



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Families and Communities

Ministry of Status of Women  
Consideration of Main Estimates

Tuesday, April 17, 2018  
3:30 p.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session**

**Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Goehring, Nicole, Edmonton-Castle Downs (NDP), Chair  
Smith, Mark W., Drayton Valley-Devon (UCP), Deputy Chair  
Sucha, Graham, Calgary-Shaw (NDP),\* Acting Chair

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (UCP)\*\*  
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Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (UCP)  
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Horne, Trevor A.R., Spruce Grove-St. Albert (NDP)  
Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (NDP)  
McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (NDP)  
McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (AP)  
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (NDP)  
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Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
Shepherd, David, Edmonton-Centre (NDP)  
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Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)\*\*\*\*  
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Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (UCP)

\* substitution for Nicole Goehring

\*\* substitution for Ronald Orr

\*\*\* substitution for Tany Yao

\*\*\*\* substitution for Marie F. Renaud

\*\*\*\*\* substitution for Barb Miller

**Also in Attendance**

Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (UCP)  
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (UCP)

**Support Staff**

Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Clerk
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## **Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

### **Participants**

Ministry of Status of Women

Hon. Stephanie V. McLean, Minister

Darrell Dancause, Senior Financial Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Financial Services

Susan Taylor, Deputy Minister

Lisa Tchir, Assistant Deputy Minister, Gender Policy, Strategy and Innovation



3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

[Mr. Sucha in the chair]

**Ministry of Status of Women  
Consideration of Main Estimates**

**The Acting Chair:** All right. Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to call the meeting to order and welcome everyone. Before I begin, I would like to recognize that we are commencing this meeting on the traditional territory of the Treaty 6 people.

The committee has under consideration the estimates for the Ministry of Status of Women for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

I'd ask that we go around the table and have all MLAs introduce themselves for the record. Minister, when we get to you, if you can introduce the officials joining you at the table. I am Graham Sucha, the MLA for Calgary-Shaw, substituting for Ms Goehring, the chair of this committee. We will continue with the member to my right.

**Mr. Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon. Prab Gill, MLA for Calgary-Greenway.

**Mr. Ellis:** Mike Ellis, MLA for Calgary-West.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Leela Aheer, Chestermere-Rocky View.

**Mr. Stier:** Pat Stier, MLA for Livingstone-Macleod.

**Ms McPherson:** Good afternoon. Karen McPherson, MLA for Calgary-MacKay-Nose Hill.

**Ms McLean:** Stephanie McLean, MLA for Calgary-Varsity, Minister of Status of Women. I'll ask my officials, going from left to right, to introduce themselves.

**Mr. Dancause:** Darrell Dancause, SFO for Status of Women.

**Ms Taylor:** Susan Taylor, Deputy Minister of Status of Women.

**Ms Tchir:** Lisa Tchir, ADM, gender policy, strategy, and innovation division.

**Drever:** I'm Deborah Drever, the MLA for Calgary-Bow.

**Ms Luff:** Robyn Luff, MLA for Calgary-East.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Good afternoon. Bruce Hinkley, MLA for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

**Ms McKittrick:** Annie McKittrick, MLA for Sherwood Park.

**Mr. Shepherd:** David Shepherd, Edmonton-Centre.

**Mr. Westhead:** Cameron Westhead, MLA for Banff-Cochrane, and I'm substituting for MLA Barb Miller.

**The Acting Chair:** Excellent. I will note again for the record all substitutions for the day: Mr. Sucha for Ms Goehring, Mr. Westhead for Ms Miller, Mrs. Pitt for Mr. Yao, Mrs. Aheer for Mr. Orr, and Dr. Turner for Ms Renaud.

Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard* and that the committee proceedings are being live streamed on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. Please set all of 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, including speaking rotations.

As set out in Standing Order 59.01(6), the rotations are as follows. The minister or member of the Executive Council acting on the minister's behalf may make opening remarks not to exceed 10 minutes. For the hour that follows, members of the Official Opposition and the minister may speak. For the next 20 minutes members of the third party and the minister may speak. For the next 20 minutes members of any other parties represented in the Assembly or any independent members and the minister may speak. For the following 20 minutes the private members of the government caucus and the minister may speak. For the time that remains, we will follow the same rotation just outlined to the extent possible; however, speaking times are reduced to five minutes as set out in Standing Order 59.02(1)(c).

Members wishing to participate must be present during the appropriate portions of the meeting. Members may speak more than once; however, speaking times for the first rotation are limited to 10 minutes at any one time. A minister and a member may combine their time for a total of 20 minutes. For the rotation that follows, with speaking times of up to five minutes, a minister and a member may combine their speaking times for a total of 10 minutes.

Discussion should flow through the chair at all times regardless of whether or not the speaking time is combined. Members are asked to advise the chair at the beginning of the rotation if they wish to combine their time with the minister's time. If members have any questions regarding the speaking times or rotation, please feel free to send a note or speak directly to either the chair or the committee clerk about the process.

A total of three hours has been scheduled for consideration of the Ministry of Status of Women. With the concurrence of the committee I'll call a five-minute break near the midpoint of the meeting; however, the three-hour clock will continue to run. Does anyone oppose taking a break?

Committee members, ministers, or other members who are not committee members may participate; however, only a committee member or an official substitute may introduce an amendment during the committee's review of estimates.

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. Ministry officials are reminded to introduce themselves prior to responding to any questions. Pages are available to deliver notes or other materials between the gallery and the table. Attendees in the gallery should not approach the table. Members' staff may be present and seated along the committee room wall. Space permitting, opposition caucus staff may sit at the table to assist their members; however, members do have priority to sit at the table at all times.

If debate is exhausted prior to the three hours, the ministry's estimates are deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule, and the committee will adjourn. Otherwise, the scheduled end time for today's meeting is 6:30 p.m.

Points of order will be dealt with as they arise, and the clock will continue to run.

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

The vote on estimates and any amendments is deferred until consideration of all ministry estimates has concluded and will occur in Committee of Supply on April 19, 2018.

Amendments must be in writing and approved by Parliamentary Counsel prior to the meeting in which they are being moved. The original amendment is to be deposited with the committee clerk, and 20 copies of the amendment must be provided at the meeting for committee members and staff.

With that said, I will now invite the Minister of Status of Women to begin her opening remarks. You have 10 minutes.

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to present the 2018-19 estimates for Status of Women. Let me start by giving you a brief overview of the Status of Women ministry. Status of Women works to make life better, fairer, and safer for women and girls in Alberta. We are a small but mighty ministry, and we are razor focused on our important mandate. We have an annual operating budget of \$6.8 million and employ 33 staff between Edmonton and Calgary. The ministry has three key policy areas: to improve women's economic security, prevent and end violence against women and girls, and increase the number of women in leadership roles, in public life, and in the community.

The ministry is made up of two main divisions, gender policy strategy and innovation and gender equality and advancement. The majority of our budget, 71 per cent, is spent on staffing costs as our work is focused on policy, training, and supporting communities. Status of Women does not deliver direct programs and services. The remainder of our budget is allocated to supplies and services and supporting communities through community grants.

Like all other government ministries, we are committed to using our tax dollars wisely. The Ministry of Status of Women is important and unique. Our government recognizes that women in Alberta are strong, talented, and make incredible contributions to our province, but for too long women in our province have faced barriers to work, unequal pay, and high levels of domestic violence. That's why our government set up this ministry, to find ways to break down these barriers. No other ministry has the primary responsibility to advance gender equality and work with other government departments to achieve this goal. While women have come a long way, many still face glaring inequality. According to Statistics Canada women on average earn 40 per cent less than men. While more women participate in the workforce, they continue to carry the main responsibilities for child care. Women are still vastly outnumbered by men in boardrooms and in corner offices.

Our ministry's main mission is to improve the status of women and girls in Alberta, who make up about half of the population. I'm proud to say that Budget 2018 is the first budget in Alberta's history that requires ministries to provide details in their business plans of how their funded activities and commitments will advance gender equality. This is just one example of how our government puts women and girls at the centre of all our decisions. Status of Women works to ensure that we have good policies that advance gender equality. Our ministry reviews public policy to determine how it affects Albertans, considering their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and other intersecting factors.

Our ministry's GBA plus, standing for gender-based analysis plus, unit helps us make life better for Albertans because it supports better government decision-making in policies, programs, and legislation. Now more than 3,900 government staff have been trained in the GBA plus analysis, and Status of Women has directly provided GBA plus reviews and recommendations on more than 70 government policies as the area experts. Those recommendations are now part of key pieces of legislation, including the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act and updates to the Employment Standards Code that extend the length of parental and compassionate care leave and provide other job protections such as domestic violence leave. An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans improves protections for workers by outlining the responsibility of employers and supervisors to prevent workplace violence and harassment.

Our budget ensures that critical tools like GBA plus continue to be used consistently and effectively in all government programs,

policies, and services. In Budget 2018-19 we have again allocated funding to support our highly successful community grant program. Through careful budgeting and reallocation of priorities, Status of Women has increased grant funding over the last year to respond to the significant demand that we have seen. All over Alberta community-based organizations are doing great work to improve the lives of women and girls, but often they need some extra dollars to get this work done.

3:40

Last year's grant program supported diverse and important work in all areas of the province, from training immigrant women in Calgary to help them compete for tech jobs to supporting a women's leadership conference in Bonnyville. I'm so proud of the work that community organizations do, and I'm pleased to say that we've provided grant funding to help advance our mandate in ways that we could not do as a government alone. Our proposed budget will help continue this good work in communities across Alberta.

Sexual violence is one of the most underreported crimes in Canada. It devastates lives, it hurts communities, and it's a public health issue that we must eradicate. Though anyone can experience sexual violence, the vast majority of survivors are women, and 94 per cent of perpetrators are men. These are our sisters, our daughters, our friends. Our government stands with survivors of sexual violence because every Albertan deserves to live free from sexual harassment and assault. That is why our ministry is working with nine other government ministries and many community organizations to prevent and address sexual violence. Our actions include supporting sexual assault prevention programs with increased funding to sexual assault centres in Alberta, including funding for underserved rural areas; increasing access to the legal system for survivors of family and sexual violence by removing the time limit to bring forward civil claims; making it easier for survivors of family violence to leave dangerous situations by allowing them to break residential leases without financial penalty. The more we keep working for gender equality, the more we can eradicate this violence from our communities.

Our ministry is also working to reduce barriers women face in leadership roles. In the past two years the government's new board-appointment process has boosted women's participation as board members on agencies, boards, and commissions to more than 50 per cent. We created the Ready for Her initiative to encourage more women to run last fall for municipal office, school board trusteeship, or band councils, which led to 100 more women running in local elections in 2017. These are examples of how it is only with deliberate action that we can see more women at the table.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak about the great milestones of the Status of Women that we have reached over the last year. These estimates we provided will support us in achieving our goal of making life better, safer, and fairer for women and girls across Alberta.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to engaging with you.

**The Acting Chair:** Excellent. Thank you very much, Minister.

For the hour that follows, members of the Official Opposition and the minister may speak. Would you like the timer set to 20-minute intervals just so you know the time?

**Mrs. Aheer:** That would be lovely. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Would you like to share your time with the minister?

**Mrs. Aheer:** If that's okay with the minister.

**Ms McLean:** However you like.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much. Thank you, Minister. I'll just keep my remarks brief because I want to make the most of our time together. I want to first of all thank you and your staff for joining us today. I know that I speak for everyone here when I say that the work that you do in advancing women's economic security, increasing representation of women and minorities at decision-making tables, and addressing gender-based violence is crucially important. We know that when we raise women up, we raise society up as a whole. Thank you so much for your efforts towards this cause.

I also want to say specifically to you that you're a trailblazer and especially in this ministry, being the first female MLA to have had a baby while in office all the while holding this incredibly demanding job. It's an accomplishment that is truly worthy of recognition. Thank you so much for the example that you've set for women across the province through your hard work and your dedication. The government has also walked the talk by achieving gender parity in caucus, in cabinet, so congratulations on that as well.

Women's issues are everyone's issues. They cross all partisan lines, socioeconomic lines, gender lines, race lines. They affect everyone, so it's to everyone's benefit to champion the rights of women, and we need to encourage as many women as we can to step into leadership roles in society, whether that's STEM occupations, boardroom tables, public office. Premier Notley had said in one of her Ready for Her campaign videos that if women run for public office, they will win. That was a fantastic statement.

It is my role as the Official Opposition critic to ask tough questions. It's part of what makes democracy function. It is a privilege to participate because it's my job, but I'd also just ask that you remember that I'm asking these questions not to attack your work or because I don't believe in your ministry's mandate to support women; I just ask them on behalf of democracy.

With that, I will start my questions. On page 140 of your business plan, under performance measure 1(b), the number of government of Alberta staff who attended the GBA plus training sessions, your last actual number for 2017-18 was 1,500, with a note that clarified that the number was a preliminary estimate. I believe that in your opening statements you gave us the number of 3,900 staff at this point in time. Is that who's completed the training sessions, then, at this point, 3,900?

**Ms McLean:** Yes. It's 3,900 now, and approximately 3,400 of those have been trained since 2015.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Since 2015. Okay.

