add to that. Regarding the Alberta French language policy review, there are eight specific recommendations moving forward that I just want to quickly highlight so all committee members have the benefit of having that. The first two points are that there are changes to how we present this overall policy. There are some what we call administrative changes in terms of language we use and how we introduce the subject there.

Then the next part is a communication framework that emphasizes that we need to maximize available resources rather than just working with what we currently have, so that desire for advocacy to bring a fair share on the federal level is right there.

The fourth part is emphasis on the concept of an active offer in the policy instead of being footnoted in some areas there so we become bold, become very up front with what the needs are and what we want to be.

The fifth point is to include court services to the policy work that expand the scope of French language policy. Include that part.

Sixth is the one I mentioned about given the economic boom we're having, emphasize the economic development as a component of the support for the vitality of francophone Albertans.

Seventh is that instead of one-off engagements here and there, have a multistakeholder, crossministry, holistic approach in advising policy change and actions and giving input and so on and so forth. It's taking the next gear to a more comprehensive approach in doing so.

The last one is changing the review period from a five-year term to an eight-year term.

Those are the key changes outlined in moving forward for the French policy.

Let me move the subject to the question regarding the parliamentary secretary for a francophone position. I want to emphasize this, that the ministry is responsible for the Francophone Secretariat and also responsible for the co-ordination of Alberta's French policy. We are focusing on those works directly, as you hear me talking about this from my duty as a full ministry here. I am very pleased that we have the advisory council working very closely with us. Plus, the ACFA is a very active stakeholder, very much engaged with us, and even joined me for the flag-raising ceremonies.

The Chair: Minister, that concludes that 10-minute block.

We move now to MLA Goehring, deputy chair, for the next set of questions. Your 10 minutes start now.

9:40

Ms Goehring: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I would like to go back and forth if that is something that you are open to doing?

Mr. Luan: I'd like to keep this block time.

Ms Goehring: Okay. That's unfortunate because I was hoping that we could have more of a conversation going through this.

I know that this is your first time in the estimates for the Ministry of Culture, and I welcome you to that. I would just like to note that you are the third minister that has been representing this ministry. Since the start of the Ministry of Culture under your government it has been dismantled, and I believe now there are five ministers responsible for what we had when we were government as one ministry and two parliamentary secretaries that are also responsible for what was previously known as Culture under our government. So that's five ministers, two parliamentary secretaries under this government, and I note that there are a lot of staff in this space. I'm hopeful that because the ministry has been changed so much, we will be able to get some of the questions answered regarding this budget that's been put forward.

I would like to start by welcoming some Grant MacEwan social work students that are joining in the gallery today and everybody that's watching online from Culture. We have artists and individuals involved in film that are closely paying attention to this ministry, because what we've seen over the years through the budget is that there have been a lot of promises, a lot of beautiful language supporting the arts and culture; however, we haven't actually seen that in terms of actual support from government.

I would like to start, Minister, by reflecting on some of your opening comments as well as page 7 of the fiscal plan. The opening statement is "Alberta is the best place to live, work and raise a family." I believe in that statement 100 per cent. What I'm curious about is how your government and how the Culture ministry are contributing to that. What I hear over and over from Albertans is that they are struggling and that they are in a place where affordability is top of mind, and those that are in the culture industry, in the arts, in sports, in nonprofits: they're struggling. So I would love to hear how

this budget supports Albertans, specifically when it comes to culture, when it comes to arts, when it comes to sports, because I believe that a lot of this budget has really nice language in it that I would hope would support the community, but I don't see that in this budget. I would like to know how that's tied in, if you could articulate what the Alberta advantage is currently for the arts and culture community.

I would like to know specifically how you've invested in the arts and culture community to include them in that Alberta advantage. I would like to know if you could articulate how you're supporting the art and culture industry in terms of business resources available to the arts and culture community. My understanding of the grants that you mentioned is that they are a one-time grant. You mentioned an increase to the CIP grant, and I cannot see that increase. If you could articulate where that increase is, that would be greatly appreciated.

What I've been hearing from so many of the organizations across the province is that they have not recovered from COVID. They are still being impacted by the loss of revenue, and they are hurting in ways that have not been acknowledged by this government. There's significant talk about burnout across volunteers, across the nonprofit sector, and there's a real lack of faith in this government and their capacity to adequately support them to recover from the impacts of COVID. I would like you to be able to point out where that advantage is for your ministry, specifically in the budget, where we can see that this is being supported, because when we look at the grants that you mentioned, there are some significant downfalls in them. They've been significantly underfunded over the years throughout the ministry, with previous ministers. I see that there's been an increase in the CFEP; however, over the last three years it had been significantly underfunded. So I'm curious how this budget supports community.

You talked about community, the nonprofits, being the backbone of our province, and, Minister, I couldn't agree more. Albertans, I would suggest, have been impacted by a nonprofit, by a charity organization in some form in their lives. I would say that they are the heart of our communities. Those volunteers and individuals that work in the nonprofit sector have seen so many Albertans, and they are struggling, Minister. I don't see a real plan in place that supports those organizations, the nonprofit sector.

I'm curious what the arts and culture industries can be told about what measures you've put into this fiscal plan to assist them to be able to participate actively in the growth of the economy. They have mentioned over and over that they have not been a voice at the table. They are the front line, directly working with Albertans, that have the insight about what is happening in each and every one of their communities. Yet they're voicing that they have not had a voice.

At previous estimates I've pleaded with ministers to reach out to those community organizations, to talk to them about what is happening in the province. They have the first line of response. They are our first responders. They are aware of what the needs are, and they have been so instrumental in making sure that the downfall of the government and the lack of supports and resources have been picked up by these charities and by these nonprofits. So I would like to see in the budget where that support is coming from.

I know that there's been a push in this government. We talk specifically about – I believe it's in the business plan on page 28. It's key objective 1.4:

Enhance the capacity of non-profit organizations through facilitation, capacity-building services and promoting the importance of volunteerism through volunteer recognition programs.

I would like you to expand on what that means, because we have a sector that is reporting burnout. They have reported that the number

of complex cases that are coming through their doors is not only burning out staff – and they have a really difficult time retaining staff – but the volunteer component of that, all across the province, is struggling.

They're citing significant mental health impacts when we have a government that two sessions ago, I believe, decreased access to posttraumatic stress disorder supports. Yet we have seen a spike in mental health concerns. We have seen trauma in so many more fields across the province, yet we have a government that decreased access to posttraumatic stress disorder supports and resources.

I would like to know how that is being impacted when you talk about wanting to enhance the volunteer sector. Are you listening to the organizations that are reporting these concerns? We are. We're hearing it very loud and clear, that the complexity of those issues that are being brought forward to the nonprofit sector is skyrocketing and there are not the supports available through this provincial government. So when you talk about being able to enhance volunteerism in the province, I would like to see in this budget what that looks like. I don't see a connection to mental health supports when it comes to our volunteers. There's zero acknowledgement that this is an issue that's being identified by the nonprofit sector across the province.

You talk about the importance of the arts in the province, and I couldn't agree more, Minister. When we're looking at bringing investors into the province, one of the things that we hear from CEOs is that . . .

9:50

The Chair: Thank you, Deputy Chair Goehring.

Ms Goehring: Thank you.

The Chair: That ends the 10-minute block for questions.

Minister, you have up to 10 minutes to respond.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, hon. member, for the question. Before I begin, I do want to address one fundamental part when you opened your questions, talking about that it's my first time doing estimates. Just to correct the record for your information, I've been the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addiction, went through the estimates. I've been the minister of community and social services, went through the estimates. Now I'm the Minister of Culture. This is the third time.

Another question, a general one, just for the record, for your information, when you talk about the number of ministers changing and so on and so forth, what I like to see is what we bring to the table, a diverse background from multiple points of experience to this. To me, that's a strength and not a weakness. So that's the forefront I want to begin with.

I also appreciate that, you know, as an opposition member you oftentimes want to say things which are not quite true. But even the things we agree on: you would put a different slant on that. Let me tell you this. I recognize that, but I also want to draw your attention to: numbers and facts, at the end of the day, stay true. That does not get changed.

So let me rephrase your question about the increased demand, the mental health components of that, the complexity of that. Absolutely. That's why we have Budget 2023. That's why we maintained core funding across the ministry. That's why we significantly increased a couple of those.

Let me read the number again because numbers don't lie. For the community support part, we have a 17 per cent increase for community grants. That speaks of both CIP, that you talked about, and CFEP. In particular, the facility enhancement part, CFEP, received a 30 per cent increase. So that number speaks volumes.

We have a total of \$80 million for the community grants there. This is a historical high. For the CFEP grant alone, we have a total of \$50 million. This is a historical high. Those are the numbers.

Let me tell you another number. I mentioned about affordability and that inflation is a problem, and you and I echo that we need to increase that. The number tells the story there. We doubled our investment in there. Now it is \$8 million for affordability, access to sports and recreation, particularly for youth. This is in recognition of what the pandemic has done, the damage to youth and how high the demand is, that youth want to be able to access physical sports and recreational activities not only for their physical well-being but for mental health.

Let me keep going, one more item for the numbers so that we don't have any dispute here; \$28 million in infrastructure investment for the Citadel Theatre here in Edmonton, to Telus Spark in Calgary, to two more in central Alberta. We are investing in that culture-specific capital infrastructure there because we want to sustain the sector here, contributing to making Alberta the best place to live, to work, and to raise a family. So on that part I think we're on the same page. Once again the numbers speak volumes rather than political rhetoric.

Let me tell you another part that you asked about, the nonprofit part that wanted to have us support them. I like to use CCVO as an example. You know, even before I stepped into politics, I was a civil servant in the city of Calgary, representing FCSS funding. The CCVO was started by FCSS Calgary, Calgary Foundation, and the United Way. The three of us are the founding members, giving life, giving birth to CCVO.

Let me tell you this. Karen Ball, the current executive director, I call the second-generation leader there after the founding members now retired. They carried the torch and worked through the sector, not only helping with systemic issues, capacity building, and others. They voiced to me in person: we need to grow the CIP grant and particularly CFEP.

