



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Fourth Session

Standing Committee  
on  
Public Accounts

Indigenous Relations

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8:30 a.m.

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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (UCP), Chair  
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (NDP), Deputy Chair

Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (UCP)  
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (NDP)  
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)  
Gotfried, Richard, Calgary-Fish Creek (UCP)  
Hunter, Grant R., Cardston-Taber-Warner (UCP)  
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (NDP)  
Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (NDP)  
Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (NDP)  
Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (NDP)  
Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (NDP)  
Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (UCP)  
Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (NDP)  
Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (NDP)

**Also in Attendance**

Hanson, David B., Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills (UCP)

**Office of the Auditor General Participants**

W. Doug Wylie	Auditor General
Rob Driesen	Assistant Auditor General

**Support Staff**

Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Clerk
Shannon Dean	Law Clerk and Director of House Services
Stephanie LeBlanc	Senior Parliamentary Counsel
Trafton Koenig	Parliamentary Counsel
Philip Massolin	Manager of Research and Committee Services
Sarah Amato	Research Officer
Nancy Robert	Research Officer
Corinne Dacyshyn	Committee Clerk
Jody Rempel	Committee Clerk
Aaron Roth	Committee Clerk
Karen Sawchuk	Committee Clerk
Rhonda Sorensen	Manager of Corporate Communications
Jeanette Dotimas	Communications Consultant
Tracey Sales	Communications Consultant
Janet Schwegel	Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

### **Participants**

#### Ministry of Indigenous Relations

Clay Buchanan, Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations Relations

John Donner, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Climate Leadership and Corporate Services

Kristina Midbo, Director, Indigenous Women's Initiatives

Stan Rutwind, QC, Assistant Deputy Minister, Consultation and Land Claims

Olena Urban, Acting Director, Financial Services

Donavon Young, Deputy Minister



**8:30 a.m.****Tuesday, May 1, 2018**

[Mr. Cyr in the chair]

**The Chair:** Good morning, everyone. I would like to call this meeting of Public Accounts to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Scott Cyr, and I am the MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake and chair of the Public Accounts Committee. I'd like to ask that members, staff, and guests at the table introduce themselves for the record, starting at my right. Mr. Deputy Chair.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you. Good morning. Lorne Dach, MLA for Edmonton-McClung, deputy chair.

**Mr. Barnes:** Drew Barnes, MLA, Cypress-Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Panda:** Good morning. Prasad Panda, MLA, Calgary-Foothills.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Good morning. Richard Gotfried, MLA, Calgary-Fish Creek.

**Mr. Hanson:** David Hanson, MLA, Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

**Mr. Hunter:** Good morning. Grant Hunter, MLA, Cardston-Taber-Warner.

**Mr. Clark:** Good morning, everyone. Greg Clark, MLA, Calgary-Elbow.

**Mr. Rutwind:** Good morning, all. Stan Rutwind, assistant deputy minister, consultation and land claims, Indigenous Relations.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Morning. Clay Buchanan, ADM, First Nations-Métis relations.

**Mr. Young:** Good morning, everyone. Donavon Young, Deputy Minister of Indigenous Relations.

**Mr. Donner:** Good morning. John Donner, ADM, indigenous climate leadership and corporate services.

**Ms Urban:** Good morning. Olena Urban, director of financial services.

**Mr. Wylie:** Good morning. Doug Wylie with the office of the Auditor General.

**Mr. Driesen:** Rob Driesen, Assistant Auditor General.

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

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

**Mr. Carson:** Good morning. Jon Carson, MLA, Edmonton-Meadowlark.

**Ms Miller:** Good morning. Barb Miller, MLA, Red Deer-South.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Good morning, everyone. Chris Nielsen, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Malkinson:** Good morning, everyone. I'm Brian Malkinson, MLA for Calgary-Currie.

**Dr. Massolin:** Good morning. Philip Massolin, manager of research and committee services.

**Mrs. Sawchuk:** Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk.

**The Chair:** Mrs. Littlewood, would you introduce yourself for the record, please?

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you. Good morning. Jessica Littlewood, MLA for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Congratulations, Doug.