Under that same performance measure your target for the number of government of Alberta staff who attended GBA plus training for 2018-2019 is 2,500, but your target for 2019-2020 is substantially higher, 6,000, I believe. Would you mind telling us how your ministry will manage such a substantial jump? Are you planning on bringing in additional training staff to meet your goal?

**Ms McLean:** The way that we have, very wisely in my view, structured the growth of the GBA plus unit is by creating centres of responsibility which help to support policy and program development. By training these centres of responsibility, we effectively train trainers as well. We can increase our capacity and growth by training those who are capable of also training others, so that will assist us with reaching that goal, certainly. We have definitely seen a large appetite from the public service to have the

GBA plus training conducted. In the couple of years that we've been doing this now in a concerted fashion, we've also got a sense on how quickly and on our capacity for providing training sessions. With having that experience and also having the capacity that we've trained up in our centres of responsibility, we are confident in these projections.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Is there a line item that this falls under in your budget, as far as the costs for these centres of responsibility and this training?

**Ms McLean:** Yes. That falls under item 2, gender equality and advancement. You would find that on page 248.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yes. I'm with you. Okay. Thank you so much.

In last year's estimates you noted that you'd been able to stretch resources, which you did, to provide this training to some arm's-length bodies such as the AUMA and the city of Edmonton. It's in the *Hansard* transcript at FC-585. Have you done any additional training this year for other arm's-length organizations, and if so, who? And does that fall under a line item as well in your budget?

**Ms McLean:** That would be under the same line item. It's the same unit engaging in the training. We've provided training to support the city of Edmonton, the city of Lethbridge, the city of Calgary, Strathcona county, members of the Edmonton Police Service, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, the University of Alberta, and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

**Mrs. Aheer:** That's great.

Following a year of these bodies, hopefully, implementing the training that they've received, what's the feedback that you're getting on the GBA plus analysis? How has that training rippled out into the communities through those arm's-length agencies? You've got a whole bunch of arm's-length agencies at this point.

**Ms McLean:** We are constantly evaluating the impact and success of the GBA plus training sessions for government of Alberta staff. We've received feedback both from the GOA and also from those other arm's-length agencies that we've provided training to, feedback that the GBA plus . . .

**Mrs. Aheer:** Minister, if you want to pass it on to me afterwards.

**Ms McLean:** I think I'll just ask staff.

3:50

**Ms Taylor:** I can speak to that. I think the minister was indicating that as part of our training for GBA plus sessions, we have evaluations that are done for each session. The feedback that we have been provided with from those participants indicates that that's a very good foundation for individuals to become aware of what GBA plus is and the analysis that they need to undertake in their ministries. They've also given us feedback that it would be helpful for us to be able to identify specific policies from the ministry's perspective that that would enable them to focus on. We're also working with Status of Women Canada to undertake an evaluation component on GBA plus to be able to look at that across a number of different jurisdictions, and the minister can speak to that. She has been at the table.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Good. I have questions about that later, actually. Thank you so much.

You noted in last year's estimates discussions that you provided the AUMA and other stakeholders with surveys following the training. You were mentioning that you've gotten some feedback.

Are there any other sort of metrics or numbers or any other information that you can provide on any changes that happened – I don't know – like, through codes of conduct or any other aspects? I'm assuming that would be within the scope of GBA plus.

**Ms McLean:** So you're asking for information in terms of how they're using GBA plus in their work?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Correct. I'm not sure if "metrics" is the right word, but, yes, not just the feedback but actual data coming back on how that was impacting those arm's-length groups.

**Ms McLean:** If you will just give me a moment.

**Mrs. Aheer:** You betcha. Thank you.

**Ms McLean:** We offer this training, and we ask for feedback up front as to their experience of the GBA plus training and, you know, where they think that we could improve with respect to that particular organization's experience. However, we don't follow up with respect to how they're implementing it in their work. I can tell you that, anecdotally, I have seen it come through in correspondence with government. With some of the grants, for example, that folks have applied for, you can see the impact of using gender-based analysis after receiving training. The training that they receive from us is certainly in person, but you can receive GBA plus training online through Status of Women Canada. So it is something that everyone has access to, absolutely. You can definitely tell the difference, when you're looking through a grant application, for example, whether or not they've received GBA plus training.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Yeah. Because that one-on-one training is far superior, right?

**Ms McLean:** It allows for that interaction, absolutely, but there are different levels of GBA plus training, too.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Oh, I see.

**Ms McLean:** There's train-the-trainer training, which takes longer, that kind of thing. There's the basic GBA plus training, which is what we provide to the majority of GOA staff. Then there are the centres of responsibility and those who are trained up to become trainers. They would have more training in the GBA plus process than the majority of GOA staff. From any amount of GBA plus training, you can see the impacts in their analysis when they're making grant applications, for example. So this would filter into the other work that they're doing.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Just maybe as a suggestion, I think that information would be so useful just for consistency and to help other people with grant applications – right? – if they're not able to maybe necessarily get the training or the one-on-one. I just think that that advice and some of the information that maybe some other groups are providing based on what they've received would be extremely useful out in the rest of the world.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Through the grant process we do ask for GBA plus to be used in their analysis in the application process, and we direct them to the federal Status of Women if they haven't had an opportunity otherwise.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I have a question, then. I don't know if you remember last year when we were chatting about the private sector a little bit. I was going to just ask you: have you considered, especially because you're training trainers, offering training staff, experts in the GBA

plus analysis, to be tendered to the private sector, like, sort of at a cost or a fee-for-service option to do their training that would enable you to expand the GBA plus lens outside of government and into the private sector? It would also be a source of income – right? – for government, but, I mean, it would be a great way to expand GBA plus into the private sector, which is, of course, in the mandate that you have. We have not as many women as we'd like to see around those boardroom tables and whatnot.

**Ms McLean:** I'll say a couple of things.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Sure. Thank you.

**Ms McLean:** First of all, there is legislation that requires that when government provides a service, they can't do it at a for-profit level. So when government does provide a service, it has to be at cost recovery or as close to cost recovery as possible.

**Mrs. Aheer:** But it wouldn't cost taxpayer dollars. I guess that is where I was going with that. It would be recoverable. You could do it as a tender, as a recoverable option, then.

**Ms McLean:** Right. If government provides a service of any kind – for example, over in Service Alberta we provide licence plates to registries – we can't jack up the price of the licence plate to create revenue for government. So while it is theoretically possible that we could do it on a cost-recovery basis, right now we're working on developing a, for lack of a better word, matrix on how to assess providing GBA plus services to external bodies, to be able to have an open and transparent process for us to be able to evaluate within our capacity where and when we would provide that training. Right now it's at a bit of an ad hoc request and provision purpose, but that also requires that organizations know that they could request it.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Correct. Yeah.

**Ms McLean:** So we're working on ensuring that there's transparency to that.

That being said, with a 33-person ministry and only five people in the GBA plus unit, we simply don't have the capacity even that we would like to have with respect to being able to train government and arm's-length government bodies. My priority and focus would be for us to prioritize expanding within government and then looking towards agencies, boards, and commissions, how we can work into that space, before we start looking even external to that.

So right now it's been on a bit of an ad hoc basis, but we're developing a process.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. The suggestion would be that if you're getting fee-for-service, meaning that you're recovering your cost, capacity will build as a result of necessity – right? – and especially if the industry has the ability to ask you and has that consistency and is able to say outwardly: "Well, actually, we've gone through the same government training. We have that consistency. We have this availability." You're going to be, you know, definitely bringing in wonderful information to attract women to the board tables and so many other things that, I think, would impact some of the other numbers that are the mandate of this portfolio, for sure.

**Ms McLean:** I'll bring you to TBF with me, Leela, so you can make the case for my budget to be expanded so that I can do that.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. But, again, I think that even beyond the budget expansion, if you can get the private sector to buy into that . . .



**Ms McLean:** The problem is that that's FTE capacity that we wouldn't be able to use on training government, which is our priority mandate. If we're having those individuals go at cost recovery to the private sector, those individuals don't have that same time to be spending on government. So we have a serious capacity issue in terms of that.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. To that point, actually, I'm just going to ask one more question about that. With regard to capacity what do you think your timelines are, then, with training for GBA throughout the rest of government?

**Ms McLean:** That's a bit of a hard predictor given that there's turnover in GOA staff, and then people also move into different positions. We started with trying to ensure that executive-level teams have training, and then we have moved through the GOA from there. What I will tell you is that it will never end. There will need to be refreshers, and then there will be new people that come in who will need the training from the first step. So it will be a constant need. Our goal right now is to get through as much of the public service as we can, but those numbers shift.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Well, hopefully, with training outside of that as well, the public sector will pick it up, and they will provide public-sector availability, too, based on what the government is putting forward. If it's not able to come through capacity in government, hopefully the private sector will take that ball and roll it forward.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. I am aware of some companies out there that provide training for the private sector on gender sensitivity and that kind of thing. Similar kinds of companies exist with respect to, like, indigenous training. You've probably seen it in the private sector. I know I have. Corporations will hire these companies and bring them in. I know that some of that is definitely going on.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Awesome.

**Ms McLean:** I've met some of the proprietors of those companies.  
4:00

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much for your answer.

I'm just going to move on, then. On page 142 of your business plan under performance indicator 2(a): would you mind providing a definition of what "labour force participation rate in Alberta" means?

**Ms McLean:** Sorry. You were asking me to define?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah, the labour force participation rate in Alberta. I have a couple questions around that. I just want to make sure I understand what it is that we're talking about.

**Ms McLean:** I'm just going to check my assumptions.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much.

**Ms McLean:** It's defined by Statistics Canada. I don't have that definition in front of me, but you can find it on Statistics Canada's site. We're using their data.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. The reason I'm asking is that you had a small dip in your category – right? – of women, from 66.6 per cent in 2015 to 66.2 per cent. Do you mind speaking to the factor that might have led to this? Is that a minimum wage increase issue? Did the minimum wage increase affect that, create that dip? Because based on what I would understand it to be . . .

**Ms McLean:** That would require disaggregated data from Stats Canada, and they just provide overall numbers.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Actually, I have this question later. Are they going to ever apply, like, anything to that to be able to pull that apart a little bit more to help you with being able to disseminate that data a little bit more?

**Ms McLean:** I've had some general conversations with the federal Minister of Status of Women. They acknowledge that this is an issue, too. I believe I read something just anecdotally about them putting more money into data collection within the federal government, but you'd have to check the federal budget. Sorry. I'm just going off these reports.

**Mrs. Aheer:** That's okay. It's a fair comment.

Page 142 of the business plan, performance indicator 2(c), rate of police-reported intimate partner violence for Alberta women: you note that this is a quadrennial survey. [A timer sounded] Thank you. Who produces that survey, because that's not StatsCan, right? And why is it done only every four years?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. This is provided by the uniform crime reporting survey, and it's done annually.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It says that it's a quadrennial survey on page 142.

**Ms McLean:** Oh, okay. That is a change that we acknowledge we need to make with respect to the business plan because it's done annually.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. Because that data for your ministry, I mean, would certainly be hard to project. It puts your priorities way out of date. I think the last one was 2013, right? That's where your data comes from in the business plan?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Thank you.

Again on page 142 of your business plan, under performance measure 2(d), percentage of candidates running for office who are women, we see the smallest increase in women running federally for seats, at 26 per cent, and 27 per cent running in the 2015 election. Your ministry focuses, I realize, on provincial matters, but would you mind speaking to initiatives that you've undertaken to ensure that Alberta women are also being represented at the federal level because, obviously, you're working with Status of Women Canada as well,?

**Ms McLean:** Oh. At the federal level.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Not that you already don't have enough to do, but I think that's just as important. You've worked on municipal, obviously, provincial.

**Ms McLean:** Right. As you've indicated, our focus is provincial. However, we work with a number of community organizations that focus on getting women elected. One of the organizations that we work with is Equal Voice. We've engaged with them on a number of their initiatives, really, largely at their request, and we certainly share information with each other. I wouldn't want to speak for them, but I believe that they engage in research to determine the barriers to women being elected federally. But that would largely be the scope of the work that we do at the federal level.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Excellent. Then I also want to commend you on your work that you've done to increase your percentage of

women serving on GOA's agencies and boards and commissions as well as the number of women holding senior executive management positions in the Alberta public service. It certainly sends a message to both the public and private sector of the incredible competency of Albertan women. Thank you for that. The metrics show substantial increases. It's really impressive.

Unfortunately, like we were mentioning before, we were just chatting about the fact that we don't see as many women holding key roles in the private sector, disproportionately low. According to your performance indicator 2(e) on page 142 of your business plan women only represent 13 per cent of board members for Alberta TSX-traded companies. Has your ministry had any luck ascertaining what this is? What I mean is disseminating the information. Like, is it just barriers, or is there also lack of interest? Like, what is it? Do you have many, many different ways of looking at this data? Could you share some of that with us?

**Ms McLean:** Well, we know – and this is, you know, mostly qualitative research – that women experience a number of barriers. Really, I think the best way to characterize it overall, if we're looking at what the main cause is, is to use the word "barrier." That barrier also extends to things like the confidence gap that women experience. This is really due to systemic socializing of girls. As they get older, this is part of how media represents women and girls as well. So it's pervasive in society. We know that there's been research done that you can find that shows that when women, for example, read a job description, they will self-select themselves out of things even though they may be qualified.