As you all know, when we are enduring coming back from economic downturn, that is the time to invest in a capital project and create jobs that also have a long-lasting impact. It is because of their input, along with many others, that we came to where we are today. I am very pleased to share with you that when I championed this cause, went through the process, including convincing my Treasury Board colleagues that this is very much needed, I was very pleased, at the end of the day, that we all came to the same conclusion. That's brought us where we are today. Just for your information, once again, the number speaks volumes of what we actually accomplished here.

Another part I would like to get to is that you mentioned about what we did for the culture industry. I want to cite some successful stories here just to give you not only the numbers – you've got that one – but to also give you anecdotal, real stories so that the emotional support and the rational numbers can speak together.

The first example here is the Alberta-made production grant funded for *Before I Change My Mind*. This is a small production. The script was named by a GLAAD list, a curated list, of the 10 most promising LGBTQ-plus inclusive screenplay writers in Hollywood at Sundance in 2020. The film went on to be premiered at the Locarno Film Festival in Locarno, Switzerland, and has received numerous awards, including best script feature, best screenwriter, best cinematographer from the Alberta film and television awards.

Another example is the documentary of *Kaatoohkitopii: The Horse He Never Rode*. I'm not sure my pronunciation is right, but it's a first language. It was featured as part of Gem's *Absolutely Canadian* documentary series and showcased as an official selection for the 2022 imagineNative film festival, the largest annual

Indigenous media arts event in the world. The documentary was funded through the Alberta-made production grant from this ministry.

Here are some tangible, real examples that, you know, beyond the numbers that we talk about, are the real stories happening in life. It is because of those real, life-changing stories there and the numbers and so on that prompted us to make the budget change that we are talking about today.

Let me go back to another part that you mentioned, again regarding affordability. I think that inflation, no doubt, is one of the current most challenging day-to-day issues affecting all Albertans, and we, our Ministry of Culture, want to make a very, very tangible contribution to that. Let me run some of the list of the things we've done, improving accessibility and removing financial barriers for folks there.

Experience Alberta's History pass is one program we created. We operate that provincially towards all the heritage sites and facilities, with several admission fee assistance programs there. Alberta Culture Days, the last weekend in September; Seniors' Week and Family Day: those are all free passes given to Albertans for those special occasions. Free admission for Indigenous people at the Royal Alberta Museum is another example of making sure the financial barriers won't become a challenge for Indigenous communities to access that. Free admission to children under the age of seven . . .

10:00

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. That concludes that 10-minute segment.

We will move to MLA Irwin for the next set of questions from the Official Opposition. You have up to 10 minutes to ask your questions. There are about 17 minutes left in this block of questions.

Member Irwin: Perfect. Thanks, Chair, and thanks everybody for being here on Treaty 6 territory on this lovely morning. Thanks to the civil servants here as well. I know it's not always easy doing the work you do, as someone who was once a civil servant as well, so just thanks for your work.

You know, I'm going to focus mostly on status of women, well, what was once status of women, and I can mention that I'm having a bit of déjà vu from last year's estimates once again, even though some of the people around the table have changed. But, of course, as I noted, status of women doesn't really seem to be a thing anymore, so I am left asking what this government thinks about half of the population. It is interesting that the minister mentioned status of women in his opening remarks.

Let's get into some specifics if we can. I am going to refer to the business plan here, page 27, which notes that Culture is committed to increasing gender equality, preventing gender-based violence, and supporting women's participation in the economy. Obviously, that sounds like a pretty admirable thing, but I do wonder where the evidence is to support that anything is being done on that front. Of course, there are sort of three pillars to that statement. Again, given that status of women has been, you know, essentially eliminated, I'm doubtful.

I would ask on the gender equality piece, "What work specifically is being done?" again because I don't see any key objectives supporting that work.

But on the gender-based violence piece, let's dig into that a little bit more. On page 30, as an example, you talk about supporting victims of domestic violence through working with other government ministries, and under that you talk about, which the minister did allude to in his opening statements, \$1 million in 2023-24 to expand supports for rural sexual assault survivors and survivors of gender-

based violence. On that piece I would like to know where specifically those dollars are going because, again, I paid keen attention to your opening remarks, and you did mention rural sexual assault, so I just would love to know. Obviously, you and I share an interest in supporting survivors, but we're not getting any sort of clarity about where exactly those dollars are going. What are those supports for rural sexual assault survivors? How much of the \$1 million is specifically going to survivors? If you can break that down, I'd like to know that.

I would also like to know, Minister, how you are advocating specifically for survivors of domestic and sexual violence given that we all know, anybody who's been paying attention not to me in question period, because I don't expect you to be paying attention to me in question period, but to the countless organizations that have spoken out about the lack of funding in this budget – of course, we're talking about the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, AASAS; we're talking about SACE, the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton; ACWS, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, just to name three. It's quite alarming and troubling to folks on the front lines, to survivors themselves, and, of course, to many Albertans that this doesn't seem to be a priority of this government, particularly at a time when, you know, there are seemingly billions to give away to pals of the Premier but not to Albertans fleeing violence. It does say a lot about your priorities.

I do wonder as well: if we're not hearing from the minister on this, where's the parliamentary secretary? I don't see the parliamentary secretary. You know, if the minister is not going to be speaking out, why isn't she? Why isn't she pushing for funding? Why aren't all of you doing all you can to get survivors support? A lot there, but again because we're not sharing time, I have to speak incredibly fast.

Next one, related, on a similar topic – and I will probably come back to gender-based violence as well, but something that's quite troubling to me is the fact that there are no references to Indigenous women in this year's budget documents for the Ministry of Culture. Of course, they are present in Indigenous Relations. MMIWG2S-plus, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit folks: that's been in multiple business plans in previous years, including in your own government's. We know the data is clear that Indigenous women and girls experience far higher levels of violence than their non-Indigenous women and girl counterparts – right? – and are at much higher risk of experiencing specific forms of violence.

You know, last year in the business plan on page 27 you talk specifically about addressing violence against Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit folks, so I guess my question is: what are your plans? Do you have any efforts at all from your ministry to address the crisis facing missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit folks and their families? We know – and I've asked about this in every year that I've been in estimates – that addressing the 231 calls for justice will require resourcing and will require crossministerial collaboration. Are you advocating for funding for this work? If it's not coming out of your ministry, what are you doing to support Indigenous Relations in addressing these key calls for justice?

Okay. Moving along here, 2SLGBTQ-plus supports. Again, I know I'm sounding like a broken record here, but last year on page 27 of your business plan, previous years as well – I could pull them up; I've got all the tabs open on my computer – you mentioned specifically – it's great to see it – violence against the 2SLGBTQ-plus community. Again, any reference to the 2SLGBTQ-plus community has been removed from your documents. There's not a single mention in any of your budget documents. I'm happy to be

proven wrong, but for the Ministry of Culture I don't see it. In previous years I did.

What message does this send? I mean, it's not lost on me that I'm asking these questions at a time where we've seen a rise, an increase in violence and hate towards the 2SLGBTQ-plus community. We've seen it in downtown Calgary. We've seen a rise in antitrans hate. This is a time where your ministry, because we are not going to see it anywhere else, I'm afraid, in this government, could be leaders. You could be stepping up. Minister, you just mentioned the 2SLGBTQ-plus community when you talked about arts. Why aren't you naming it? If it's not named, it's not going to be addressed. How will you ensure that representation of the 2SLGBTQ-plus community will be addressed? What activities are you engaged in? What funding is being provided? Please be specific.

Okay. I'm just looking at my time here. I'm going to come back to a few other topics that I have, but just on this same topic of gender-based violence in particular, because, of course, you can imagine that we have a number of stakeholders who are asking these questions – you know, I'll come back to gender-based violence by talking about the meeting which you alluded to. I must again thank the minister for being the voice of all Alberta women at the federal-provincial-territorial forum of ministers. I am still shocked that there wasn't a single woman MLA who could go there, but I'm sure you were a strong voice for us all.

Anyways, according to the release from that meeting a number of key issues were discussed, and at that meeting FPT ministers endorsed a national action plan to end gender-based violence. So what I want to hear from you, Minister, is: how can you explain that your government is supporting the action plan? Again, I see one reference to gender-based violence in your budget documents, and that's on page 27. If you can break that down and if you can specifically break it down to talk about how you are going to be, you know, addressing the plan. Are you signing that national action plan? Has our government committed? If so, how will addressing the key objectives of that plan be funded? If you can provide a breakdown there.

Again, I'm only learning this from what I've read online, but I learned that you also discussed key issues that impact the advancement of gender equality, including women's economic participation and gender-based analysis plus. Again, here's where déjà vu is hitting me very much because I wonder how you would have contributed to the conversation on GBA plus. You know, we go back to page 27 of the business plan, which says, "Supporting women's participation in [Alberta's] economy." One of the best ways to get at that outcome is through an intersectional approach. By applying a gender-based lens like gender-based analysis plus, we can assess the impacts of policies, programs, proposed legislation on women and other underrepresented populations. Past business plans discussed GBA plus. In fact, GBA plus was addressed in a crossministerial way. Of course, once again, all mentions of it are removed from this year's business plan. I don't know. What would you have said at that meeting of federal and provincial leaders when it comes to GBA plus? We know the government of Canada is pushing that.

Thank you, Chair.

10:10

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Irwin. That concludes the 10-minute block.

Minister, you have up to 10 minutes, but we have just under seven minutes left in this time.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try to speed up. Let me begin by saying, hon. member, when I hear you saying that lots of the

work we presented today is admirable: thank you for saying that. We're on the same page with that. We are taking some bold steps, moving some needles here. Your reference of – you see that, and now you even added your own words for that. I want to thank you for that one.

You know, lots of questions are interrelated, so I'm going to go just by the order I see fit and try to answer them all. Let me pick up the first one, which is victims of domestic violence, a million-dollar investment for rural sexual assault survivors assistance on that one. That one is a particularly cutting-edge one that Alberta leads. When I was at the federal-territorial ministers meeting, when we each had turns to share some of the unique programs that we have, this one was referenced there and got lots of attention because remote areas, rural in particular, share this common problem, when victims have to wait for, you know, 10 hours, days before they can have the evidence collected, examined, and become strong ammunition to pursue the court procedures. It is a very realistic issue there that needs to be removed.