**The Chair:** Your phone is very muffled, Member.

Okay. I have a few housekeeping items I'd like to address as well. Please note that the microphones are operated by *Hansard*. Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of this meeting. Committee proceedings are being streamed live on the Internet and broadcast on Alberta Assembly TV. The audio- and video stream and the transcripts of the meetings can be accessed via the Legislative Assembly website.

We'll move on to the approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? Seeing none, I'd like a member to move that the agenda for the May 1, 2018, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed. Mr. Malkinson. Any discussion on the motion? All in favour? Any opposed? On the phones? Thank you. The motion is carried.

Then we'll move on to the next point, approval of the minutes for March 20, 2018. Do members have any amendments to the March 20, 2018, minutes? If not, would a member move that the minutes of the March 20, 2018, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed? Mr. Hunter. Any discussion on this motion? All in favour? Any opposed? On the phones? Thank you. The motion is carried.

**Dr. Turner:** Chair?

**The Chair:** Doctor.

**Dr. Turner:** Could I check in?

**The Chair:** Please introduce yourself, sir.

**Dr. Turner:** MLA Bob Turner, Edmonton-Whitemud.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Turner.

Before we hear the department officials for Indigenous Relations, I wanted to address the committee's time allotment format for questions. The committee working group met last week and agreed on a rotation to accommodate the recent change to the committee membership. Based on past practices of the committee, the working group recommends that the first two rotations be nine minutes each for the members of the Official Opposition and government members, followed by three minutes for the third-party member. The third rotation will be five minutes each for the Official Opposition and government members, followed by three minutes for the third-party member. Thank you.

I'd like to welcome our guests who are here on behalf of the Ministry of Indigenous Relations to discuss the outstanding recommendations from the Auditor General's office and the ministry's 2016-2017 annual report. Members should have the research report prepared by research services, the Auditor General briefing document as well as the status of the Auditor General recommendations document completed and submitted by the ministry.

I invite Mr. Young to provide opening remarks not exceeding 10 minutes. Please, you can start.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you and good morning, everyone. I'm pleased to be here on traditional Treaty 6 territory, and we also acknowledge the importance of this land to Métis people.

I'd like to introduce the members of our senior management team who are with me here today. Clay Buchanan, to my immediate left, is the ADM of First Nations and Métis relations. To my far left is Stan Rutwind, the ADM of consultation and land claims. On my immediate right is John Donner, the ADM of indigenous climate leadership and corporate services. On my far right is Olena Urban, the acting SFO for Indigenous Relations. Seated in the public area are Kristina Midbo, who is the director of indigenous women's initiatives, and Jessica Johnson, the director of communications.

Thank you, committee members, for the opportunity to appear here today.

There are more than a quarter of a million indigenous people living in Alberta. Since 2006 the indigenous population in Alberta has grown by 42 and a half per cent compared to 37 per cent for the rest of Albertans. This young, rapidly growing population has a lot to contribute to our future prosperity. My department works to ensure that indigenous peoples are active in our social and economic growth.

In 2016-2017 we had two key business goals. The first one was that indigenous communities and peoples can fully participate in Alberta's economy and society. Number two is that Alberta's coordinated approach to indigenous strategic engagement, consultation, and land claims respecting treaty and aboriginal rights increases First Nations and Métis participation in land management and enhances resource development. Achieving these goals rests on the strength of our relationship with indigenous people. To date, Minister Feehan has visited 46 out of 48 First Nations and all eight Métis settlements. Respect and trust are cornerstones to having a good working relationship with indigenous leaders and community members. This is especially important to our department. Indigenous Relations is the focal point of the province's relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and organizations in Alberta.

With that, I'll highlight the areas of work and the milestones that Indigenous Relations has achieved.