This is borne out in outcomes. Women typically will not apply for a job until they are overqualified for the position whereas men will differently apply for a job based on their potential. But there's also a corresponding response on the side of the person who is responsible for either handing out the job or handing out bonuses or handing out promotions and other opportunities. There is corresponding data that shows that men are more likely to be promoted on their potential whereas women are typically only promoted if they can meet a number of measurable metrics and outcomes and have, quote, proven themselves, which is sort of where you get that concept that women talk about and the feminist movement talks about, where women have to work twice as hard in order to be able to achieve the same things. You know, we see that borne out in research that's done.

There is a lot of good research that is done in the community, that's being done at the university level. We've funded a research study that is not complete yet – we've contributed to it – that is looking at female politicians across a number of countries.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Do you have a line item for that, for the research study?

**Ms McLean:** That wasn't from this estimates. The year that we funded that would have been from the year before.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. So it's not continuing into this budget?

**Ms McLean:** No. It was one time.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It was a one-time thing.

**Ms McLean:** I believe, actually, there might be a part of an FTE, and that FTE was out of which unit? Which one does that fall under, the research and analytics? That would be under our gender equality and advancement unit. I don't even know if it's .5 of an FTE. It's less than that. Yeah, it's less than half of an FTE's time. I can't

remember exactly. It would be borne out in the salary, essentially, for that ongoing support.

**4:10**

**Mrs. Aheer:** That's going to be a very interesting study. I look forward to seeing that.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Me, too.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I'd like to inquire about data for the number of applications received from women for the GOA board appointments. Last year you noted that from September to February the percentage of women applying to these roles rose from 21 and a bit to 35 per cent almost. That's from last year's *Hansard* transcripts. Do you have updated statistics on the percentage of female applications in relation to the number of women now sitting on the boards? This is from your performance indicator 2 I'm referring to.

**Ms McLean:** That are sitting on the boards?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. Applications in relation to – have you had a lot more as a result of your outreach? Are you having even more? You had great increases last year. Have you seen greater increases this year? You said that you're up to 53 per cent this year – right? – on women sitting on boards, so what's your percentage of applications in relation to that?

**Ms McLean:** We do our best, given that we support a number of other ministries' work, to try and bring as much detail about how outcomes are realized, but this year we did not come armed with the information from the Public Agency Secretariat.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Could you get that for me later, possibly?

**Ms McLean:** It actually falls under Finance, that's responsible for this.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Financing?

**Ms McLean:** The Department of Finance, yeah. We play a support role in this. It's the Public Agency Secretariat that's ultimately responsible and collects that information, and we just happened to have that last year to be able to assist you, but we didn't bring that this year. It properly falls under the Department of Finance. A lot of what we do in Status of Women is to play a support role to other departments and projects, and this is one of them that we play that support role in.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I see. But you know what would be lovely is if those ministries could supply it to you and give you feedback. That would be great . . .

**Ms McLean:** They do supply it to us upon request.

**Mrs. Aheer:** . . . just because they're great numbers.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. It certainly is. I'm sure we can get it.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It would be wonderful. That would be very nice to know. It would be nice to see. You had a great increase last year. It would be nice to see what that looks like this year, especially with your success.

**Ms McLean:** Sure. We'll see what we can get for you.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Thank you so much.

Then on page 143 of your business plan you note, under Risks to Achieving Outcomes – this was an interesting part of your business plan; thank you for providing this as well – “Without a specific mandate for ministries to implement [the GBA plus] approach, there is a risk that although the knowledge and capacity exists, it will not translate into more system wide action.” Can you speak to the reception that the GBA training has received from other ministries and departments?

**Ms McLean:** First of all, I will say that this is a newer metric. This is the second year of this metric.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. It’s a really interesting metric.

**Ms McLean:** It’s a requirement of Treasury Board and Finance’s accounting principles imposed on all government departments.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It’s a good piece of accountability, actually.

**Ms McLean:** You’re asking for other departments’ feedback on receiving GBA plus training?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Well, yeah, how they received the GBA training. Also, the concern was that it doesn’t translate into more system-wide action. I guess what I’m asking is: how did they receive it, and did you actually see that capacity grow within the ministries that you’re supporting?

**Ms McLean:** We definitely are seeing a lot of growth as a result of the GBA plus analysis. Including it as part of the recommendations to cabinet was very much an important first step for us. We are there to ensure that it’s treated as more than just a checked box. What happens is that policy analysts work on the item, and we want them to be able to apply it from the very first stage, when they’re engaging in, like, data collection, for example, all the way through all parts.

So now that every department has a GBA plus centre of responsibility, which is a change from the last estimates conversation that we had – we weren’t at that point yet – those employees are also part of a crossministry committee on gender equality. We have more structure in place that leads to a greater policy capacity and shared accountability where those conversations happen.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Have you had any push-back at all, like, any feedback that wasn’t as positive as you expected?

**Ms McLean:** No.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Has your ministry done any work towards obtaining a specific mandate to implement GBA plus, that you mentioned? Like, is there a line item that falls under within the crossministry, within your budget, for how you mandate that within the other ministries, or is that supported through the ministries themselves?

**Ms McLean:** We are the centre of excellence. The employees that are trained would fall under the line items in other government departments. You know, in that sort of practical sense it’s somewhat similar to training for diversity issues and understanding of aboriginal culture, indigenous culture, and that kind of thing that happens for employees. So, yes, a portion of an FTE’s time would be committed to this work. Really, our goal is to ensure that GBA plus just becomes part of all of the work that they do and that it’s second nature for them.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. On page 138 of your business plan you noted that “the substantive model of equality requires using the actual

conditions of women’s lives as the true measure of whether equality has been achieved.” That’s a very, very true statement. That would be extremely difficult to track and measure, though, I would think. Do you have any metrics that your ministry is using to quantify the actual conditions of women’s lives in order to fulfill your statement?

**Ms McLean:** I’m just going to the statement. It’s just paragraphs there; there aren’t points to follow along with you.

**Mrs. Aheer:** That’s page 138.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. I’m on it. I just wanted to get the context.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It’s right at the very top, Minister, the very top line.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah, at the very top. Great. Right. It’s absolutely important that we work with the United Nations and other women’s machinery across Canada to ensure that our equality is substantive, which really means that you can’t just paint everyone with the same brush, basically.

I like to think of this example. There’s a cartoon where there’s a fence, and a bunch of people are all given the same size of box to stand on. Some of those people are shorter than other people, and when you give the taller people the box to stand on, they can see over the fence, but the shorter people, who have the exact same box that you’ve given to everyone else, cannot see over the fence. So the outcomes are disproportionate even though we gave everyone the exact same thing.

That’s really what this is talking about and pointing to, that you need to ensure that you engage in a GBA plus analysis, basically. Just to say, “Okay; well, we’ll give everyone the same tool” doesn’t mean that you’re going to get the same outcomes from or for everyone. This really points to the importance of using GBA plus, because GBA plus takes into account the intersecting factors of experience. You know, we know that an indigenous woman, for example, experiences greater rates of violence than a white woman does, so we can’t use the same tools for the solutions that we’re looking to achieve in all circumstances.

**4:20**

**Mrs. Aheer:** Sure. Thank you so much for the description.

I guess what I’m asking – and I agree with you completely. I think your metaphor is excellent. But I think that in order also to be able to move forward and actually have impact, you have to be able to quantify that to some degree to be able to understand what box is needed for what person, to use your metaphor. Do you have any of that actual information to help? I mean, there’s culture. There’s race. There’s age. There are all of these other things that would help to define what that person would need. It’s a fairly broad statement. Have you been able to collect any data on that with regard to specific groups or anything or how that’s impacting people? Like I said, your statement is a good statement. I just don’t understand how you’re quantifying it.

**Ms McLean:** I’m just curious as to, when you talk about quantifying it, whether you’re talking about quantifying on the front end in terms of doing the analysis work or whether you’re talking in terms of the outcomes, like, the back end.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Well, I think you’re already doing the analysis work, right? I’m talking more about the outcomes. If you could share with us some of that and how that’s impacting the way you’re creating policy.

**Ms McLean:** Oh. Absolutely, yeah. I mean, really, there are a lot of examples that I could talk about in terms of how application of

the GBA plus has impacted government work. I'm really happy to give you some examples. I think that's what you're looking for?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yes, to some degree, but actually more than that, Minister. I appreciate that. I think we've talked about that a little bit. Anecdotally – and I don't even know if anecdotally is the right way to ask you. But you have it specifically here. You say that it "requires using the actual conditions of women's lives as the true measure." That's what I'm looking for. That's hard to quantify. I'm curious, based on your statement, how you are able to do that.

**Ms McLean:** Okay. So it's on that sort of front end.

**Mrs. Aheer:** More on that front if you don't mind. Thank you so much.

**Ms McLean:** We rely largely on research that's being done somewhat within our research and analytics unit, but that's more of an aggregating body, I would say, that works with researchers that exist across the province, so researchers at the University of Alberta, for example.

**Mrs. Aheer:** So it's collaborative work, Minister?

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay.

**Ms McLean:** We also heavily rely on data collected by the federal government through Statistics Canada. We rely on data that is procured through the Department of Labour, for example. We heavily rely on research that is done in the community for having this qualitative analysis as to the inequality experience for women in the province.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Is there going to be some way that we'll be able to see that data and that research to help inform the way that policy goes forward?

**Ms McLean:** The data that we rely on is publicly available. All of the data that we rely on, I am comfortable in saying, is publicly available. For example, there's a lot of data that's provided, actually, through my other ministry, through Service Alberta, through open data, where you can use the tools to find out some more information.

Here's another example. You know, we work with the eQuality project with the University of Ottawa. It's not just Alberta universities. This one is looking at how online and mobile information-sharing combine with social norms to expose Canadian children and young adults to discrimination and online harassment, that impact. There's a partnership between the University of Alberta and Auckland, New Zealand, on research on pathways to premiership. There's a development grant that's investigating why more women are achieving power at the subnational level. It's all publicly available data, for the most part.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you.

I'll move on, then, if you don't mind.

**Ms McLean:** Sure.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I just wanted to ask a question. We had sort of chatted about this during the supplementary supply estimates. The \$675,000 that you funded to Alberta Sexual Assault Services, the flow-through dollars that came through your ministry from Community and Social Services: is that a grant, like a one-time

investment, or is that going to be something that we see reflected in future budgets?

**Ms McLean:** My understanding from Community and Social Services is that there is an ongoing increase to funding. There was a one-time larger injection, and there is year-over-year funding that is committed to, but I don't have those details. That's under Community and Social Services.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Have you seen any changes? I mean, I realize that this money is just coming to you now, but what are you hoping to see in terms of investment in the wait-lists for counselling services and outward-facing community-based initiatives?

**Ms McLean:** In our conversations with AASAS they told us that right now individuals are – well, not right now but at the time – looking at in many cases a multimonth or six-month wait for counselling services. Their goal with these new dollars was to bring it down to about a two-week wait time.

We also heard from organizations, one in Canmore, for example, that was on the brink of having to shut their doors and not be able to provide services to women and sexual assault survivors in that community. They would have had to travel to Calgary for it. We also know that while this money will help keep doors open, there is a focus through AASAS on expanding and developing a collaborative community response model in seven underserved rural regions of the province. It will expand the geographic reach. That would include communities in the northwest like High Level, High Prairie, Fort Vermilion; in the northeast, Fort Chip, Fort MacKay; in north-central, Wabasca, Slave Lake, Athabasca; in central-west, Hinton, Jasper, Edson; in central-east, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul, Lac La Biche; in the southwest, Lethbridge, Cardston, Taber, Pincher Creek.

**Mrs. Aheer:** So pretty far away, rural places. Okay. Thank you so much, Minister.

In last year's estimates you noted that your ministry dedicated \$500,000 in budget 2016-2017 for grants. That's in *Hansard*, page FC-584. In your last business plan, page 135 – of course, this is last year's stuff; I'm just reiterating – performance measure 1(b): "percentage of grant recipients reporting positive outcomes for women and girls as a result of their project." The data on this performance measure was marked N/A for 2016-17, with a note that clarified that the data would be available this year. But in this year's business plan I find the same performance measure as 1(a), page 140. Now the relevant data won't be available until 2018. Given that these grants are, obviously, crucial, it's essential to track the meaningful contributions that they're making for women and girls. Do you have any tangible metrics that you could share with us about that?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Absolutely. I agree it's really important that we do track the outcomes. That is work that is under way right now. We had to wait for the full year to come around before we asked those organizations to provide the data back to us. We're going through it literally right now. It's really just a matter of timing as to when we're able to roll out the dollars. As you've mentioned, it was not applicable at that time, and that's because at that point we had the dollars set aside but, actually, I believe, at the last estimates hadn't fully rolled out all those dollars.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It didn't roll out until December, I think, if I remember correctly on the 2016-2017. That's why we were wondering why this year that there wasn't a follow-up.