Let me tell you this. We piloted this last year with great success. This is meant to create a brand new training program so that health care workers in rural areas can quickly do the evidence collection part with confidence. Those are specialized skills. You need to have the training so the court will recognize that. Otherwise, you damage the very precious evidence collection piece of that. We're very pleased that it was a pilot that went so successfully that I can't wait to see the first group of graduates finishing the program and starting to, you know, provide a service to rural folks on that.

You were wondering about: what are some of the breakdowns of how the dollar is spent on that one and the components of that? I am going to invite my ADM Nilam Jetha to share that.

Nilam, take it away from here.

Ms Jetha: Thank you. Yes. From the \$1 million that we received, a portion of that has gone to the polytechnic institute to develop the training program. It's about \$200,000 there. We are also going to be providing a bursary for the health care professionals who are in rural and remote areas to take this course for free. We are also putting money towards a contract to look at best practices and how the data has been collected and to come up with a more consolidated effort in collecting the data. So we're working with Alberta Health Services, Mental Health and Addiction. We'll be doing that as well. The remainder of the funding is going to go towards organizations that are working with men and boys to shift the culture.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, ADM. Appreciate that.

With that, I am going to shift to another question you asked about, which is the national action plan. Thank you for paying a lot of attention to that one. Let me tell you this. When I was there, working with our federal counterpart and other ministers across the country and territories, it was a very interesting dialogue. On one hand the overall framework of ending domestic violence, gender-based violence is well received because the framework created very broad-stroke components there. Hon. member, you mentioned about Indigenous community involvement in this one; that was anchored as one of the top four pillars there in that national action plan.

With that, we not only endorsed the broader scope of the framework but, most importantly – minister after minister; I did a lot of that on behalf of Albertans – is negotiating a true bilateral agreement, meaning that we recognize the overall goal we are collectively sharing. But in how to get there, local priority has to be respected, the local provinces and territories. The federal government is not going to use their contribution of funding to tell us exactly what they want to do. We negotiate word by word,

motion by motion. Every piece we agreed on needed to honour local priority and autonomy of provinces and territories to make their own decisions about which program they fund and how they use that money.

Let me tell you this. It was hard work but was a very, very interesting three days of engagement and accomplishment. At the end of the day we passed every motion that referenced local autonomy, referenced that the overall funding needs to reflect each province's and territory's own choice of how they want to spend the money. Let me tell you this. If we succeeded on that one, I am very much waiting to see until the bilateral agreement is signed and the dollars are in our pocket and we can spend. Then I will say: mission accomplished.

Today we are still working on that. They honoured every statement, every motion we passed in such a way, but I need to see the final agreement, that the dollars are coming, essentially.

The reason I am saying that is this. Alberta has spent so much money in this area. We're increasing that again . . .

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. That concludes the first portion of questions from the Official Opposition.

Seeing no independent members at the meeting, we now move on to the government caucus for 20 minutes of questions from the members. Would you like to combine your time with the minister? I believe, MLA Stephan, you will be starting.

Mr. Stephan: That's correct, Chair. Would you like to combine or separate blocks?

Mr. Luan: Combined, please.

Mr. Stephan: That's great. I have some really, actually, really important questions to talk about. I know that looking at performance indicator 1(b) on page 29, it shows that charity expenditures increased from \$32.8 billion in 2017 to \$38 billion in 2020. The first question that I would have is: do you have the numbers for '21 and '22?

Mr. Luan: Thank you for that question. You know, we need to combine – the challenge is that I've got to flip to the right page on the question. So thank you so much. Let me take a bit of time.

Mr. Stephan: Yeah. No worries.

Mr. Luan: Culture supports the growth of Alberta's creative and cultural industry through consultation, advocacy, development, and collaborative effort to expand market access and create jobs for Albertans. Investment in Alberta's cultural industry diversifies our economy. Hon. member, I know you are a champion for this, and I really admire the way that you brought many conversations to our caucus and discussions there. So when we create jobs, we share our share of the culture part and the perspective and our stories provincially and nationally. They get shared on a global stage, too.

Alberta's culture industry includes the film and television sector, book and magazine publishing sector, and sound recording sector. The Alberta media fund provides financial support to cultural industries through the following programs: book publisher operation grant, magazine publisher grant, music organization operating grant, culture industry organization project grant, culture industry support organization operating grant, and culture industry initiative grant.

10:20

Additionally, the department is working with the Alberta Music and the West Anthem group to build on a prior Alberta music

ecosystem study to leverage additional opportunities for significant economic return to our province.

Mr. Stephan: Great. I thank you for that discussion.

I want to kind of turn my time and focus on charities for a minute here. I know that Albertans are known for their generosity and caring nature. In fact – just kind of following up on this – there was an article in the *Calgary Herald* in December 2022, which is very recent, that reported that Albertans had the highest per capita of any province in Canada for giving, at around \$2,800 per individual, which is just a wonderful statistic. It speaks to the culture of Alberta. Furthermore, there was a Fraser Institute study, a generosity index, that for 2019 also said that Albertans had the highest per capita giving. But, interestingly, in terms of proportion of Albertans giving, Albertans were fifth.

Now, I kind of want to focus on that as it relates to the 2023 budget. You know, Alberta is – we've kind of asked the question about the Alberta advantage. For charitable giving above \$200, currently, if an Albertan donates and they've donated over \$200, they get a 50 per cent credit, so for every dollar they donate, they get 50 cents on the dollar back. And isn't it wonderful, trusting Albertans to identify the charities that they love and care about and support them in giving to those charities that matter most to them?

We had this Alberta advantage. We have this awesome, most competitive tax credit out of any other jurisdiction in Canada. We have this 50 per cent credit, which reinforces and supports Albertans, in fact having the highest per capita giving in all of Canada.

Now, something that I'm quite excited to ask you about for the 2023 budget is that while we had this competitive advantage, we were the best in all of Canada, that 50 per cent credit. My understanding is for 2023, we have increased the charity tax credit for donations under \$200, so if an individual Albertan, perhaps of modest means, you know, who had less capacity to donate, to participate in charities they care about – we have increased our charitable tax credit so that an Albertan who now donates in 2023, instead of getting a 25 per cent credit, they get a 75 per cent credit. That is just wonderful. If an Albertan decides to donate to a charity that they love and care about and they donate \$200 – and perhaps they are of modest means – they can receive a tax credit, a refund of their taxes of now \$150.

You know, the wonderful thing that I think about this charitable tax credit is that prior to this change the political donation tax credit was also a 75 per cent credit on the first \$200. Isn't it great that we have created parity? It's certainly important to encourage and support Albertans in participating in our political civic environment, but it's also the charity, the esteem accorded to charities – we have now created parity there with supporting that 75 per cent credit.

What I will say on that really important initiative, that I'm going to ask you to comment on – but, you know, in that Fraser Institute study, where they identified that Albertans on a per capita basis were the most generous, certainly this will continue. This charitable tax credit will only support our charitable organizations. On that chart that I referred to, where we saw charitable expenditures go up from 2017 from \$32.8 billion to \$38 billion, their capacity to support Albertans is now going to be increased with this credit.

But the exciting thing for me is that while the Fraser Institute for 2019, yes, identified that we are, from a per capita basis, the most generous, you know, individuals in all of Canada in terms of per capita donating but we are only fifth in participation, I believe – and I'm really excited to see the fruits of this – that with us becoming not only the best above \$200, but now we are going to clearly be the best from an Alberta advantage perspective with donations under \$200, and we will be far and above the best in all of Canada.

That fifth place participation that the Fraser Institute identified for '19: for 2023 going forward, I do believe, because we have shown Albertans, we have demonstrated to Albertans that we trust them to support the charities that they feel strongly about, that we are partnering with them, that we will now not only be the highest per capita, but we will be the highest in participation.

Minister, I appreciate you sharing with the committee your excitement, your enthusiasm for this very exciting transformative initiative for Budget 2023, supporting charitable giving.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, hon. member. I know your passion in this area inspires me and inspires our colleagues about that. I also know that, you know, a private member's bill from the MLA for Peace River increased the tax deductible credit for charitable donations from 50 per cent to 75 per cent for the first \$200. So I'm with you. The efforts we made there and the collective work we have done absolutely positioned Alberta as one of the best places in the world, particularly the charitable, religious, nonprofit communities, how they contribute so generously to our culture and community part of life.

In addition to all the things you talked about, the Alberta advantage, the pride that we share, I also want to share with you and through you to all the committee members here that with our current budget we continue to support a brand new program leveraging additional support in this way. It's called Crowdfunding Alberta. This is similar, if I can use a short nickname, to a fund-me kind of thing, but it's tailored to nonprofits. Every dollar that you put in there, we will match up with you, as we are encouraging you to contribute, to give more to our community. Crowdfunding Alberta helps nonprofits generate faster and flexible funding for program services as small as, you know, kids wanting to get together, developing strong peer relationships, to mentoring programs and others. You name it. You create the program that is meaningful for you, you put a bit of your own money there, and we will be there with you to make it bigger. So that's one new thing.

Since the launch of that program, over 150 organizations have successfully got approval for the matching grant from the Crowdfunding Alberta platform, with over 120 campaigns being approved. The total funds raised today are in excess of \$333,775. Organizations may be eligible for up to \$15,000 in matching funds and a \$1,000 referral bonus. We want more people to take advantage of that.

I hope that by sharing that additional information – I can see you nodding. This is what makes us proud to be Albertans. Not only can we generate huge economic momentum; we have a heart. We care for our community. We have compassion to address some of the social needs there. But we don't do it in the way of government telling you what to do. We do it along with community. Through the crowdfunding approach we can see it's community led on this, and we match with what they do. To me, I am so proud and so privileged to be in this position to work in such areas and to expand our level of impact and the level of support to our community members.

10:30

Mr. Stephan: Thank you with that, Minister. It is really based on the principle of trusting Albertans and partnering with them in supporting many great causes that they love and care about.