**Ms McLean:** The final reports are due on July 31, 2018, so these are commitments that we have with these organizations. While we'd like to be able to provide a full evaluation, we won't be able to do that until after that date. Some of them have come in, but we don't have them all.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Thank you. I will look forward to seeing that. How much money will you be designating in this year's budget towards those grants, and what line item would I find that under?

**Ms McLean:** It is under 2, gender equality and advancement. The grant program is \$700,000 this year.

4:30

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much, Minister.

I understand the grants are meant to be one-time, you know, seed money to create or grow a project. Are you finding that after these initial investments the organizations are able to be self-sufficient, or do they require additional funding afterwards? Have you had any feedback about that?

**Ms McLean:** I can speak anecdotally again because we don't have the evaluations in, but I will say that we go to, you know, quite extensive efforts in the evaluation process to evaluate that goal as well. That is part of the evaluation, to make a determination as to whether or not this is something that is sustainable, whether or not the organization has identified a way to sustain it. If it's not sustainable, that would certainly count against our funding of that project because we want to be very clear that this is seed money and not create expectations that we're not capable of going through.

Each organization outlines their evaluation strategies for project management as part of the grant application on three indicators: key outputs and products, measurable planned outcomes – so those are their anticipated results – and indicators that describe the project for applicants.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I read your applications, so that's what I was wondering about. Thank you so much.

Then on page 139 of your business plan: "The ministry's Mentorship Pilot Program matches women with mentors who are leaders in the areas of engineering, construction, finance, academia and business development." How many participants do you have in the program, and how are you choosing your mentors for this?

**Ms McLean:** Seven mentors and seven mentees were selected. It matched women who want to advance their career development with seven women in senior positions in the areas of engineering, construction, finance, academics, and business development. It was a six-month pilot project, and the Status of Women section, which came under gender policy, strategy, and innovation – I had requests from them, a recommendation of a list of women that they had identified that were at a very highly successful level of their career, so looking at the VP, CEO, c-suite type of level to be able to provide that experience. The department provided me with a recommended list, and we went through the list with a view to having some variety. We didn't want it to, for example, be all oil and gas executives. So these are women that come from the areas of engineering, construction, finance, academics, and business development.

Once we sort of had a bit of a short list, we sent out letters to them to ask them to participate. Now, these are very busy women, so in some instances we didn't hear back immediately, and I actually made phone calls personally to them to tell them about what we were attempting to do, that this was a new thing for government, that we wanted to test it out and find opportunities to promote

mentorship for women. The mentors were from Pivotal Capital Advisory Group, the University of Calgary, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Calgary Economic Development, Grafton Asset Management, WorleyParsons, and Ammolite Strategies.

When we were coming up with the concept, we knew that having a successful mentorship program meant that we didn't just sort of randomly pick mentees. Somehow it was identified that the mentees were committed to this – it was a fairly intensive six-month program – and that they would be able to give as much if not more to the experience as their mentors. You know, they were really highly motivated individuals that would get something out of this. So we turned to community organizations that the Status of Women has partnerships with.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Who are the community organizations, if you don't mind me asking?

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely. The nominating organizations were Business Link, Alberta Women's Science Network, Young Women in Energy, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, and BPW. Those organizations each identified a few possible mentees, who then applied to the program. They had to be nominated first, and then they engaged in an application process.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It's quite a process that they went through, yeah.

**Ms McLean:** To qualify, they had to explain how they had recently hit a barrier in their career. They had to have a minimum of five years' experience in an administrative or junior entry-level role and identify as a woman. Then our department looked at who our group of mentors were and who the successful mentees were and then matched them based on their strengths, career goals and interests, and what they were looking for in a mentor or mentee. It was a really qualitative process.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It sounds like it was a really successful pilot. Have you received any of the feedback or metrics back yet?

**Ms McLean:** We're just in the evaluation portion. We just wrapped that up – time is flying for me – in March.

**Mrs. Aheer:** In March? Okay. Great. We'll look forward to seeing the results of that as well.

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely. I look forward to that.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you.

Your ministry has partnered with Indigenous Relations and other stakeholders to address issues involving our indigenous populations. On page 138 of your business plan you state that you're working "to support the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry." Can you give us some insight as to how that is happening through your ministry and how you're supporting that?

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely. I'm just going to turn to my notes. Okay. In December 2015, as you likely know, the government of Canada announced the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and it began its work on September 1, 2016. The inquiry, to my understanding, has also made a formal request to extend it. In September 2016 our government passed an order in council under its provincial inquiries act establishing a provincial inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, appointing the same five commissioners as appointed by the government of Canada with the same mandate. The inquiry held

a community visit in Edmonton the week of September 5 in preparation for the family hearings that were then held on November 6. We are actively participating in a federal-provincial-territorial working group that provides support to the national inquiry in order to work to address the systemic causes that put indigenous women and girls at risk of violence.

Our government's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls initiative is focused on developing consistent and culturally appropriate victims' services responses for indigenous families who have a missing or murdered loved one. As a result of that work, we've heard feedback from the inquiry that Alberta's model for the victims' support and family support services is a model that they believe was extremely successful and is one that ought to be replicated in other jurisdictions. You know, you've probably heard in the national media how some of these inquiries have really gone off the rails in other jurisdictions, but you did not hear any of that in Alberta. Largely, we believe, and from the response that we've had back, it's due to the government's work in setting the family liaison groups that assisted victims through the process.

4:40

**Mrs. Aheer:** So the program is already in existence? Like, it's already working? You're already working with families specifically to help with the trauma?

**Ms McLean:** It will conclude on December 31, 2018, but it has already gone through Alberta. In the event that they receive an extension, we anticipate that there would be more work to be done, but we continue to actively participate in the federal-provincial-territorial working group on the national inquiry.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much, Minister.

In last year's business plan key strategy 2.5 on page 136 stated: "Establish an advisory council to ensure that perspectives from Alberta women and girls are reflected in government policies, programs, and services." In this year's business plan key strategy 2.6 on page 141 states: "Explore the establishment of an advisory council to ensure that perspectives from Alberta women and girls are reflected in government policies, programs, and services." Can you elaborate on why the advisory council was not created last year? Are you less committed to that now, or what's happening with that?

**Ms McLean:** I'm just turning to the spot. Just give me a moment.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much. Page 141, key strategy 2.6.

**Ms McLean:** Yes. We have shifted to exploring the idea of creating a women's advisory council. Part of the reason for that is that initially, when we set up the ministry, you know, we were exploring ways that we could connect with women in the community. We have absolutely not ruled it out. Women's advisory councils can be extremely useful. There is a cost associated with running these advisory councils.

**Mrs. Aheer:** What would the cost be, Minister? Do you know? Any projections on what that would be?

**Ms McLean:** The projection is approximately \$50,000 that it would cost for it. We are considering whether or not that continues to be necessary given that we're a stand-alone ministry. This type of machinery, the advisory councils, exists in a number of other jurisdictions across Canada.

**The Acting Chair:** The time for the Official Opposition has expired.

We'll move on to the third party. Would you like to share your time with the minister?

**Ms McPherson:** Yes, please, if you're good with that.

**Ms McLean:** Whatever you like.

**Ms McPherson:** Great. Thanks.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Ms McPherson:** Well, thank you for the opportunity to ask some questions about the budget, and thank you to all the staff for being here today. It's great to see. Yesterday during the Infrastructure questions it was all women across the table. It was really great to see.

**Ms McLean:** That's fun.

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah.

Just a couple of things that I wanted to say first of all. I think the work that you do is really important. I think you're doing a remarkable job. I do want to dig into stuff a little bit. I was struck by a little bit of irony when you said that Status of Women plays a supporting role to other ministries. I would love to see the ministry elevated, and then I would love to see the ministry not necessary any longer. Let's hope those things happen quite quickly.

Also, I think the work that the ministry does in terms of violence against women is some of the most important work that we can do. Freeing women and girls from the fear of violence and sexual violence frees up so much creativity and opportunity. I can't stress that enough, how important it is.

I also appreciate the work that you're doing specifically with women in STEM. I see lots of opportunity for women in nontraditional areas, especially the Alberta Women's Science Network and Chic Geek. I'm really pleased to see that.

Into the questions. On page 137 one of the ministry's three areas of work is advancing gender equality in women's economic security. I think that, overall, probably one of the biggest challenges is to quantify the impact of the work that you're doing, so a lot of my questions will be around that. For this line in particular, how many women has your ministry helped to move out of a lower economic status? Where are they located geographically? Do you understand rural versus urban, and is that proportionate? What are the demographics of those women?

**Ms McLean:** First of all, I'd like to just take the opportunity to respond to your comment around the irony of a supporting role and liking to see us elevated. I agree. I always want to see Status of Women elevated. However, the type of ministry that Status of Women is in line with all other jurisdictions as to how these ministries function. We are modelled very much after the same model that you would find in relatively any other jurisdiction with women's machinery in it. Certainly, the Premier and Executive Council elevate this issue and want to see it elevated in all the work we do, which is why it has become mandatory to have gender-based analysis on all cabinet reports and, frankly, why there is such a demand and uptake for gender-based analysis training.

To your specific question, I would love to be able to provide you with that data. However, data collection is a significant issue with respect to evaluating impacts for women and women's experience, so much so that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation created an entire multimillion-dollar granting arm to provide funding to research, to provide disaggregated data. We are currently at the point of encouraging departments through the GBA plus lens to understand the value of disaggregated data and to engage in disaggregated collection from the outset when they're doing public consultation and engagement or where they do data collection

directly. It is still very much a challenge for us to be able to provide the kind of data that you're looking for. Unfortunately, we're largely reliant on federal and nondisaggregated data from which we need to extrapolate.

**Ms McPherson:** Great. Thanks.

That actually brings up a question that I was going to ask a little bit later, but it seems appropriate now. On page 142, performance indicator 2(b): "Rate of self-reported sexual assault for Albertans 15 years and older (quadrennial survey)." Then notes 1 and 2. Note 2: "Available data is not disaggregated by gender. Note that rates of sexual violence are significantly higher for women. Indicator to be used as a proxy until an Alberta-specific annual indicator is developed." Is that something that's under development right now?

**Ms McLean:** I'm just going to clarify. We're just wondering: are you referring to performance indicator 2(b)?

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah, 2(b) and note 2, "Indicator to be used as a proxy until an Alberta-specific annual indicator is developed."

**Ms McLean:** This data comes from the general social survey that the federal government puts out. Sorry; just let me clarify. The federal government, Status of Women Canada, is working on a gender-based violence survey, but it is not in existence yet. Currently the survey from the federal department that we get this result from is conducted every five years. They are aware that there is a problem in the fact that the data is disaggregated, but it's the best we have.

**Ms McPherson:** From that last sentence in note 2, are there any plans for Alberta to be gathering this kind of data on their own?

4:50

**Ms McLean:** We do work together on some projects with Community and Social Services. The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters does a survey on men's attitudes, for example, and provides that. So we do some specific funding on certain areas of disaggregated data collection and monitoring. That being said, we're heavily reliant on grassroots and community research that's being done, and we participate wherever possible.

This, again, is a capacity issue. We only have two individuals in our research department, so having additional capacity would allow us, theoretically, to be able to do that. Unfortunately, we don't have the capacity to engage in that kind of high-level, qualitative research.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. Thanks.

I think that speaks to your comment earlier about the Status of Women ministry being based on other models. This is probably an excellent opportunity to create your own model because that data is super important in driving the kinds of policies – you know, you're making meaningful change now – to be able to dig into that even deeper and understand how much more of an impact you can make.

**Ms McLean:** We would absolutely love to have additional FTEs in our research group, but the economic realities are what they are, unfortunately. At the moment we're very pleased to be able to have the country's first stand-alone Status of Women organization in Canada.

**Ms McPherson:** On page 138 the second paragraph talks about focusing on four key areas, including GBA plus, and I have some questions around that. I was happy to hear the number of people in the government of Alberta who have been trained, 3,900. Do you

understand what that is as a percentage of the total of GOA employees?

**Ms McLean:** I'll just check. It's approximately 11 or 12 per cent.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. And do you have a goal for the percentage of GOA employees you want to have GBA plus training?

**Ms McLean:** Well, our goal in the estimates is to have that up to 6,000 for the next year.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. But as a percentage of the total, do you . . .

**Ms McLean:** That would double the percentage, right? So that would bring us up to approximately – it's not cumulative. Okay. So that would be, you know, 9,000 of 27,000 employees approximately.

**Ms McPherson:** And do you have an end goal where you see 95 per cent of all employees having been GBA plus trained eventually?

**Ms McLean:** We have not reported that in these estimates. We're just not there yet.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. All right. Thanks.

Do you ever envision there being an HR rollout component of it? I know you've spoken about training a trainer within specific ministries, but for GOA overall do you see that being a function of HR?

**Ms McLean:** The HR department is under the Department of Finance. Given that we are the centre of excellence, we do not anticipate that role being transferred to the Department of Finance.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. Thanks.

Now, in terms of collecting data around GBA plus, it's kind of tricky, and compliance with different types of regulation I would think might get in the way of some data collection. I'm wondering. The data that you have collected in terms of FOIP and PIPA: have these been taken into consideration?

**Ms McLean:** Can you clarify your question? I'm a bit thrown off with FOIP and PIPA being added to that.

**Ms McPherson:** Is the data that you're collecting about GBA plus anonymous data? Is it just simply: this many people have been trained? Does it go into any kind of record-keeping about those particular people? Is it something that you can directly relate to an individual?

**Ms McLean:** The majority of the training that's being done around GBA plus is with government of Alberta employees, so we keep general percentages, but we rely on individual departments to essentially ensure that they have GBA plus individuals who are trained to do the policy analysis as it's required on the cabinet reports. So that provides the accountability mechanism. In the event that an individual is transferred from one department to another but they happen to be their GBA plus analyst, that department would need someone new trained, and then they would come to one of our training sessions.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. Thanks.

The centres of responsibility across the ministries. I have been asking about this in the different estimates meetings, and it seems that not everybody is really clear about whether they have one within their ministry or not. There were two in particular. Infrastructure, I think, was one of them, and the other was Treasury Board and Finance. It didn't seem like there was a centre of

responsibility. I'm wondering: is there a date that you expect that to be completed by?

**Ms McLean:** All 22 ministries have an established GBA plus centre of responsibility, and they're at different levels of operating. So the 80 per cent target for 2018-19 represents being more fully operational in terms of staff involvement in GBA plus training and implementing GBA plus frameworks. As indicated, there are varying levels in the number of employees in any particular department that are involved in the centre of responsibility. So that's why we have the 80 per cent target for 2018-19, so that we can essentially beef up the capacity within each department. An example of where we've made some headway: in Infrastructure, in particular, capital planning submissions now ask whether or not a GBA plus analysis has been completed.

It's unfortunate that perhaps the individuals who were at the table were not able to speak to that, but Infrastructure absolutely does have a GBA plus centre of responsibility.

**Ms McPherson:** Great. Thanks very much.

On page 138 there's a section on women's economic security, and it mentions early learning and child care, which, of course, are super important. How has child care access at GOA workplaces improved or been supported?

**Ms McLean:** Sorry. How has child care access at . . .

**Ms McPherson:** At a GOA workplace how has access to child care improved?

**Ms McLean:** Ah. We are working in respect of improving access to child care through our \$25-a-day early learning and child care centres. This is an opportunity that all Albertans, regardless of where they work, have access to. This is something that we do in collaboration with Children's Services, and we co-led the policy development. We started out with 22 early learning and child care centres, creating nearly 1,300 affordable child care spaces across the province. There were a number of them in Edmonton that were initially approved, where the vast majority of GOA staff work and live. This is a program that we are expanding, so it will create up to 78 additional early learning and child care centres with an additional 4,500 affordable child care spaces.

That being said, within the GOA – I might ask I believe it's Lisa to assist me with this as well – we have worked with a number of departments on a flexible work, essentially, plan and policy. Would you be able to summarize that a little bit better than me, Lisa? Thanks.

5:00

**Ms Tchir:** Recognizing that one of the barriers for women working in government is some of the other responsibilities they might have, whether it's elder or child care, we've been working, as part of the diversity and inclusion initiative, to look at flexible work arrangements being more widely available and acceptable across government so that accommodations could be made to the usual hours of work to accommodate some of those child care or other care-type responsibilities.

**Ms McPherson:** Thanks.

How about any on-site daycare initiatives within the GOA?

**Ms McLean:** We'd have to get that information from Children's Services. That wouldn't fall under our ministry, so perhaps you might want to inquire from them.

**Ms McPherson:** Great. Thanks.

The \$25-a-day child care: I know you just mentioned that. Seventy-eight new locations or daycares and 4,500 spaces: is that in the next year?

**Ms McLean:** That is my understanding.

**Ms McPherson:** And that's through Children's Services?

**Ms McLean:** Oh, sorry. The agreement allocates \$136 million over three years for the investment. I don't have the detail from Children's Services on whether or not that is for set-up in this year and then ongoing funding for three years or how that's exactly being allocated. We were more part of the policy development in the structure, in how that was created, but in terms of the additional rollout, that falls properly under Children's Services.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. Great.

There are only about, like, 40 seconds left, so I'll just cede the time, and I'll pick it up next time. Thanks.

**The Acting Chair:** We'll use this opportunity to take a five-minute break, and then we will resume in five minutes sharp.

[The committee adjourned from 5:02 p.m. to 5:07 p.m.]

**The Acting Chair:** Okay. We'll call the meeting back to order.

We will now proceed to the government caucus. Would you like to share your 20 minutes with the minister?

**Drever:** Yes, please.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed, Ms Drever.

**Drever:** All right. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Before I get to my questions, I'd just like to applaud the minister on all her hard work that she's done for this ministry. I'm proud that we have a stand-alone ministry for Status of Women, which is the first in Canadian history, so we're leading by example in that and also in the fact that we are investing in child care, increasing the minimum wage, working to end violence against women, specifically around domestic and sexual violence issues that, frankly, were ignored for far too long with the previous government. I also want to say that I'm happy that we have men on our side that don't like to tell women what their priorities are. Rather, we actually listen to women, and we want to work with them.

With that, I'd like to get into the budget. The ministry overview on page 137 of the business plan describes the ministry's mandate as working to advance gender equality in Alberta. In these tight fiscal times why should Status of Women, Minister, continue to be a stand-alone ministry? What is the value in a ministry focused on gender equality?

**Ms McLean:** Thank you, Deb. I can see why, you know, you might ask that question given that we've seen some of that conjecture on social media and that kind of stuff. The budget is quite small, but it provides invaluable investment. Advancing gender equality and addressing barriers to women's full participation in the economy, ensuring that our communities are safe and inclusive, embracing fairness and equality of opportunity and outcomes for all Albertans, and maintaining sustainable and accessible social supports require that the lived experience of women and girls is considered in government decision-making. Gender equality is intrinsically linked to a prosperous future with full social and economic participation by Albertans, and really this is the messaging of the



budget that we've got on the table here. It's about building a recovery that's built to last that includes all Albertans.

Gender inequality is a complex issue, and solutions require collaboration between orders of government, communities, and the private sector. Over the last few decades an insistence on gender-neutral policies had become very much commonplace in Alberta and elsewhere. It was viewed as a mechanism for treating everyone the same way. However, identical treatment of all people regardless of gender, gender identity, race, socioeconomic status, citizenship, sexuality, and so on, saying things like "I don't care if you're a man or a woman" or "I don't care if you're gay or straight," et cetera, actually disadvantages certain groups of people, often women and other marginalized groups, resulting in inequality of outcomes. Again, back to the example I had of the fence depiction: you give everybody the same box; that doesn't mean everybody can see over the fence.

Canada is a signatory as well to the United Nations conventions and treaties, which obligates the federation to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women and advance substantive equality instead of considering equality only in formal and legalistic terms. A substantive model of equality requires using the actual conditions of women's lives as the true measure of whether equality has been achieved. This is to say that, yes, there's a law that says that, you know, you have a right to vote, but if you can't get to the polling station, that is meaningless, right? That's what this work considers, whether or not there's a meaningful opportunity for participation. Simply having the right doesn't mean that you have the same access.

We work with federal, provincial, and territorial orders of government to advance gender equality and report on progress. Having a distinct ministry allows us to focus on increasing gender equality in Alberta and to support policies, legislation, and programs that are inclusive of our diverse population. Gender inequality is consistently recognized as a root cause of all forms of violence against women, including sexual violence. The experience of sexual violence can severely impact a survivor's physical and mental well-being and affect their ability to economically, socially, and politically participate in their community. Again, the barrier: they have the right to run, they have the right to be elected, et cetera, but if you are a survivor of sexual violence, your ability to participate in a meaningful way is perhaps quite different from someone that has not had that experience.

Reaching gender equality has long-term benefits for the economy as well. With more women in the labour force, advancing gender equality at work could boost our GDP by 6 per cent by 2026, and that's more than \$17 billion that we're otherwise leaving on the table.

The United Nations research recommends that women should hold at least 30 per cent of elected seats for a government to properly reflect women's concerns. Gender balance in decision-making bodies, whether elected or appointed, is necessary to ensure organizations fully reflect the diversity of Albertans.

Being the smallest ministry in the government of Alberta and in an effort to use our staffing resources wisely, the ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with other ministries to support financial, procurement, human resources, and IT services in addition to services to support our compliance with FOIP and privacy legislation as well as records management. We keep striving for financial efficiencies through shared services in order to ensure that we're wisely using our dollars.

**Drever:** Thank you, Minister.

The three priority areas of the ministry, identified on page 137, are women's economic security, preventing and addressing gender-

based violence, and increasing women's leadership and democratic participation. I know that you've already touched on Equal Voice and your ministry's work with them. I've also attended many of their events, and I really applaud them on their work in trying to get more women involved in politics. I know that it's an issue. You know, I personally was asked to run. When I go to these meetings, I ask the women there: how many of you have thought about running? A lot of them don't put up their hands, but this is at the beginning of it. Near the end we ask the same question, and we can get at least 10, 15 more women who will consider running or think about it. I think that's really saying a lot.

You know, I know that your ministry has worked really hard to get more women to run for office, and I think 2015 showed that Albertans want to see change and that we have gender-based policies. I just applaud the work that we're doing on that.

I'm just wondering: what has Status of Women done to advance gender equality in Alberta in your three areas of focus for your ministry?

5:15

**Ms McLean:** As you've identified, since its inception in 2015 the department has been working to address barriers to equality. We are making life better for women and girls in Alberta. Status of Women works towards the outcome of improved position and conditions for women in Alberta in relation to economic security, violence against women and girls, and women in leadership and democratic participation largely through policy support to other ministries and shared initiatives with other orders of government and non-governmental and community organizations.

Through our work across government, using gender analysis plus to integrate a gender and diversity lens in the review of policies, programs, and legislation, public policy now better reflects decision-making that considers gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and other factors and advances gender equity in all three areas of focus for the ministry. One good example of this is a progressive taxation system as opposed to a flat taxation system. In 2016 we have completed gender-based analysis plus reviews and recommendations on more than 70 policies. Since the delivery of GBA plus training has been implemented, approximately 3,900 staff have been trained in the GOA.

We have supported key legislation which supports the advancement and position and condition of women in Alberta. Some examples of this include changes to the Alberta Human Rights Act through the Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2017, which protect ameliorative programs such as employment or internship programs for indigenous youth. This basically means that if someone creates a program that gives a bigger box to stand on to see over the fence to an indigenous program, for example, that would be defensible in law as something that would advance an underrepresented and disadvantaged class.

Bill 17, the Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act, and updates to the Employment Standards Code include provisions to extend the length of parental and compassionate care leave and outlines new job-protected leave options such as citizenship ceremony leave, critical illness leave, and domestic violence leave.

Bill 30, An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans, improves the protections for workers by introducing legislative definitions and outlining the responsibility of employers and supervisors to prevent workplace violence and harassment.

The government has also tabled Bill 2, the Growth and Diversification Act, that's currently under consideration. This provides tax incentives for companies that hire people from underrepresented groups, including women, in their workforce or on their corporate boards.

The interactive digital media tax credit would provide eligible digital media companies with an additional 5 per cent tax credit for hiring employees from underrepresented groups, including women. This is one of our efforts – and I was really proud of EDT, to see this come forward – to deal with and tackle the fact that women are highly underrepresented in the technical work in these fields. This additional tax credit is specifically for hiring them for the technical work, so they don't get it for hiring them in admin roles, for example.

Enhancements to the Alberta investor tax credit program would also provide an additional 5 per cent credit for investors who invest directly in companies where the majority of the board of directors, including the CEO, are members of an underrepresented group, including women. That also incentivizes those boards to diversify their boards.

Additionally, Bill 9, the Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care Act, which you've alluded to, enables women to access abortion services without fear of interference, harassment, threats, or intimidation.

We, nicely and conveniently, partnered with Service Alberta and Community and Social Services to amend the Residential Tenancies Act for your legislation to come into effect in developing the regulations for the safer spaces for victims of domestic violence amendment. The latest update is that 406 certificates have been issued as of February 28, 2018.

Also, you know, due to the effect of this department, government amended the Limitations Act to eliminate limitation periods for survivors of sexual and family violence.

Through our grant program we also distributed 1 and a half million dollars to 34 charitable and not-for-profit organizations in rural and urban communities across Alberta and have provided grants that support a diverse range of projects to build community capacity and advance gender equality in all three priority areas, including, just to give you a sample, training for women in Calgary to compete for tech jobs, training for front-line workers in Fairview to support women and children affected by family violence, and support for women farmers to build their skills to run successful businesses.

Work across Canada with other ministers responsible for the status of women to advance gender equality through shared priorities and projects is also ongoing, and we plan to attend the upcoming meeting of all these ministers in the Yukon in October.

We lead and support several initiatives, too, and promote women's access to labour force participation and economic security and prosperity. As mentioned, we work with Children's Services, and we co-led the development of the model for the early learning and child care centre pilots. As I mentioned earlier, the program is expanding, and Status of Women will participate by helping in the selection process of the new early learning and child care centres as ongoing work.