I will now cede my time to my colleague Member Rowswell.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you very much.

Yeah. You know, some people give money, and that's a great thing, but a lot of people give of their time. When we look at community organizations, they play a vital role in the communities

that they're in, and you see them all – there's just so many people that get involved in that, and they really give out a lot of their time.

I'm looking at page 60 of the government estimates, and I see that the community facility enhancement program budget will increase by quite a bit, from 38 and a half million dollars in Budget 2022 to \$50 million in Budget 2023. Can you please outline some of the ways that these funds are currently being used to support Albertans?

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much, MLA Rowswell. Before I answer your question, I do want to have a chance to say thank you to your strong advocacy to your area. I know you brought so many proposals and visited my office so many times. Sometimes when I see you coming, I say, "Ah, here he comes again," but the good news is that I know for a fact that you've had quite a few successful applications in such areas. Good on you, and good on your community there. That's through such grants that lots of nonprofits and the communities benefit from. So thank you for that one.

Back to your question about the increase. Yes. It is because of the work that you and others are advocating that we recognize the need for growth in this area. In particular, you know, changing from economic downturn to coming out of a pandemic, having the facility enhancement program down – this is in part addressing the capital needs for our community – has long-lasting effects even after the pandemic. We have increased funding in this area from \$38.5 million in last year to \$50 million this year. This is a whopping 30 per cent increase, one of the few largest asks when I went to Treasury Board. I am very satisfied and I am very grateful for colleagues like you and others supporting me moving in this direction. I believe, through all of you, this is representing a demand from Albertans, and the broader community is waiting for us to step to the plate to be the support that they needed.

I can't thank you more than enough for being the voice and helping us accomplish there, and I look forward to using the increased grant to expand our scope of work and influence in our community.

Mr. Rowswell: Thank you very much, and I appreciate your enthusiasm behind helping.

You're talking about the additional funding and what it might go to. I'm not sure if you can identify some specific project types that the funding might go to.

Mr. Luan: I will speak on a broader form. I'm going to give the ADM a chance, Mr. Nathaniel Smith, to further articulate that detail. From a policy direction point of view, instead of, you know, just grants open for anything, we do want to make sure we have some themes, some priorities. We all know the pandemic's negative impact to our community, particularly complex mental health issues. So that was one area that I particularly asked for as we move forward, that we give some consideration in that area.

The other part is that after three and a half years of hard work we finally see the beginning of our new economic booming time, and we want to make sure that the community benefits from the economic aspect, too. So proposals that related to further help with job creation, you know, increased capacity for employment – and people can fulfill their full potential whatever way, shape that is meaningful for them – those need to give some consideration in the context of economic performance and prosperity.

I will stop there. Of course, the program has broader criteria. We also modified the intake time, and those are all changing according to the feedback received from community. I am going to turn this to my ADM Mr. Smith.

Mr. N. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. The community facility enhancement program has two funding streams, which we call CFEP small and CFEP large. CFEP small provides funding up to \$125,000 per project. We have three intake windows throughout the year: January 15, May 15, and September 15. It gives communities an opportunity to get their projects in order and to present their applications throughout the year. The CFEP large funding stream funds projects that are above \$125,000 to a maximum funding amount of \$1 million, and we have an annual intake for that program due to the larger size of the projects.

CFEP is a matching grant program. For every dollar that's invested through CFEP, we've realized a community investment or economic return of \$4 or more per project. Primarily we look at projects that address community-identified need. They demonstrate community involvement. They illustrate the ability of the organization to execute the project through both their history, organizational capacity, their financial ability, and generally the amount of support for that project in the community. Then also, because there is a matching component, we look at demonstration of the organization to provide the sufficient matching resources to complete the project.

I can speak to some of the projects which we funded in the most recent year. For example, we've provided \$550,000 to the Leduc & District Food Bank Association to purchase two additional bays. This will increase the size of their facility by 7,200 square feet to support increased demand on the organization's services. We provided \$125,000 to the Dunmore Community Association for the construction of an all-season facility. This will serve the community meeting space for special events and sport and recreation facilities and programming. Then, just another example, we provided \$63,400 to the Wood's Homes Society for park and playground revitalization of their George and Annie Wood park.

The Chair: Okay. That concludes the first block of time for the government members' questions.

We now move to five minutes of questions from the Official Opposition, followed by five minutes of response from the minister. As mentioned, members are asked to advise the chair at the beginning of their rotation if they wish to combine their time with the minister's time. Please remember that discussion should flow through the chair at all times regardless of whether or not speaking time is combined.

Deputy Chair Goehring, I believe you're on next.

Ms Goehring: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, as I see you're now open to going back and forth, I would propose that perhaps we could do that for this section of time. Are you open to doing that?

Mr. Luan: As you witnessed, when we take different approaches, it takes longer time to find the right answer there, so I'd like to try to go back to the five-minute block time again and monitor how that goes, and perhaps we will change again.

Ms Goehring: That's very disappointing, Minister. I was hoping to be able to go back and forth and have a question-answer response rather than . . .

Mr. Luan: Let's continue working on that.

Ms Goehring: I would love that. I'm open to that. I am hearing you are not.

Mr. Luan: Five minutes block time for this round, and we'll continue to evaluate as we move forward.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Minister. When we talk about numbers, I think that you made very clear in your response to my last round of questions that numbers don't lie, so I would like to point out that in page 29 of the business plan – in your opening remarks and all throughout your comments you talk about the importance of arts, yet I see the targets for participation in the arts and sports have been drastically reduced.

10:40

For the arts in particular the UCP seem content for the arts to continue operating at half of what it used to. For reference in 2018-2019 76 per cent of Albertans reported that they attended some form of arts activity. Now fast-forward to this business plan, and I'd like to note that the target, the number, is 34 per cent. I would like you to identify why this black-and-white number is so low, why the target that you've proposed in your budget is 34 per cent as opposed to the 76 per cent that was targeted in 2018-2019 under our government. I think that the numbers here speak volumes. It's very clear that this is a very low target, and I would like you to explain why this has seen such a reduction. I'm just very concerned that this is the number that you're talking about supporting.

You've talked at length about supporting artists in outcome 1, yet there's nothing indicating that the arts sector is being supported. When you talked about the arts, you referenced film quite significantly and their success, yet the projects that you spoke to didn't fall under the Culture file; they fell under previous ministries not related to the Culture file. I would like to hear how you are specifically targeting the arts, that your ministry is responsible for, Minister.

When we talked about numbers, you spoke about the increase in the grants, yet when you look clearly at the numbers on page 59 of the main estimates – I would like to draw your attention to 2.3, which is the community initiatives program – there is, in fact, a decrease in that budget line item despite you saying that the numbers don't lie and show an increase. That number shows a decrease, so I would like you to articulate that decrease and why.

I'm very pleased that you mentioned the CCVO and Karen Ball because they have been incredibly fierce advocates for the nonprofit sector. I am hopeful that when you reference the great work that they do, you're also aware of the significant asks that they have asked of this government when it comes to supporting the nonprofit sector and the report that they've released talking about the crisis that the nonprofit sector is in. They identify the ongoing significant needs of Albertans and what they see through the nonprofit sector from things like food provision, basic needs settlement, seniors supports, sports and recreation, arts and culture, entrepreneurship, environmental health, and more.

We know that this sector employs over 285,000 people in Alberta. I'd like to point out, Minister, that despite not having a status of women ministry, this sector has 78 per cent employed being women. That is a significant number because when this sector was crushed by COVID and the lack of supports and resources that were put in place, that had a very significant impact on women.

The Chair: Thank you, Deputy Chair Goehring. That concludes the five-minute segment of questions.

Minister, you have about four minutes and 44 seconds to respond.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Deputy Chair, for your question. Five minutes comes by very fast, so I will quickly get to some of the questions for your answers.

Let me address this one first. For the performance metrics you are saying: why are we not going higher? There's one issue that we all know is fact: COVID. COVID had a significant impact over our

museum facilities for visitation and so on and so forth. You know, despite the current great momentum we are seeing, we're still trying to catch up from where that used to be. The department has gone through a very vigorous process in establishing the metrics of how we measure those and how we get back to the full scale.

I'm going to ask my assistant deputy minister Mr. Smith to articulate even further details about the process and how we came up with those metric numbers that you are asking for.

Mr. N. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. The process that we undertake to develop our performance metrics is based off of information that we receive from the sectors that we serve, the programs that we provide, and data that's available to us through a number of sources such as the Statistics Canada cultural survey that is undertaken. You know, it allows us to set standards and performance measures and indicators that focus on the progress that we see in each of those ministry outcomes but not individual objectives. Also, as the minister alluded to, the impact of COVID was quite significant in a lot of our sectors, and we've seen that through our survey of Albertans, that participation levels in the years that were affected by COVID directly due to health restrictions was quite significant. That is reflected in our current performance metrics that are represented in our business plan.

Mr. Luan: Thank you.

I will quickly get on to another question before we run out of time. The CIP that you mentioned is about \$700,000 less. If you pay attention, CIP and CFEP come together as a community grant that has an overall 17 per cent increase. If you want to break down that way, CFEP got a 30 per cent increase and CIP currently rests at \$20 million. Out of a \$20,700,000 difference, there is a small administrative balancing books exercise there. If you talk about the community grant, it's a 17 per cent increase overall for both programs. If you break it down, CFEP received an \$11.5 million increase, CIP a \$700,000 adjustment. So, to me, it is an internal program administration part that doesn't represent the policy direction. The policy direction is very clear. It's a significant increase for the community funding grant.

Let me see how much time I have left.

The Chair: One minute and 30 seconds.

Mr. Luan: Okay. Let me get on to another question. You talk about CCVO again and continue to advocate for more than what we currently put forward. Let me tell you this. You know, I think you and I probably share lots of passion in this because I see when I talk about my budget, you keep nodding. There are lots of points that we are on the same page except the part I want you to recognize, when you mentioned about food shelter, sector salary, and so on and so forth. I am with you, but be mindful. This is only Culture we're talking about, a piece of the overall pie. I don't want to speak for my colleague Minister Nixon, who is currently in charge of community and social services. I can tell you I'm so tempted to talk about all the increases there, but I will leave that to him when he has a chance to respond.