We also established a mentorship pilot, which I spoke about briefly before, and partnered with Economic Development and Trade, Alberta Chambers of Commerce, and Alberta Women Entrepreneurs to host a series of workshops for women entrepreneurs who are starting or growing their business. That ran from June to October 2017.

We also led and supported initiatives to prevent and address gender-based violence, and we're leading the work with nine other ministries around preventing and addressing sexual violence in Alberta.

We are also working in partnership with the city of Edmonton and UN women in the launch of the United Nations safe cities initiative, which will be really helpful on a number of fronts, including collecting some very specific data for the city of

Edmonton on women's experience of living in Edmonton. Edmonton is only the second Canadian city to have joined this global initiative since it began in 2010.

We also are working in support of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – this is done with Indigenous Relations but also Justice and Solicitor General – and are co-leading a table for the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples on the antiviolenence programs to increase the safety of indigenous women and girls.

We also led initiatives that support women's presence, participation, and decision-making in the leadership of private and public organizations. We've delivered unconscious bias training, conscious talent management, and gender-based analysis plus training.

We've implemented an administrative mobility program with the Alberta public service. We've provided secretariat support to a women in leadership group, which is an employee-driven movement of the public service aimed at supporting, engaging, and empowering women within the Alberta public service. I had the opportunity to speak and give greetings at one of their meetings.

As you've identified, we've hosted Ready for Her events as well. I really like your concept of asking people at the beginning where they sit on whether or not they would run and then asking at the end. I wish we had done that. That would have been fun and interesting to see if we were able to move the target at all.

We've partnered with the Public Service Commission to develop a diversity and inclusion policy for the GOA.

5:25

**Drever:** Okay. Sounds like you're very busy.

**Ms McLean:** Small but mighty.

**Drever:** Yes. This is great.

Under outcome 2 on page 141 of the business plan it says:

Evidence based policy and strategic initiatives led or co-led by Status of Women improve conditions for women and girls in Alberta by increasing understanding of and addressing systemic and structural barriers to . . . equality.

I was just wondering: how has the ministry worked to reduce structural barriers to equality for women?

**Ms McLean:** Well, the department is primarily a policy shop with no programming or delivery responsibility. We provide strategic and policy advice on issues and concerns related to Alberta women's economic security, violence against women and girls, and women in leadership within the GOA to inform policies that shape and impact women's asset-building capacity and economic prosperity.

We established a women's entrepreneurship crossministry working group to identify and address issues encountered by women entrepreneurs, including a lack of access to information, access to capital, and networking opportunities. We're working to identify and reduce barriers that limit women from being in the workforce and earning their fair share.

We're ensuring that ongoing provincial work on poverty reduction has a gendered and intersectional lens applied to it, highlighting the different ways that different groups of people experience poverty.

In partnership with Children's Services we co-led the development of the child care pilots, as I mentioned, and expanding that.

We're working with other government ministries to prevent and address sexual violence through things like making it easier for

survivors to leave dangerous situations by breaking their residential lease.

We're working to reduce barriers women face in leadership roles as well through co-leading the Alberta public service's diversity and inclusion initiative, through things like unconscious bias training, our administrative mobility program, gender-based analysis plus, and the women in leadership group.

**The Acting Chair:** I apologize to interrupt.

We will now revert to the UCP caucus for 10 minutes. Would you like to share that time with the minister?

**Mrs. Aheer:** That would be great if that's okay with you, Minister.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much. Okay. On page 141 of your business plan, key strategy 2.4: "Prevent and address gender-based violence in response to persistent and emerging issues through collaboration with stakeholders and governments at all levels." I just wanted to mention, too, that we're very, very lucky to have men across this province calling for an end to domestic violence. Is there any, not programs necessarily, advocacy in your ministry related to gender-based violence that specifically works with men, specifically around, like, bystander intervention and advocacy?

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely. We are working on a provincial bystander intervention training working group. This came as a result of the University of Alberta and the Calgary Sexual Health Centre, which started a bystander intervention training program around bar staff a few years ago. We have, through our grants program, actually funded a number of programs that focus on how other populations can contribute to reducing and ending violence against women and girls. One of them was to provide \$50,000 to Next Gen Men. The focus of their program was to promote gender equality in the workplace, particularly by engaging men. This was an equity-focused workplaces project launched in Calgary. They essentially do workshops and presentations with a number of more corporate-type workplaces.

One example of the work that they've done is that a cohort of 15 male employees from Benevity participated in an intensive equity-focused workplace training program. It reaches a variety of industry sectors with workshops, presentations, and intensive training, with a focus on shifting organizational culture towards gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The Calgary Sexual Health Centre Society: we funded a community education campaign called Calgary Gets Consent, which provided sessions and training about consent and sexual violence. It created curriculum for four different workshop topics, including bystander intervention training; male ally training; Let's Talk about Sex, which is a workshop about consent in relationships; and consent 101 training. They provide those workshops to participants in community settings that were open to the public, including bars and clubs, festival settings, and universities.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Minister, I have just another suggestion, too. I think it was a year and a half ago that Member Drever and I were both at the consent forum that they had at the University of Calgary. One of the lectures that I attended, that was extremely profound for me, was the one with regard to special needs. We have a group of people who are also trying to navigate this world and trying to figure out all sorts of things. One of the issues that we were chatting about was consent and the directive around consent with regard to special

needs and their ability to be able to judge body language and all of those kinds of things.

Have you considered at all, within the GBA plus as well as with this, doing – I'm not sure – outreach with groups with special needs, especially cognitive delay, to help with understanding body language? We just want to make sure that, you know, our kids that are challenged – this is very personal for me, obviously; I have a son who is 19 – understand body language and those kinds of things that maybe a parent can't always bring into a discussion. Sorry that it's a very long-winded question, but I'm just curious if you've had any outreach in that respect.

**Ms McLean:** Specifically with relation to disabilities – you had a number of questions in there . . .

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. Sorry about that.

**Ms McLean:** . . . so I'll just try and start at the beginning.

First of all, GBA plus: the plus stands for intersectional factors, including varying ability. Applying that to our policy will also help us to identify where individuals from the disability community either benefit or are left behind. You know, certainly, I speak to this myself as someone with a personal relationship to it as well, as my sister is developmentally delayed. I know that her navigation of the world with respect to all facets of her life does heavily depend on government services and programming. So this is something that both the department is very alive to and myself personally.

We were very happy to receive an application in our last grant round from Connections Counselling and Consulting Foundation, and we provided over \$30,000 for a workshop series addressing issues faced by mothers with cognitive challenges and discussing healthy and abusive relationships. They put on what they called learning to love yourself workshops, which are being delivered to women with disabilities in Calgary. They have a partnership with the Calgary Sexual Health Centre and have presented to participants on consent and healthy relationships. The workshops, as we know so far, are having positive impacts on participants, and we've heard some success stories already, including women taking transit for the first time independently and women with anxiety increasing participation in group activities.

5:35

You also just addressed children generally, I think, in terms of educating them without having to, you know, talk to their parents about these issues. We provided funding for a consent play, that was created, I believe, in Edmonton – I'm just trying to look for it – through the Concrete Theatre Society. We provided over \$80,000 to them. They engage in the theatrical exploration of sexual consent issues in teen relationships and the development of resources for students and educators. The theatrical performance of *Consent* is delivered to schools across Alberta and provides resources and supporting materials to be developed. These folks have a very strong reputation.

It was quite funny. When we went to the launch, I realized that their earlier version – it was a different version but taking the same concept of using a theatrical exploration – was actually something that was delivered in my school when I was in junior high, and I had taken their course. They have a long history of partnership with Alberta school boards across spectrums of education delivery.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Sorry, Minister. What course is that? Is it in CALM, or is it, like, part of . . .

**Ms McLean:** It would be brought in by the school. Typically I would think that they would put it under CALM, but that's the high

school version. You know, it's called something different at the junior high level, health and wellness and that kind of thing.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Health and wellness. Okay. Thank you so much.

Still on the same page, page 141, of your business plan, key strategy 2.4. The Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association recently released a report on shockingly high rates of domestic violence, 70 per cent in fact, which continue to impact the lives of immigrant women. The reported highlighted issues are language barriers and that perpetrators often threaten the victim's immigration status as a tool of control, or they threaten them with deportation should the victim report domestic violence. What is your ministry doing in collaboration with other ministries and organizations like CAIWA to address these issues? Have you identified factors such as race, ethnicity, ability, health status, sexual orientation as being . . . [Mrs. Aheer's speaking time expired]

I'll ask you that next time.

**The Acting Chair:** I apologize for interrupting.

We'll move on to the third-party member. Member McPherson, would you like to share your time with the minister?

**Ms McPherson:** Yeah.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Ms McPherson:** Thank you. I wanted to briefly touch on the Ready for Her campaign. It's great that more women were participating in the election. Of course, there was Ask Her as well. I think these initiatives are really important. I'm wondering about Ready for Her and having more women run. Do we understand how many more women there are on city and town councils and on school boards now as a result of having more women run?

**Ms McLean:** Sorry. Just give me one second. I'm always happy to talk about this work, but strictly speaking, it's not part of these estimates as it's not budgeted as an ongoing initiative. This was around the municipal elections.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay.

**Ms McLean:** Women's representation across the province moved from 26 per cent to 29 per cent following the 2017 municipal elections. What is really significant is that there was a 12 per cent increase in women running compared to the 2013 election. Women made up 29 per cent of the candidates, confirming that when women run, they win as often as men given that we saw that exact percentage reflected in the election. So 29 per cent of the candidates were women, and 29 per cent of the elected were women. In 2017 – oh, sorry; I was reading off something else. Yeah. There you go. That's the end.

**Ms McPherson:** Okay. Great. I will pick up on the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association report. It was recently released. I'm looking at a story about it from last Friday. One line in particular really struck me from the report. The director said that 70 per cent of those contacted in gathering data said that either they know someone affected by domestic violence or it's happened to them. That's a really high number. My question isn't quite as specific as the previous one, but I'd like to understand what sorts of policies or supports are available to help bring that number down and to give support and outreach to women in these communities, especially in the context of the things that are barriers. Language is a barrier. Culture, the understanding of what authority figures can and cannot do: those are all barriers to women reaching out for help.

**Ms McLean:** You know, again, broadly speaking, we provide the GBA plus analysis and support to other departments. We work crossministry. A lot of the direct funding from government for dealing with issues around violence – for example, funding for women's shelters, et cetera – comes from Community and Social Services. Knowing these details and knowing that what this report is putting out confirms what we knew, which is that certain intersecting factors absolutely increase your risk for experiencing violence, it's unfortunately not surprising to hear these results, that immigrant populations experience an increased risk and additional barriers in all aspects of their life. Language barriers are certainly a huge one but also perhaps coming from a community where you have a different relationship with policing and the kinds of community resources that we provide here. We know this, and it absolutely influences the work that's done across government.

With respect to ways that Status of Women has an opportunity to, in a more direct way, influence these issues, it would obviously come through our grants. It's highly dependent, in terms of our ability to impact outside, other than going through our work crossministry, on, again, our grants. We were able to provide a grant to Calgary Catholic Immigration Society towards a collaborative mentoring project that ensures immigrants experiencing family violence can receive culturally relevant supports. That goes to the underlying issue that is, in part, addressed by that report, which is having culturally relevant support and response to the issues.

I've met with some of the immigrant associations. One in Edmonton comes to mind, where it was, you know, explained to me how these concepts need to be taught differently sometimes to the men in these communities when they come from a background, from a different societal structure, where some of these practices that are illegal here are perhaps more commonplace there, so individuals speaking to them in their own community as opposed to more of a top-down approach, so somebody that actually comes from that background and understands it. I think that canvasses the question.

**Ms McPherson:** With your grants, do you ever do any outreach to communities? You've spoken about the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. For a rural community, it looks like it's pretty grassroots. It looks like it is run by and for immigrant women, who may not be aware of the grants that are available. Does the ministry participate in any outreach to those communities to connect them with those kinds of resources?

5:45

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely. In general these things are certainly impacted, and we know from gender-based analysis plus that your geographic location absolutely can and does, often disproportionately and negatively, impact both your susceptibility to violence but also your ability to respond to it.

So we – sorry. I just lost my train of thought. It just jumped out of my head.

**Ms McPherson:** It's been a long day.

**Ms McLean:** Yes, it certainly has.

We support survivors of sexual violence in all areas of the province and work very closely with community partners to provide services in rural communities. For example, the governments of Canada and Alberta announced a joint investment of \$1.9 million to increase capacity at Mountain Rose Women's Shelter in Rocky Mountain House.

Our community grants also went towards addressing violence in rural communities. The Camrose Family Violence Action Society,

for example, received just over \$23,000 to support expressive art programs for women in Camrose and surrounding area who are recovering from domestic violence. The Boys and Girls Club of Whitecourt and District received just over \$36,000 to deliver information sessions to young people in Whitecourt to increase understanding of family and sexual violence committed against women and girls. The Pembina Crisis Connection Society received \$3,000 to deliver programs to Drayton Valley and area junior and high school students on the prevention of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and family violence. The Hope Resource Centre in Westlock received \$50,000 to provide support services to women and children experiencing domestic violence.