What I want to draw your attention to is that I'm with you. We're doing our part here by significantly increasing our community funding part. For the food, shelter, salary, and a whole list of others: I know he has announced a whole bunch of those already, but more through him is probably the right approach for that. Hopefully, that gives you the answer that you're looking for.

I see I've got 30 seconds left.

The Chair: Five seconds.

Mr. Luan: Five. Yeah. I am going to yield my time at five seconds.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Members, at this time we will take a five-minute break, and when we resume, we will have a 10-minute block with government members asking questions and answers. The time currently is just about 10:50, so we'll be back in five minutes.

[The committee adjourned from 10:49 a.m. to 10:54 a.m.]

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, members. We will call the meeting back to order.

We go with a 10-minute block with five minutes of questions from the government caucus. Who wishes to proceed?

Mr. Rowswell: I cede my time to MLA Issik.

The Chair: MLA Issik, you may proceed at this time.

Ms Issik: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Minister, earlier this morning there was a conversation with respect to status of women and specifically with respect to sexual violence, and a reference was made to work with men and boys. Certainly, we know that sexual violence comes from a culture that enables it, and I would be interested to hear from you what specific programs the ministry is supporting with respect to working with men and boys to address sexual violence and specifically the culture that leads to it.

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much, hon. member, for your question. I also know you've championed this cause in the past, and I want to thank you for your special contribution to this. I feel like I'm walking in shoes that you guys have created before, trying to catch up, but thank you for your passion for that.

Regarding this particular question about, you know, involving multiple genders, men and women, all supportive to the domestic violence and gender-based violence prevention, you are absolutely right. Alberta in some ways is championing this. When I was at the federal-territorial ministers' conference there, we articulated one of the programs called VOICE here in Alberta. That is having mentors, athletes that mentor others, in this area that needed help. We piloted a program called VOICE, which has received so much positive response for our community. We funded them under several streams for a total of close to \$900,000. They're still growing. When I shared this there, athletes being the mentors for others in domestic violence victim support services, it generated so much support across the country from other jurisdictions that are interested in knowing how we are doing this.

I wasn't sure; were you there when they formally launched an expansion of the program into phase 2? It was unreal. I was so pleased, mingling with some of the top athletes and talking with some of the victims there, and how much they see this kind of natural mentoring way transformed their life. Plus, we have the University of Calgary's top research group using data to inform practice. I just feel like all the stars aligned on this one. It was just so great to see. So thank you so much for being supportive to that one.

Ms Issik: Minister, I should have asked you at the beginning of this; I trust that it's okay to go back and forth.

Mr. Luan: Of course.

Ms Issik: I have one more quick question for you, and it is a very quick question. Earlier we were speaking about CFEP, and certainly we know that that's a very successful program based on, you know, matching funds, shovel-ready projects. But you also have – I

believe it's on 2.2. Where did I see that? I'm going to say 2.2, where it's other initiatives. I think it's 2.2. It's funding for up to \$1 million. I just wonder if you could – line 2.4. Sorry. I'm just wondering if you could please expand on that, on what types of projects this funding is going to be supporting and why it's important to increase the funding to the other initiatives line item.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, hon. member. The other initiatives program for 2022-23 is targeted for \$2.2 million under the budget, and that one is a support for large initiatives. Sorry. Let me get the right page here. For instance, the one we mentioned earlier about a rural sexual assault services initiative: that came from this kind of funding stream. It wasn't there before, but it was a cutting-edge pilot meeting real needs in the community, and we had to start from scratch. But let me tell you that the success of that pilot led to this budget providing \$1 million base funding moving forward. The other initiatives program is designed in such a way that you can be on the ongoing support for existing programs; you're not cutting something off in order to support a new initiative. So that is how that works. I hope that makes sense.

11:00

Ms Issik: That's very good. Thank you for that answer.

I'm going to cede my time next to my colleague to my right.

Ms Rosin: Thank you, Member Issik. I have a couple of questions, Minister, and thank you so much for being here today. My first question will likely come as no surprise. It is focused around large sporting events and their economic impact on our province. I can see under section 7.4 of your budget it discusses grants to support sport organizations. I'm not a hundred per cent sure whether funding for large sporting events falls under this category. If it does, that's good. If it doesn't, you can correct me when you answer.

But if it does, I do see that funding for this category has increased by about \$8 million this budget, or the equivalent of 35 per cent, which is quite significant. I know you yourself and myself have had many conversations about the importance of these large-scale events to Alberta's economy, primarily in my region of Banff-Kananaskis, events like the FIS Cross-Country World Cup and Alpine World Cup and the IBU Biathlon World Cup, which we just welcomed back to our province, after nearly losing our A licence, thanks to the upgrades of the Nordic Centre in Canmore.

I see these events every year. I know that you've been to a couple of them with me and seen first-hand the importance of maintaining them in the province. And I do see again that the funding is increased under this budget. So just from a tourism perspective, recognizing the importance of what I believe are these events to our province's economy and putting them on the map internationally, my first question is just whether or not this funding increase, again, under 7.4 of your budget, is projected for sporting events or any bids in the coming years.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, hon. member, for a good question. I know you are such a champion for Banff, Canmore, and the area there, not only for tourism or for sports. I know you and I both attended the FIS World Cup downhill, and we have many discussions of how we can continue to support the major events part of our ministry and our province for that one. So I'm with you on that one.

You know, we have people saying: "Minister, it's great. We have finally got our economy back. We have higher income. We have good economic indicators." But at the end of the day it's quality of life that we all want. That speaks of – we need to continue support for sports events, particularly the one that you mentioned, about major events that put our province on the world stage. Yeah. We're committed to that one in terms of continued funding for that.

Back to the budget part. You see that we did have a 35 per cent increase for the \$8 million sports and recreation component of that. We'll have further details in the coming weeks to announce. I don't want to speak of my own pending announcement, but we'll have further details to share by then. But from a principle point of view let me tell you that I am with you in terms of we need to continue to support those major sports events, and we're entertaining lots of those proposals, trying to find out the best that can give us the maximum return not only on economic factors but also from an overall sense of community. You know, people say that sports build nations, and I wholeheartedly agree with that. It gives us pride, puts Alberta on the world stage.

I know you've been a strong advocate for the FIS World Cup. That one along with many others are in consideration.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We now move to the Official Opposition caucus for a 10-minute block. MLA Irwin, you may proceed.

Member Irwin: Thank you so much, Chair. I assume we can continue with shared time, Minister?

Mr. Luan: I'm going to venture this shared time just to see if I can have enough time to find the answer.

Member Irwin: Hey, here we go.

Mr. Luan: Let's give it a try.

Member Irwin: Okay. Thank you, Minister. I truly appreciate it. This is going to be an opportunity for me to repeat a couple of my questions just because we weren't . . .

Mr. Luan: One minute or five minutes right now?

Member Irwin: Five minutes.

The Chair: Each individual has up to five minutes to speak, but in combined time it's just back and forth, and typically the questions will be shorter; answers will be shorter.

Member Irwin: Perfect. I will use this opportunity to repeat a couple of my questions only because we didn't have a chance to get to all of them, but because we're sharing, I'll try to keep them a little bit more brief.

I appreciate your ADM providing a little bit more information on gender-based violence. What I'm not clear on is exactly what the program's name is, so if you can add a little bit of detail on that. Perhaps to the ADM: what was the name of the program that is supporting rural sexual assault survivors? I was listening; I just didn't catch what it's called.

Mr. Luan: That one I can tell you. We abbreviated it as RSASPP, but it's rural sexual assault support pilot program.

Member Irwin: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that.

I need a little bit more clarity about what exactly your government is doing when it comes to supporting survivors of sexual and domestic violence. You know, I'd love to hear from you how you're advocating for survivors. As I noted, a number of organizations have spoken out about the lack of funding in your government's budget, and we've just learned that one of your colleagues, the Minister of Mental Health and Addiction, has just cancelled a meeting with the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton to talk about the absolutely dire need for funding. Like, what message

does it send? Why is no one in your government willing to stand up for survivors of sexual and domestic violence?

You should be speaking out. You should be pushing for funding. You should be doing all you can to get survivors supports. Instead, we're getting crickets, and worse than that, we're getting cancelled meetings. So, Minister, what are you doing to support survivors?

Mr. Luan: Let me respond to that right away. The commitment we have to fight for victims, survivors for this is paramount. In the second week I was appointed to this position, I went all the way to Nova Scotia attending this crossministry ministers' meeting. In that, we collectively agreed on the national action plan there. Also, I spoke to this earlier. I hope you are with me on this one. We have established the condition right now, if everything prevails as what we agreed on, that we do not need to be here alone using our own resources to support this.

There will be added, additional federal leverage, additional resources coming to status of women for such services as in the rural sexual assault services that we mentioned and others. We don't have to re-create the need here. We are already established, and we just need to carry on and do more with us determining how Albertans want this to be done. That is significant.

You know, before we sign on the dotted line – I'm not in a position to indicate what amount of money we are talking about. But I can tell you that for the one we already got, \$3 million to support 211 to have a designated hotline service for sexual assault victim support services, that is a prime example: 211 has existed in Alberta for as long as I remember in a decade, but it was small scale, regionally limited. Through the pandemic this government significantly increased funding for that one. Now we are in a position through status of women – we leveraged an additional \$3 million from the federal government to support the same service we had before but expand the scope and expand the coverage.

So that's the example I'm saying to you: specifically what I am doing, what this ministry's doing, what are some tangible amounts of money and programs we are putting in.

Member Irwin: Thank you, Minister. No, I appreciate that, and of course that's the downside of sharing time; we can try to cut each other off a little bit. I appreciate your willingness to work with me here.