**Ms McPherson:** Is it through outreach that they were connected with the grants?

**Ms McLean:** Oh, sorry. Yeah. Thank you. That's my brain fart there, where I was, like: where was I going with this?

We have a number of stakeholders, so we rely heavily, being a small ministry, on our networks but also on media to cover the launch of our grants program. We also work very closely with our rural MLAs to get the information out to communities that the granting is open. But we have very deep and strong connections with women's organizations and organizations that serve women throughout the province.

**The Acting Chair:** I apologize to interrupt.

We'll revert to the government caucus. Ms Drever, would you like to share your time with the minister?

**Drever:** Yes, please.

**The Acting Chair:** Okay. Please proceed.

**Drever:** Thank you, Chair. On page 141 of your business plan key strategy 2.5 refers to work done with federal, provincial, and territorial partners as well as UN entities to improve the status of women and girls. Can you elaborate on this and provide us with examples of how this work is making life better, safer, and fairer for women and girls in Alberta?

**Ms McLean:** Thank you. We are an active participant at the Forum of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women. In my first year appointed we hosted and we attended the FPT meeting in Toronto in November. The forum provides FPT ministers with an opportunity to lead and influence change on issues related to women's equality and the status of women in Canada.

Priorities that were agreed upon last year in Toronto include gender-based analysis, gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment, engagement with national indigenous leaders and representatives in exploring options to address the gender wage gap. Participation provided the opportunity to highlight Alberta's key activities and initiatives as well as to learn about and influence best practices in other jurisdictions.

We also participate in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and attended and participated in the 62nd session, from March 11 to 14. This really signalled to the world Alberta's strong commitment and to the other FPT ministers our strong commitment to the promotion and advancement of the status of women. This is a unique forum for learning from international nongovernmental organizations, elected officials, and public servants about emerging issues and issues that are particularly important. With the theme for this past session, it was extremely important for me to attend given our large rural communities. The

theme was Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls.

We also contribute to Canada's submissions on key international and UN instruments such as the Beijing platform for action, and we attend as part of the Canadian delegation to international UN efforts and events. For example, we sent an individual from our department to the Mexico gathering for the United Nations safe cities initiative so that we could better support the city of Edmonton in their work on the safe cities initiative.

**Drever:** That's great. That was in New York, wasn't it?

**Ms McLean:** Yes. It's held in New York, always during the snowy, cold time of year.

**Drever:** So how is your ministry making sure that there is access to regular and reliable data, analysis, and research regarding women's social, political, economic, and legal conditions as indicated under outcome 1 on page 139 of your business plan?

**Ms McLean:** As I've identified, this is a problem for the feminist movement overall. We found that government and other organizations are collecting good data, but it's not in a form that shows inequities between what men experience and what women experience, so the fancy way of saying this is that it's not disaggregated.

Our role is to help ensure that data collected by the government is gender and diversity responsive and turned into information that will lead to good policy decisions that will benefit more Albertans. Status of Women is working with other departments and community organizations to turn very cumbersome data sets into information products that provide greater understanding of issues and inequality so that it doesn't necessarily take a statistician or researcher to be able to interpret the data.

Two initial presentations on gender- and diversity-responsive data were developed and delivered to all government department GBA plus centres of responsibility representatives and the office of statistics and information of Treasury Board and Finance. Presentations and workshops will be further developed and presented to more research and analytics units across the government in 2018 and '19.

We also partner on a number of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded research projects that are aligned with the knowledge needs of the department and give us cutting-edge information about advancing gender equality. An example of this is data visualization. We're working with Service Alberta – again, a very good partnership – to make data more accessible by presenting patterns, inequalities, and differentials that we can act on. The first, partnering with Alberta Municipal Affairs, is a dashboard featuring municipal action data broken down by gender, as you might imagine.

We also have a number of research partnerships. I addressed a couple of them earlier. One that I think I didn't mention was with the University of Alberta addressing domestic violence in postmigration gender relations. SSHRC knowledge sent us this grant. It is looking at the current state of knowledge around domestic violence in newcomer communities in Canada. Again, it addresses some of the underlying information that we need to combat these issues that that recent report from CAIWA addresses, with a specific focus on Alberta given the data issues around having to just extrapolate, often from federal data.

We've also forged relationships with more than 20 data analytics units across government, impressing upon them the importance of ensuring that data is disaggregated. Our partnership with open government and Service Alberta ensures that data processes are

modern and government-wide to provide information on issues that cut across departments.

We've recently started working with community organizations to analyze and visualize their program and service data as well, so trying to bring together the data that they also collect to give us a clear picture of service needs and uses, what these issues will look like on the ground, and how services can be more inclusive.

5:55

**Drever:** Thank you, Minister.

I'd like to cede the rest of my time, some of the questions, actually, to MLA Luff.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Ms Luff:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. All right. I just want to ask sort of a question related to key strategy 2.1, which indicates that the ministry is supporting government of Alberta strategies, policies, and programs that increase women's economic security and prosperity. There is often a lot of talk about the gender pay gap, and sometimes when folks are talking about the gender pay gap, they attribute a lot of it to the fact that women have a tendency to be in jobs that pay less, on average, than perhaps positions that men might choose.

I was just looking at a pretty interesting article that came out of Ontario recently that showed that women working in the same positions are actually earning less than men on a regular basis as well, with data showing that, for instance, women with a bachelor's degree who worked in STEM were earning an average of \$60,000 compared to \$72,000 earned by men of the same age and with the same education. It also showed that sort of as income goes up, that disparity gets bigger.

**Ms McLean:** It increases.

**Ms Luff:** Yeah. So, like, the more money people earn, the larger the gap has a tendency to be. You know, over the course of a woman's lifetime, so over 35 years, that disparity can amount to \$2.2 million in difference in earnings between a man and a woman working the same job.

I'm just curious: given that this is still a fairly major issue, what work has been done by the ministry to increase women's economic security and address the gender pay gap?

**Ms McLean:** Thank you. We certainly recognize that the gender pay gap is a massive issue, but it's also a very complex one, and it requires multiple policy interventions. This is the kind of thing where, certainly, there is no one-stop cure-all for this problem. We are committed to closing the gender pay gap through efficient, effective, and consistent equality-promoting practices. We've made progress on improving accessibility to affordable child care, enhancing parental and domestic leaves, and increasing the minimum wage as over half of minimum wage earners are women. These measures contribute to closing the gender pay gap.

When Status of Women provided GBA plus analysis and input to Alberta Labour through the employment standards review process, this resulted in a number of legislative changes to support safe, fair, and healthy workplaces. We also provided input on Bill 23, the Alberta Human Rights Amendment Act, 2017, which protects ameliorative programs. An example of this is Bill 2, really, where there are additional incentives to hire women into those positions.

**The Acting Chair:** I apologize to interrupt.

We'll return to the UCP caucus. Would you like to continue to share your time with the minister?

**Mrs. Aheer:** How much time do we have together?

**The Acting Chair:** Ten minutes combined.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Ten minutes. Okay.

Do you mind if I ask you a few questions and then you take over?

**Ms McLean:** I will do my best to answer them and remember them.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Excellent. I promise not to, like, do too many. It's actually based on what we were talking about earlier, Minister, with regard to the Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association. I just had a couple of follow-up questions if you don't mind. You were talking about research that you've collaborated on with the federal government and StatsCan and a bunch of other folks to get some information there.

With respect to grants, if we're having language barriers or other possibilities that might come, especially with new Canadians, that may not allow a woman to be able to even participate in activities outside of her home or anything like that given cultural barriers, my first question is: how is it that you're reaching those ethnic groups that have major barriers such as that?

My second question. With regard to the immigrant associations, you had mentioned also that for men that are coming in – again, cultural differences – you have to be very selective in the approach with education because we're dealing with, you know, cultures that are extremely different and coming from very different backgrounds and different ways of life in where they're coming from. I appreciate very much the sensitivity that would go along with that. However, if we're talking about serious conditions for women and girls, how are we making sure that those men are understanding that education? Maybe you can give us some information. I realize that you're not doing programs, but I imagine that you have outreach. More importantly, with the granting piece of it, not only with the barriers but even on the other side, for people who are trying to help those people with those barriers, how would they apply for those grants in order to get that help?

I'll just leave the rest of the time for you. Thank you.

**Ms McLean:** Okay. I don't think it'll take me the balance of the time to answer these questions.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Good. I have more questions if we get there.

**Ms McLean:** First of all, how are we reaching ethnic groups? This is largely through our partnerships with stakeholder organizations, organizations like the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association and Calgary Catholic Immigration. It's largely through partnerships. Your question around grants: how do they know about it? We rely on our robust network. I believe that we also send out notice by e-mail, I think, when the grants come out. I'll have to check on that.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Minister, do your e-mails go out in multiple languages as well?

**Ms McLean:** They, unfortunately, do not at this time. Fortunately, the organizations that operate in Alberta tend to have a capacity for communication in one of the two official languages. But, overall, from my understanding from the community and public engagement section, government is really working on increasing our capacity for communication in multiple languages and has specifically been engaged in hiring individuals who speak multiple languages so that we can more effectively communicate with Albertans across departments. That is a capacity that we are working on and building across GOA.

With respect to immigrant associations and how we're ensuring, I guess, to summarize, that men are getting the message, well, we certainly took advantage of opportunities through our granting to fund programming that, as I went over, through the Calgary Sexual Health Centre and through Next Gen Men, addresses men and boys. As they are, the majority of the time, the perpetrators of violence, they certainly need to be the ones that this message is getting to.

We are ensuring that there are support services formally for all who are experiencing sexual violence across GOA. It is a highly gendered issue, but all people, no matter their gender, can experience sexual violence, so we work to ensure that there is support for everyone. In Alberta our sexual assault centres are unique among the Canadian provinces in that they serve people of all genders. This is not the case in all jurisdictions.

We really do leave it to the front-line service providers to know their communities – they know them better than we do – and how to address them. Certainly, when they're applying for government funding, we look for metrics of accountability and for appropriateness in alignment with Status of Women's mandates before we provide any funding.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Minister, may I ask you one other question?

**Ms McLean:** Sure.

**Mrs. Aheer:** It's just, like, with regard to shelters and sexual health centres. Are you able to provide if immigrant women are actually utilizing these spaces? Is there any sense of it? This would not be normal practice for them, coming from the countries that they're coming from, let alone feeling the ability to actually participate given the fact that so many things may be held over their heads. I was just curious if you could maybe answer that one. Sorry. I know we only have a couple of minutes left. I wanted to try.

6:05

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. This is not a metric that we track for our business plan in terms of outcomes. This is something where, while we provide support in terms of GBA plus analysis in order to ensure that there's a gendered perspective on the work and programming that's being done and how those dollars are being rolled out, they are ultimately rolled out, and the tracking of the outcomes and participants is under Community and Social Services. You would have to follow up with them for that detail.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Thank you so much.

I wanted to actually move on, if I have a second here, just to page 141 of the business plan, key strategy 2.4. With the upsurge of the Me Too movement, we've seen the issue of sexual violence highlighted like never before. We've also seen highlighted facts that there are many universities in Alberta that lack guidelines for addressing sexual assault, especially the violence that has happened on campuses; specifically, the case of Connor Neurauter. What is your ministry doing in conjunction with Advanced Ed to address gender-based violence on campuses and put in place much-needed best practices and guidelines?

**Ms McLean:** We have been working with Advanced Education to ensure that we have as many postsecondary campuses as possible developing sexual violence policies and frameworks for dealing with these issues on campus. We're at a point where we've been quite successful in that the majority of campuses in Alberta have developed some policy. The University of Calgary – I'm referring to the Connor Neurauter issue – has developed a policy around sexual violence on campus. Every campus tracks and records a little bit differently the instances of sexual violence on campus.

The issue with respect to reporting publicly about instances of violence can be a bit muddled, depending on which body the incident is reported to. If it's reported to the police service, for example, the University of Calgary would not have the data on the violence occurring if it's not brought to their attention. If it's brought to the attention of the campus officers, then it's able to be tracked by the university. So there's an inherent barrier to the universities being able to track and report the data accurately.

But it's important that all of them have a policy, so we've worked with Advanced Education to let campuses know that this is a priority and to get voluntary participation. My understanding is that there are very few campuses that haven't provided one. They're working on it.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Acting Chair:** I apologize to interrupt.

We'll now go back to the government caucus. MLA Luff, would you like to share your time with the minister?

**Ms Luff:** Yes, please.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Ms Luff:** Yeah. There's been a lot of talk during the last two hours, I suppose, about the various grants that Status of Women has granted over the last couple of years. I think you've given a ton of really good examples of how that money is being used to really increase capacity for organizations and increase opportunities for women in Alberta. I'm proud and lucky to have the Riel institute for education in my riding. They received a grant recently from Status of Women for capacity building and professional leadership development of female indigenous staff. I was able to be at their open house in the summer and make a presentation on behalf of yourself for this grant. They really are a great organization that works to provide training that will lead to employment opportunities for lots of aboriginal folks.

You know, these grants really do have a noticeable impact. I'm curious: given that indigenous women have a tendency to be more marginalized than some other women, when you are making decisions regarding grant applications, is there a particular allotment you set aside for groups that are dealing with issues around First Nations and indigenous women?

**Ms McLean:** First of all, thank you very much for doing that announcement on my behalf. I'm glad that you were able to be there for it.

With respect to, you know, really, what we've learned around the impact, I mean, first of all I'd like to talk a little bit about the funding that you addressed. Four program directors and co-ordinators from the Riel institute attended an indigenous women in leadership program at the Banff Centre. It was specifically developed for indigenous women. The leadership program incorporated indigenous teachings in the leadership development sessions and experiential activities, which focused on the distinctive issues and challenges facing indigenous women in leadership. The participants will use their new knowledge and skills in the programs they manage at the Riel institute such as indigenous Youth Connections and Aboriginal Head Start and then will share their learnings with their adult students and other staff.

With respect to, like, a specified allotment, we don't specify as it would be very difficult to achieve because we're really susceptible to what the community applies for. I would say that we look forward, certainly, to the opportunity to fund opportunities that are

focused on indigenous women and girls because we know that they're disproportionately impacted.

In terms of grants that we provided in the last round, there were a number that focused specifically on indigenous women and girls. We provided a grant through the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, over \$50,000. Also – sorry; just while I have the thought in my head, too – to allot a number of grants that would go out to indigenous communities would not necessarily mean that they get a proportionate amount of funding, because some of these projects require more funding than others. For example, I mentioned a \$3,000 grant earlier. That's what they had asked for, but this grant that I'm talking about, the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, was a \$50,000 grant. There are also dollars, which matters. It's not just, you know, numbers of grants but, like, how much money they're each getting. Those sessions were for empowering women in public speaking, networking skills, leadership, and government and entrepreneurial knowledge.

We funded the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, a \$100,000 grant, for the development of a strategy to support underrepresented women – indigenous, racialized and new immigrants – in the political process and to run for office. We also provided a grant through Alberta Women Entrepreneurs that was for helping women who live on-reserve to learn how to start a business, be successful, and scale it up.

I think it's important to remember, though, that we're not alone in doing this work, that the Ministry of Indigenous Relations has a dedicated unit for the advancement of indigenous women's economic opportunities. They're also doing a lot of this good work.

We certainly need to, in our ministry, ensure that while, absolutely, indigenous women in this province are disproportionately impacted, there are absolutely other communities with great demand, like immigrant communities, that we have a responsibility as well to address.

**Ms Luff:** For sure.

I'll just comment quickly that it was really great to see in my ward during the municipal election that we had two women from immigrant communities and a First Nations woman running for city council.

**Ms McLean:** That's fabulous.

**Ms Luff:** None of them won, unfortunately, but it was great to see a diverse candidate field.

I'd like to pass, if I could, my time to my colleague MLA Shepherd.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Thank you, MLA Luff, and thank you, Minister, for the opportunity. Speaking of women from marginalized communities, I know, Minister, you had the opportunity last year – we both attended an event with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton. I believe it might have been their AGM. I had the opportunity to meet with them and hear about the great work that they do. Of course, you know that the Elizabeth Fry Society works with women who have been criminalized or are at risk, women that are coming out of the prison system, and specifically recognizes that they face some real challenges in reintegration, getting back on their feet.

Of course, we recognize that all folks exiting the prison system often face that, but women that are exiting often face additional challenges. They may have had some difficult experiences in the past. They may have come from violent backgrounds, violent relationships, be lacking supports in the community and other opportunities to get back on their feet, and then face the other things that have been discussed today, of course: women facing bigger

challenges in economic circumstances, access to careers, education, and other areas.

**6:15**

With that in mind, I know that they did apply for a grant through your ministry. I believe they received something, but I don't recall the exact amount. That being an area, I think, where those supports are so important and that being a population that, of course, overlaps quite a bit with the indigenous communities in Alberta as well for other reasons, which we talk about in some other areas, systemic racism and some of those parts, is this something where you are going to consider continuing to provide funding to groups like Elizabeth Fry, that are assisting women in these circumstances?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Absolutely. Thanks for that question. You know, I think what you were getting at, and quite accurately, and what we know from federal data mostly is that indigenous people are disproportionately criminalized and at risk of criminalization, and that holds true in this province. Largely, a majority of these women that are being served are indigenous women.

The Elizabeth Fry Society absolutely does great work. I am a big fan of theirs. I was very happy to see the department recommend and the working group recommend that they receive a grant. They were approved for a \$70,000 grant for the creating opportunities for women project. They had partnered with family and community support services offices to expand employment and employment readiness supports for at-risk and criminalized women in rural communities, including Stony Plain, Sherwood Park, St. Albert, Alexis, Morinville, and Ponoka. These workshops have been delivered to women with pre-employability needs and identified barriers to employment to assist them in addressing these barriers and establishing goals.

The Elizabeth Fry Society – particularly, I have knowledge of the Edmonton society, where we both went to their AGM – provides a number of services. They used to have a clothing room; I'm not sure if they do anymore. But they try and look holistically at the woman who is trying to get back into the workforce. A criminal record is a significant barrier to employability.

We absolutely take all of these factors, these intersectional factors, into account when we're assessing grant applications. I know that we're just finalizing some of the next round of grants. I look forward to being able to speak about the populations that we'll be serving through those grants.

**Mr. Shepherd:** Excellent. Thank you, Minister.

Just as MLA Luff noted, I also note that here in Edmonton we did think through some of the support that has been provided through Status of Women.

**The Acting Chair:** Now I'll move on to the UCP caucus. Would you like to continue sharing your time with the minister?

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yes, please. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** Please proceed.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Minister. I'm on page 141 of the business plan, key strategy 2.4. Minister, you had stated in estimates last year that you were "very close to providing... a crossgovernment approach to addressing sexual violence." That was in a *Hansard* transcript, FC-594. How close are you now to unveiling this?

**Ms McLean:** Months.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay.



**Ms McLean:** In the fullness of time.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Great. So it's still a work-in-progress.

**Ms McLean:** Yes. Very soon.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Excellent. Then my next questions are just some general questions on page 141 still, on 2.1. In last year's estimates you mentioned that your ministry "partnered with stakeholders to help . . . more low-income women file their taxes so they can access provincial and federal credits" that they may not be aware of or have access to. That's in your transcript, FC-584. Would you mind telling us a little bit about whether you've continued this work this year and if you can let me know where it would be in your budget?

**Ms McLean:** Absolutely. This is just, really, part of our cross-government work. Even recently there have been efforts under way by a number of departments to filter our populations in Alberta to get their taxes done and to go to these free clinics. You'll see this pushed out, certainly, by social media accounts by departments that work in this area. Community and Social Services comes to mind specifically. I've even seen individual MLAs' community newsletters, the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar's newsletter for example, specifically encourage people to go to a tax clinic and get their taxes filed. It's really an effort that we want to see all government that touches on this to filter people through. I also know that Money Mentors, which sits over in Service Alberta, definitely plays a role with educating the population about finances, and part of that is filing their taxes.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I mean, if we're talking about elevating women, their understanding and knowing where they're sitting with their financials is going to be largely a barrier that needs to be brought down for them. Does this also extend to ethnic communities as well?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Absolutely. I know that there are a number of community organizations that provide tax clinics. Most nongovernmental organizations actually do provide tax clinics. For example, the Elizabeth Fry Society in Calgary, I know, runs a tax clinic as well. As I mentioned, they serve a large proportion of indigenous populations. Just anecdotally, I've read of various immigrant organizations also providing tax clinics.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Do you have any metrics regarding the number of women who benefited from this, from the tax clinics that you've been providing? Because you partnered with stakeholders, are they giving any feedback on the response?

**Ms McLean:** We don't directly provide this. Our partnership is really about driving people and amplifying the availability of these clinics to women throughout the province.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. Thank you so much.

Could you provide me with a breakdown of staff resources in relation to operating expenses? This would be on page 248 of your budget. How many full-time staff fall in line item 1.1, minister's office, in your budget?

**Ms McLean:** With respect to the minister's office, Status of Women does not fund any FTE positions in the minister's office.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Do the other offices, then, provide in their line items FTEs specifically to Status of Women in every other budget? Like, if I went to the Ministry of Labour and I asked for the breakdown

for the FTEs in their ministry with regard to Status of Women, that would be in their line item?

**Ms McLean:** You were asking about the minister's office, which is 1.1. The Status of Women staff complement is 33, and that is funded by Status of Women.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Right. Just as a follow-up, then, as you'd mentioned before, you have FTEs throughout your other ministries. Are they accountable for providing information within their budget line items for the FTEs that are supportive to the Status of Women through their ministries, like in your centres of excellence, et cetera?

**Ms McLean:** That is training that is provided in addition to the work that they do, similar to diversity and inclusion training and training about sensitivity and awareness about indigenous populations. Really, we are making that like any other on-the-job training as part of all the work that's required by all GOA staff. In their work doing GBA plus, it's not that they're working for our ministry; it's that it has become, under this government, part of their everyday work.

**Mrs. Aheer:** But you were saying that you want it to just be a natural flow.

**Ms McLean:** Like answering an e-mail.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Right. Yes.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. By analogy, when an employee answers an e-mail, that FTE time to know how to navigate Microsoft Office isn't then attributed to Service Alberta's IT department. Do you know what I mean?

6:25

**Mrs. Aheer:** I do.

**Ms McLean:** It's analogous in that sense.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Yeah. I was just trying to understand the budget breakdowns. I realize that you're not going to be able to tell me about family and community services and their budget. I was just curious if within their line items . . .

**Ms McLean:** I mean, whoever is responsible in their departments, whatever their FTE is that's identified as the person that's part of their policy development for cabinet reports, for example, to apply the GBA plus analysis, that FTE would be reflected in their department.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you so much.

Okay. In your key strategy 2.1 you've worked to improve, obviously, the number of women entering STEM occupations and coding. That's from your transcript, FC-594. Since your involvement with organizations such as Chic Geek – I love that name.

**Ms McLean:** Chic.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Is that how you say it? It's not chick geek; it's Chic Geek?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Chic.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Oh, well, pardon me. Chic Geek. That's even better.

Have you increased the number of women applying for and entering these fields? Again, as always, I'm going to ask you: what's the feedback? What are your metrics?

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. Unfortunately, I don't believe we have Alberta-specific labour data. Again, it's not disaggregated in that fashion. We rely on the federal government and extrapolate from their data to show that women are underrepresented in these fields.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Okay. I was just in India in January, and there are an immense number of women working in STEM.

**Ms McLean:** Oh. I have an answer for you as to why that is the case there and not here if you want to hear it.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Well, yes. I know what your answer is going to be, but you go ahead.

**Ms McLean:** Maybe you do; maybe you don't. I don't know.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I think so, well, based on what they were telling me. But you go first.

**Ms McLean:** Okay. I learned this, actually, at the United Nations conference on the status of women because it was focused on rural women. They were talking about the STEM paradox, saying that in countries that are not as economically advantaged as North America, for example, women tend to – and this is the working theory by researchers – choose to go into fields that are more economically stable and that there happens to be a generally higher pay for that training. When you calculate the amount of time of training versus the payoff, the ratio is quite good.

That is the number one concern for women in countries that are not as economically advantaged, but when you look at a country that's more economically advantaged, that is lower of a concern and a priority on the minds of women, so they will tend to focus on things that they are maybe more passionate about or that they have an interest in and go into those areas of study as opposed to making decisions around areas of study based on need, which is what is happening in other countries.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Well, it's interesting. I have a completely different perspective because I've actually talked to a whole bunch of these young ladies. I met with probably a hundred of them from various different – Tech Mahindra in Hyderabad has a ton of these

incredible young women who are running these programs. Largely, too, it's because they're paid equally.

**Ms McLean:** Yeah. It's a pay consideration.

**Mrs. Aheer:** Well, it would be, I would say, pretty much a hundred per cent across the board that they're paid for the value that they bring to the job. Also, there is a tremendous push for STEM in India for women, and the jobs that are being provided are just fantastic.

**The Acting Chair:** All right. The final 50 seconds will go to the government caucus.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Well, with 50 seconds I'm not going to ask a question, but you mentioned the Camrose ladies' group that deals with family violence. They want to say thank you very much. They were really appreciative. And if you need some anecdotal stories of the impact, they can give you quite a few of them.

**Ms McLean:** I'd love that.

**Mr. Hinkley:** It wasn't a lot of money, but it had a big impact in that area, so thank you very much.

**Ms McLean:** That's awesome. Thank you so much.

**The Acting Chair:** MLA Westhead.

**Mr. Westhead:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you, Minister, too. You mentioned the Banff YWCA, and they really appreciate the funding that you provided, too. It's made a real difference for them, providing support for women and girls in the Bow Valley, and I want to make sure to express the gratitude on their behalf.

**Ms McLean:** Thanks, Cam.

**The Acting Chair:** All right. With that, I must advise the committee that the time allotted for the items of business has concluded.

I'd like to remind committee members that we are scheduled to meet next on Wednesday, April 18, 2018, at 3:30 p.m. for consideration of the Ministry of Education.

Thank you, everyone. This meeting is adjourned.

[The committee adjourned at 6:30 p.m.]