I just want a little bit of clarity because you weren't able to get to it in my last group of questions. Why was it, you know, that at a time when we should be supporting missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit folks – why were any references to Indigenous women in particular removed from your business plan? Again, as I noted, it's not lost on me that we're seeing a rise in violence and hate towards the 2SLGBTQ-plus community, particularly antitrans hate. Why were any references to the 2SLGBTQ-plus community removed from your ministry's budget documents? As we've seen, you don't have anyone specifically dedicated to this community, but it has historically been Culture that does anything at all related to the 2SLGBTQ-plus community. So if you can mention why in particular those two groups have been removed from your budget documents, please.

11:10

Mr. Luan: I'm eager to get back to answer those questions. For the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people, let me tell you that it is no change from our prior commitment to today. Perhaps even more so elevated to a priority because of the national action plan's four pillars, one of the four is here, and we're fully committed to implementing that. On a side issue I just want you to know that on this file we play a co-ordinated

supportive role to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations because they led the Alberta action plan on that one. We're supporting them wholeheartedly with our components of that.

For the 2SLGBTQQIA-plus community, yes, there's no change from our commitment. We have ongoing funding support for that. If you look at my budget binder, it's already, like, 30 inches thick. If you're saying we have to put everything in that report, you will be creating mountains of report. I don't know if that would add any value. But let me tell you, the funding and the program will continue to support. I'll give you that sense that there's no change or no decrease of commitment from us.

I'll give you – how much time? I'll just read two examples here just so you know it's real, it's happening in real time: \$75,000 was given to the Canadian Rockies Gay Rodeo Association for them to host specific rodeo events there; the next one is \$20,000 of funding to all LGBTIQ-plus refugees in NOW Canada Society for them to do their annual Stonewall and convention awards event. I can go on and on with this, but I think you got a sense.

Member Irwin: I appreciate that and note that those are great initiatives. Absolutely. However, you know, the risk here is when you don't name specific groups, as we've been talking about, that are perhaps disproportionately impacted by violence, as an example, then they're missed, then they're forgotten. So you need to name them, and this is the same issue we've seen with your budget documents around not having any sort of metrics, right? I mean, I wonder how you measure any of these things when you've removed so many metrics from your business plans even, from when I was first elected in 2019, from the first budget documents that I got to analyze. If it's not measured, it's typically not valued by a government.

I want to ask about the FTEs. This is page 161 of your fiscal plan. How many FTEs are working in, I guess, what was status of women? Can you just give a little bit of a breakdown of how many staff are working on, again, what historically was known as status of women? And are they full-time, or are their duties spread out across the ministry?

Mr. Luan: Quick answer, very quickly: 21 full-time equivalents for that part.

Member Irwin: In status of women?

Mr. Luan: Yeah.

Member Irwin: Okay.

Mr. Luan: Another question very quickly. Back to you about your concern of, you know, we are not stating our strong position. Let me state it on the record so that you have that. The work that we're doing will help all Albertans regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity feel safe, welcome, and well represented in the community and feel free to be their authentic self. That's our commitment, our policy. That has no change there at all.

If I could add a bit more to that, I just want you to know that from my prior experience having colleagues who are members of that community, from my own daughter who has roommates and they are in this LGBT community, and from my daughter's own words to me: it's an ongoing learning journey for those of us not familiar with this . . .

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We now move on to the government caucus for 10 minutes of discussion. I believe, MLA Rosin, you are up.

Ms Rosin: Yes. Thank you, Chair. Sorry. That 10 minutes went quicker than I expected. I wasn't ready to go again.

The Chair: It took 10 minutes.

Ms Rosin: I will keep it brief because I know I've already had one question. We are running out of time, and I know other members have questions. I just wanted to follow up on our conversation about large-scale sporting events in the province of Alberta. I certainly appreciate – I know that many communities across the province have appreciated the government's historic partnership in bringing these events to the province, and we certainly appreciate the budgetary increase in this budget and the commitments to consider or at least properly assess future events coming into the province to ensure that we can continue bringing these events to our province and putting Alberta on the map.

I do just have one follow-up question to our last conversation about the impact of these events. Of course, when I talk to the organizers in my communities, they will come with their numbers and their measures and their metrics for the success of the events. But I am just wondering if your department has any internal data on the economic return on the government's investment in the average large-scale sporting event.

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much. This is the piece I love to talk about all the time. You know, it's well recognized in our sports and culture community that sports build nations, sports build the community, and a strong community makes a strong province. That's well known. However, when you go on beyond that part, talking about specific economic numbers – I know for the FIS World Cup downhill, when you and I were there, it was – I can't remember exactly the amount of investment on that one. It was half a million investment there with a net return to Alberta's economy for \$25 million.

When you have that kind of a huge economic successful return to our province, it's like music in my ear. I can't have enough of that. I was talking to the organizer and asking: who are the ones buying all this? They pointed me to all the major brand corporations from Europe, because that event that you and I attended was a major draw for them. It's like our NHL hockey here on prime time. I can't be more excited and satisfied when I hear that.

That brings me back to what you were saying. When we entertain proposals, lending our support there, generally speaking, we're looking for every dollar invested in such major events. We're looking for a minimum of 1.3 to 1.4 times return back to us. Those are some of the figures we look at. Of course, each proposal is unique in itself. It speaks of their power of how well they align themselves with other stakeholders, who they leverage for additional resources. Some go higher; others go lower.

Yes. Of course, the higher the better, but also we want – I know this is close to your heart. We're also linked to those major events with long-lasting effect, creating tourism impact, increased volume of activities for tourism, and bringing additional economic returns in that regard, too. Those events are no longer stand-alone, work in isolation. I've seen a couple of such proposals like Tourism Calgary and Alberta. They are working, you know, in partnership, helping those bid proposals. Those are some of the components that we're looking for.

Ms Rosin: Thank you so much. You are absolutely right that from a tourism perspective these events are massive international draws from the high-priority European markets. I know that you we are at the FIS World Cup this year. I know on the weekend that I was there, I presented some of the awards, and I believe you did as well. I was quite surprised to find out after I had presented the awards

that there were 20 million people watching that award ceremony, where I had presented, and you have done the same in Europe and high-profile markets for our province. Such an incredible draw, and I'm appreciative that we are looking to support these types of events long into the future.

I do have one more question, shifting gears a little bit, but again from the tourism perspective. Under performance metric 2(a), I believe it is, it talks about the importance of heritage facilities and sites in our province, so museums and other sites that contribute to maintaining and promoting and showcasing Alberta's western heritage to visitors and other people of our province and country.

11:20

I have three questions; I'll merge them all into one for the sake of time. I see that under, again, that performance metric 2.a, the target for the share of Albertans visiting a heritage facility is rising from 20 per cent this year to 24 per cent for next year. I'm wondering if you can elaborate on the ways your ministry intends to facilitate reaching that goal and expanding attendance to our heritage facilities and sites. I'm also wondering if you can elaborate on the economic impact that these sites and facilities have to Alberta's broader tourism and overall economy. Then I am also wondering if you can discuss for me the number of museums and heritage facilities that we have in Alberta and how that number compares to other provinces with similar economies to mine and, again, how the economic impact of those facilities as well compares here to other provinces across the country.

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much, hon. member. Those are great questions. You know, when I was given this new opportunity to serve as the Minister of Culture, wherever I go, people ask me: Minister, how do you define Alberta's culture? Let me tell you this. When we have our major facilities, we have our existing museums, those are the ones telling our past and helping today's Albertans understand where we were and collectively shaping where we will be. Those are the Alberta stories. Those are the reflections of who we are and so-called Alberta culture. Culture is identity to our history, our presence, and indicating our future, and I love to talk about those pieces.

We do have 20 provincial heritage facilities, and some of those are world-class calibre, like the Tyrrell museum in Drumheller. Every year you're talking about over a million visitors there. I have to admit that the pandemic impacted significantly some of those high-performance volumes of visitors, but our estimate is that with the way we are bringing the economy back and we're adding to our support of those what we call Alberta's well-known facilities and museums, we're looking forward to returning to the prepandemic volume there.

I can go on and talk about a couple of others. The Royal Alberta Museum here in Edmonton is another classic one. The one in Calgary, the Glenbow Museum: recently we've given them a significant \$40 million capital improvement funding for that. In fact, this past lunar new year, when I was visiting them, they were showing me some of the most precious collections they have. They were saying that the Glenbow Museum is well known for 50 years of having one of the largest collections, most precious ones, in our country, yet many of those artifacts are not well known to general Albertans. I applaud them for having brand new, modern-day museum visions that are going to turn those precious items into an outward-facing engagement with communities so that they become active tools to educate our citizens.

I was so excited. You know, you reminded me of a story early in my first term when I was elected. One of the community leaders challenged me and said: Jason, I went to the Glenbow Museum;

they have some unbelievable artifacts, even for the Asian heritage. He was challenging me and said: can you at some point create a public exhibit so that we can all learn about it rather than those precious items being hidden there? I challenged the Glenbow Museum at that meeting and, to their credit, within four weeks they worked together with a cultural community partner, the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre, along with over 120 ethnocultural community organization partners to do that. Four thousand people attended that.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

With that, we move now to Official Opposition questions and comments. MLA Goehring, you have the floor.

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, are you open to going back and forth?

Mr. Luan: You know, I am constantly evaluating, re-evaluating this. What I find is when I flip to this combined one, I'm having a hard time finding the page. If you don't mind, I'd like to try and go back to the block time again so that I can give you a bit of order and I can get the answers you need.

Ms Goehring: Thank you. I'm getting a bit of a complex, Minister, as the Culture critic. I would have hoped to have a conversation, but you're not open to that, so here we go.

When you talked about the finances and specifically regarding the CFEP and the CIP grants, you talked about it being an overall increase. Frankly, Minister, this is a bit of a shell game with finances. We've watched this government decrease CFEP over \$50 million over four years. Now there is an increase of \$11.5 million, but when you look at your record when it comes to supporting communities, it has been very clear that there has been a decrease of support to these organizations.

Specifically, if you want to talk about how the communities are talking about it, the last report that was issued by CCVO says, and I quote, requests for support to the government of Alberta have been met by the message that there is no money, but in 2022 the government announced a \$13 billion surplus. End of quote. So the organizations that you are attributing supporting and talking about disagree, Minister.

When it comes to the discussion about enhancing the capacity for asking Albertans to contribute to charitable organizations, I would like to discuss, you know, where that money is coming from. We're in an affordability crisis, we see Albertans needing more access to supports and resources, so I'm curious how – it's somewhat contradictory. There's an acknowledgement that people are struggling and that they need access to supports and resources; the nonprofits are indicating an increase in complexity of needs, yet you're saying that this can all be balanced out by asking Albertans to give more and by increasing their tax benefit to do so. I'm curious where you suggest that money come from when people are reporting that they are struggling to meet their basic needs such as food. If you could identify how that's being supported, that would be great.

I'd like to talk about sports for a little bit. We've heard about rodeo being named as Alberta's official sport; I'm curious who this was consulted with, if you could provide organizations that had input into this. I'm curious about investments being made to just general supports in Alberta, specifically Indigenous sport, professional sport, recreational sport, athletes with disabilities, francophone sports, safety in sports, equity in sports, specifically women in soccer, women's hockey, women in football. I'm curious how the budget has financially supported the teams that support athletes.

How has this budget fostered jobs in sports for postsecondary students? I'm curious if there's been any sort of collaboration with the Advanced Education minister to ask for these professions to be considered in terms of return on investment for our sports community in Alberta and if there's been any sort of advocacy to postsecondary by supporting students and encouraging increasing capacity by leveraging the postsecondary-focused programs on sports to assist with future businesses' capacity of the industry.

There's talk about collaboration, and I'm curious if this has been part of your oversight of the ministry. We looked at a focus on business in postsecondary, yet there's really no mention about anything regarding sports or anything under the Culture ministry to encourage people to take careers in culture. We know that during the pandemic, which has been talked about quite a bit, and the impact of the pandemic on attendance and that kind of thing – I'm curious if, when it came to your numbers and your forecasting for the targets, that was considered, the lack of supports and resources that were put to those organizations.

11:30

The Chair: Thank you, MLA Goehring. That concludes five minutes.

We now move to the minister for a response.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Deputy Chair, there, for asking some very good questions. I'm not going to go with the order you did, but I'll just pick up the ones where we have the answers so that we can have more answers in limited time.

Safety in sports. We are proud to declare once again: we strongly support the Red Deer Declaration. That means sports safety, athlete safety is paramount, that we are working with other ministries across the whole country to continue to implement that Red Deer Declaration. Let me tell you this. When I see that it's the Red Deer Declaration, that came from Alberta, that we're leading the country on that part, it gives me an enormous sense of pride that we're actually on the front end of this one. Make no mistake; we'll continue to support that one and implement that policy.

The next one I want to go on is the CCVO. I feel like it's our common interests or friends there. I believe the numbers that you talked about: I got the same from them prior to budget, so that's their way of advocating to government what they want. Credit to them – great job – because those messages sunk in. As a result of that, we have ended up with 30 per cent increase to CFEP. I would like to give partially that credit to CCVO, particularly Karen Ball, for doing such a great job of bringing that awareness to the community. If you are in government, you also know that we have multiple stakeholders beyond one group that advocated for this. Oftentimes not everything people ask for we'll be completely able to deliver within a responsible fiscal framework.

You're also saying: "We're in an inflation time. Life is tough. Where did you find the money to increase this?" Well, let me tell you this. I want to spend a few minutes. I want you to very, very carefully listen to what I say because we are coming from two very different options on how to get this done. I don't discredit your intention, but I have a drastic, different approach of getting things done there. With that, you heard earlier the MLA for Red Deer-South talk about how Alberta is such a generous province when we come down to voluntary time and donations and so forth, and we are creating even more vehicles to leverage on that one.

But at the same time Albertans are not the victims of, "I cannot do this; I need somebody else to help me," that kind of mentality. We're a can-do province. We are not afraid of challenges. Even with 100 years and seeing a health and economic challenge like the pandemic, we never give up. Look at what we did. We drastically

changed, reformed the economic policies. We lowered the cost for business to operate in Alberta. As a result, Alberta today is one of the most business-friendly regimes in the whole of North America.

That's the reason why, when you were in government, billions of dollars escaped the province. With that, jobs have left the province; with that, people moved away from the province because they needed the jobs. We reversed that with three and a half years' hard work. Not only we've returned the Alberta advantage; Alberta is open for business. Today we have record-high investment. Every measure you look at: whether it is venture capital investment, now we're five times from where you left us, with \$506 million the last time I counted, and it's still growing.

Even in the cultural industry – I talk about this to my visitors, to the producers. I said: "You know, Alberta is well known for our oil and gas. I don't remember that we've been leading for creative industry. What brought you here from LA to come to Calgary?" Let me tell you this. The stories they share with me . . .

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. That concludes that 10-minute block.

I now go to government caucus. MLA McIver, the floor is yours.

Mr. McIver: Yep. Thank you. I'd like to go block time, please, if you don't mind. I've got some questions, and the only way I'm going to get them done is if I give 'er. So I'm going to do that.

The Chair: Fair enough.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for being here. First of all, I want to talk a little bit about our film and television industry. We've had great success, of course, with things like *The Last of Us*, *Fraggle Rock*, *Fargo*, a bunch of other things, and I love that. But, Minister, in key objective 1.1 of the business plan Budget '23-24 sees the Alberta media fund double from the prior fiscal year to \$8 million, as shown on page 59 of the estimates. Can you elaborate on how that will help support Alberta and particularly the feedback? Listen, I think all Albertans, like me, share the pride in how well this industry has done since our government got here and corrected the system we use, but there are those that will say: "Well, you're spending twice as much money. Are you going to get twice as much benefit, okay?" So I'd like that question to be answered.

Outcome 1.3 states that you would like to support artists and nonprofits by connecting them with the philanthropy and business sectors through the creative partnerships Alberta program. I think that's great. I'd like you to expand a little bit, if you don't mind, on the supports that creative partnerships offer artisan nonprofit organizations, specifically how they get in front of philanthropists and such, right? If you go into any of the major arts centres in Alberta or any place, what you see is big corporate names and small corporate names, businesses that actually are key contributors. Making that connection, I think, outside of what government does enhances what government does, and government enhances what business does. So let's talk about those connections. Can you highlight some of the other ways in which Budget '23 supports artists in Alberta?

Moving right along with my limited time, Alberta artists form the basis of the cultural fabric of our province – I think we all know that – and our lives are richer for it. Key objective 2.4 on page 30 of the business plan, to ensure the Alberta Foundation for the Arts places priority on Alberta artists, art, and cultural materials: on their funding for '23-24, how does your ministry grow Alberta's arts sector while funding for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts remains below prepandemic levels? Are you advocating for Alberta's artists and arts organizations? And, Minister, how do we deal with our trade agreements where we're sometimes required to

actually open up where we spend money beyond Alberta? How are we going to work within our trade agreements yet still try within those agreements to favour Alberta artists to make sure that they get the benefit from our funding? That's a tricky question, but you're the minister, so you have to answer these hard questions.

The next question. Albertans take pride in our welcoming, diverse, and vibrant province. Outcome 2 on page 29 of the business plan states that you would like for all Albertans to have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from vibrant, inclusive, and active communities through cultural, recreational opportunities and services that enrich their lives. Minister, on this one, can you speak about some of the programs that your ministry offers to reach this goal and any good results that you can point to where that program has been successful?

Also, under the initiatives supporting key objectives you state, "Provincial sport, recreation, and physical activity organizations will receive \$8.5 million in operating grants in 2023-24 to support these organizations in delivering safe, inclusive and quality programs to Albertans." Can you expand on some of the ways that these funds will be used?

Minister, I think it's important that Albertans make the connection between how we're spending their money – because, of course, as I think we all agree, there's no such thing as government money; it's only taxpayers' monies entrusted to the government. We can make that connection about: when we support these things that really are good for the quality of life of Albertans, how do we demonstrate to them that they are getting good value for their money? I think many Albertans may intrinsically understand that, but other ones, like every dollar the government spends, have the right to say, "What's in it for me?" or "What's in it for society?"

Of course, it's not always directly. As a broad thing, when we educate children that aren't mine, you say: well, what's in it for me? Of course, there's something in it for me because they're going to contribute to the economy that I depend upon, and the same thing, I think, to some degree is true for arts. But I would like to hear some discussion, if you don't mind, Minister, on connecting the dots between money spent on arts and culture and all the different areas of that and how it really comes back home for Albertans and their families.

11:40

The Chair: Thank you MLA McIver. That concludes your five-minute time.

Minister, you have five minutes to respond.

Mr. Luan: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, hon. Member McIver. You've been such a champion in many ways – I defer to you as my mentor – been around, been through some of the tough times, also seen the good times. Your strong advocacy of "We spend taxpayers' money responsibly": never lost from me, particularly in the ministries like I had with Mental Health and Addiction, community and social services, now Culture.

Let me tell you this. The reason that we created this Alberta media fund, particularly when we were thinking: you know, how can we leverage the success that we've seen here in Alberta and also build upon that to create some economic returns for Albertans? Yes, we're spending money, but I am so much appreciative to colleagues like you and others who keep asking this question: "What's the return? If we are spending this, what's the guarantee we're getting some returns that way?" Perhaps I will share some of the successful stories, and then you will see the relevance, why we're doing this.

This Alberta media fund was really coming from a whole list of our current initiatives, whether it's Alberta-made production grant,

whether it's a project script development grant, whether it's postproduction visual effects and digital animation grant. We have lots of those what I call small grants here and there. But what's interesting is that when we have this unforeseen creative infrastructure economic boom – even with the large investors, like you mentioned about *The Last of Us* production, when they come here, they end up employing, hiring 80 per cent of local people for various parts of their production.

I had the honour to tour one of the sites a couple of weeks ago. It's a different production, but I'll keep their name anonymous because I didn't get their approval to share publicly yet. But the story is that, whether it's preparing the stage, taking down, making the costumes, planning for every part of the production, it's 24/7 going. When I asked, I said: you know, who did you bring over here? It's pretty expensive if you bring everything from, let's say, LA to come here, but they end up having the supervisors and the lead of each division here. By far, 80 per cent of the rest of people are hired here in Alberta.

If you ask them, "Who are those people?" those are the ones currently involved in all the stuff I've been talking about, the small-scale production. They don't make it to the big projects there, but they're the ones who have the expertise, the interest, and everything else there. So this is where, wherever we go, people are telling us: if you support those smaller ones, it actually is made-in-Alberta jobs. They get direct benefit from that. They're also the supply chain for the big projects. They come down here. So it's a win-win either way you look at it.

When I ask the producers, I say: "What brought you here? You know, you're big shots in LA. I don't know that Alberta is a world point of competition that I know in the past, but I welcome you here." They say that they went to Toronto; they say that they went to Vancouver: promise high, but deliver, not so. They come here, and they say: "You are like a hidden jewel. You make things so simple and easy here, and your film tax credit makes a huge difference in our bottom line, and your low corporate income tax is another, and we know where we can be profitable and successful." So I asked them. I said: "What do you want us to do? Those are the past policies we've done. Is there anything else to move forward with?" To my amazement, they said: "Keep your policy. You're at a tipping point. If this kind of momentum is sustained, you will be at a stage where the project no longer chooses your crew or who to hire; it will be your local crew who decide which project to be part of."

The Chair: Thank you, Minister. That concludes that 10-minute block.

We now move to the Official Opposition. Deputy Chair Goehring, the floor is yours.

Ms Goehring: Thank you. Minister, are you open to going back and forth?

Mr. Luan: Let me see. I find that even with the combined I'm missing some pieces . . .

Ms Goehring: Yes or no? I'm running out of time.

Mr. Luan: Let's stay on the block one.

Ms Goehring: Thank you. I want to start by just saying that your condescending comments towards me listening closely are not appreciated at all. I have been listening, and I hope that you can start this block of responses without the condescending comments.

I would just like to go back to the arts sector. Building off what Mr. McIver is saying, I would like to clarify your target for the

number of adults attending arts activities or events by 1.2 per cent to a grand total of 34 per cent this year. Again, Minister, this is more than a 50 per cent reduction from prepandemic levels. Your objective to achieve this is to connect artists with philanthropy. I see no initiatives other than that for film. Artists are so, so, so much more, Minister.

My question. It looks like your ministry plans to shift more onto philanthropy, but don't expect that to be successful. What is your message to artists, outside of film, who have lost their venues, their livelihoods and opportunities, and what more is the minister planning to do to keep them here in Alberta? We have watched so many artists leave the province because they have cited not feeling supported. Minister, this is something that, I would like to remind you, started prior to the pandemic. We saw the outrage from artists start when this government closed Alberta Branded, which was a venue space for artists to come and share their art. Unfortunately, this government chose to close that opportunity. You know, we talk about COVID having an impact, and I would like to argue on behalf of artists in the province that it was, in fact, decisions ongoing that this government has made to not support artists.

I would like to see in this budget how you're planning to retain artists, how you're planning to work with them to stay here in the province and to be successful in Alberta. We know that in order for attraction of those industries to come to Alberta, the CEOs of organizations need to be able to justify to the families that they're asking to move to the province that we have a thriving arts community. We want to be able to say, "Yeah, if you come to Alberta, your family is going to be able to participate in incredible venues, incredible shows, beautiful arts exhibits," but we haven't seen that support from this government. We've watched them cut access to venues. We've seen venues close because there weren't supports. We saw very restrictive funding that went out during COVID that excluded so many artists from accessing the supports that were available.

Minister, I would like clear examples of what you are doing and your message to artists that clearly identify how you intend to support them, because what we've seen through the actions of this government does not support your words. Artists are watching. They're paying attention to this government. They were shown very early on that this government is not in support of the arts based on decisions, based on cuts, so I would like you to speak to the artists that are hopeful that there is some action plan in this budget from this minister that's going to actually do something that supports them in their industry, in their passion. I don't believe that there is anything outlined in this budget outside of film that supports the artists.

11:50

We have incredible glass-makers, we have incredible painting – I'm wearing a ring today from a young artist who's 13 years old. She's making silver jewellery with the support of her dad, and I met her at a community league event. The community league saw the importance of highlighting Alberta artists and bringing them. That wasn't an initiative of the government; it was a community league that saw a need to bring in young Alberta artists, to be able to give them space to connect with community, to connect with people that want to support them, and I applaud our community leagues and our festivals for doing that work despite not being supported by government.

I, very clearly, Minister, would like to hear on behalf of artists what your plan is. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Deputy Chair Goehring.

Minister, you have five minutes to respond.

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much. I'm going to skip some of the intros, go right into some of the questions. Thank you for your advocacy for Alberta's artists, and also thank you for recognizing that we're doing terrific work for the filming industry, too. Let me tell you this: Alberta artists form the basics of cultural fabric for our province, and our lives are richer because of it. So make no mistake; our commitment to supporting our artists is strong, as reflected by our action here.

In 2021 we passed the Arts Professions Recognition Act, and that one gave milestone support for artists in our history in our province here. Budget 2023 went even further; we committed \$28 million in funding for arts, including stable funding for \$25.6 million to Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Budget 2023 also gave specific initiatives such as the artist-in-residence program in Alberta. Let me tell you that when I visited the artist in such a program, it's so unique, and it's made in Alberta and helping so many start-up artists so that they have a year in support with us to be ready to go on the market, so they can be successful that way.

We also celebrate the Month of the Artist as another ongoing support to artists, and we implement the Arts Professions Recognition Act in our work throughout the division of our community support there. In June 2022 Alberta Foundation for the Arts launched the arts sector donation program. That's another new initiative that we supported to make sure that we capture the support there. Edmonton, here, the Edmonton Citadel Theatre: another icon, hub of artists and production of their work. We supported them with \$4 million capital investment for this 2023 budget.

Those are tangible numbers, specific actions we're taking. I hope those resonate with you, my critic there. If you talk about you want more time, you know, very unfortunate with this kind of formality that gives us the options for choices there, but I will extend to you this. Our work is ongoing. My office door is open to you. I'm happy to have our own meetings, briefings when we have significant new development like this coming, and your input is going to be treated no different than the rest of community stakeholders throughout the province in shaping and forming how this government will move forward. So I want to thank you for your support there.

Last but not least, I think you mentioned again about the performance indicator, the metrics, how we get there, why there's some, you know, fluctuations over that. Again I'm going to ask my assistant deputy minister Mr. Smith to help me articulate the process and how we came up with the current metrics we're measuring.

Mr. N. Smith: Yeah. Thank you, Chair. The performance metrics related to arts, specifically the art attendance performance metrics, are developed through the survey of Albertans that is conducted every year. That is a combination telephone survey and online survey. Roughly about 800 people are surveyed from across the province, across many different types of demographics and are asked the specific question of whether or not they attend an arts performance. Specifically, it speaks to adult Albertans who attend art activities or events in the past year. Some of the examples that were prompted in the survey are to include activities such as attending performing arts events such as music, theatre, or dance; community arts festivals; fairs; cultural performances; visual art events at galleries, studios, or art exhibitions; literary events; and attending arts talks or lectures.

Then, as the minister alluded to, as was the case with previous performance metrics, COVID obviously and health restrictions over the last number of years have impacted that.

The Chair: Thank you. That ends that 10-minute block.

We now go to the government caucus for the last four minutes – well, three and a half minutes. MLA McIver?

Mr. McIver: I'm going to cede my time to my colleague.

The Chair: MLA Allard.

Mrs. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah. We have about three and a half minutes, Minister, so I'll get a question, maybe two, in.

We've talked earlier in this session about domestic and sexual violence being an issue that our government takes seriously and, obviously, all Albertans take seriously. I just wanted you to talk a little bit about the ways that your Ministry of Culture has worked to help eliminate domestic abuse in our province, and I'll direct you specifically. Under the supporting initiative heading the business plan states that your office provided \$1 million in Budget 2023 "to expand supports for rural sexual assault survivors and survivors of gender-based violence and increase women's participation in Alberta's economy, including continued assistance for women pursuing careers in fields where they [feel they] are underrepresented." I think that's an important distinction as we look at what supports we can give, postabuse, to these women. Can you expand on how these funds will be used to effect this support?

Mr. Luan: Thank you so much, MLA Allard. I admire your strong advocacy for Grande Prairie. You and I have had many discussions in the past. Thank you for everything that you've done helping us to shape where we are today.

Very quickly back to your question about some of the initiatives we're doing. The rural sexual assault services support program, that one: a million dollars there. I talked several times now. I trust that you already know that piece. On top of that, I also want to give you another example. We awarded a \$400,000 project that supports a

culturally sensitive approach in dealing with domestic violence and gender-based violence prevention program; partnership with SAIT and Ruth's House. The Black community is having a very unique approach on this issue. I was there last week for their first-year anniversary celebration. It blew my mind away how the community is coming together with government, addressing a very unique way of approaching this issue. I am pretty sure you share with me such a unique support program there; makes a huge difference there.

You also referenced about women in STEM. What are we doing here? We have a specific scholarship program designated for that, to promote women to be represented in science, technology, and engineers. Traditionally that's an area that is underrepresented. We have a scholarship awarded to 90 students last year. Each received \$2,500 for that, and we're looking forward to continuing to roll out that program there.

How much time? Fifty-one seconds left. I have one more successful story, if I can share with you for that. Perhaps I will just talk through that. We are very much on top of it, helping women entrepreneurs across the province to be successful. Given the economic momentum we are having now, given that Alberta is known for a province with entrepreneurship, we need to make sure women entrepreneurs get the recognition for that. Just last week Parliamentary Secretary Fir and myself hosted a women removing barriers conference here partnered with Saskatchewan. It goes online across two provinces.

The Chair: I apologize for the interruption, but I must advise the committee that the time allotted for consideration of the Culture ministry's estimates has concluded.

I would like to remind committee members that we are scheduled to meet tomorrow, March 8, 2023, at 8 a.m. to consider the estimates of the Ministry of Technology and Innovation.

Thank you, everyone, for attending. This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 12 p.m.]