First, I want to address the report on the First Nations development fund by the office of the Auditor General. The recommendations of the Auditor General focused on improving processes to review and approve complex grant applications and processes for monitoring compliance with reporting requirements and its actions to correct noncompliance with grant agreements. We welcomed the valuable oversight by the Auditor General as it has resulted in stronger processes for this fund, including but not limited to the following: a complex grant application assessment procedure that is now in place for all new complex grant applications, an updated FNDF grant program guide, and an internal FNDF grant program procedural manual to reflect our new procedure for complex grant application assessments, including First Nations reporting requirements. As of March 31, 2018, there are no outstanding deliverables.

FNDF is a great program, and we're proud of how it continues to improve the lives of First Nations across Alberta. Last year more than \$118 million flowed into the fund to support 330 social and community development projects.

The Auditor General also recommended improvements to the department's processes for preparing, reviewing, and publicly disclosing travel, meal, and hospitality expenses for the minister's office. We have taken steps to fulfill these recommendations, including a strict action plan to tighten review processes.

Now I'll turn to our work with indigenous peoples. The United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is a vital

document that guides our work at Indigenous Relations. The Premier directed each ministry in Alberta to consider how their work contributes to reconciliation through the UN declaration. Since then, our government has been engaging with First Nations, Métis people, and indigenous organizations on the implementation of the principles of the UN declaration. In the past year, engagement with indigenous communities included work on traditional ecological knowledge, enhanced early intervention, prevention and early childhood education, and the indigenous learning initiative for all APS staff.

**8:40**

We're also working to ensure that indigenous organizations and communities have greater input into government decision-making regarding land and natural resource development. We're also working on a renewed consultation policy with the Métis Settlements General Council and the Métis Nation of Alberta to develop a Métis consultation policy for Alberta.

Building good relationships underscores our work, and the signing of protocol agreements has further strengthened the government-to-government relationship with First Nations. We have signed two key protocol agreements, one with Treaty 8 First Nations and one with the Blackfoot Confederacy. The tables are a place where cabinet ministers and Alberta chiefs can meet to address issues of mutual concern. The issues range from economy and employment to health and education to culture, language, and more, and we continue to work side by side with the nation on these priorities.

In the past year we've also worked in new ways with First Nations people. In '16-17 we collaborated with the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and the Paul First Nation to construct regional waterlines and water infrastructure to provide drinking water to those communities. We accomplished this in partnership with the federal government and those individual nations. We fund, through Alberta Transportation, construction on the provincial side to the reserve boundary and Canada builds on the First Nations side. I think we'd all agree that having access to modern, high-quality water infrastructure is crucial to the health and well-being of First Nations. With that in mind, we already are exploring 10 other potential projects of this nature with First Nations.

We're also ensuring that indigenous peoples are part of building a green economy in Alberta. We established two provincial pilot programs for indigenous communities to participate in the climate leadership plan. Eleven communities received funds to undertake building audits and identify opportunities to save energy in community-owned buildings, and 14 indigenous communities received funding to install solar panels on their buildings.

First Nations and Métis people make important contributions to Alberta's economy. My department continues to deliver several programs to support business start-up or expansion for individual and community-owned indigenous businesses. One particular program, the aboriginal business investment fund, supports community-owned businesses, which creates local employment and economic growth. Last year this capital fund program helped with tourism ventures, heavy equipment and construction operations, telecommunications projects, retail operations, and much more.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, these are just some of our milestones from last year. We've made significant progress on our key business goals. Our resources and efforts will continue to be directed to ensuring that indigenous peoples are able to benefit from the social and economic advantage that all Albertans share. Key to all of our work is working in a relationship of trust and respect with indigenous people and communities.

We're happy to try to answer any questions that the committee might have. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Young.

Before I turn the floor over to Mr. Doug Wylie, who has attended many of the meetings of the committee in his role as the Assistant Auditor General, on behalf of the committee I'd like to congratulate him on his recent appointment as the new Auditor General and look forward to working with you in your new role, sir.

Mr. Wylie, the floor is yours. You have five minutes.

**Mr. Wylie:** Thank you, Chair. As you mentioned, a bit of a new role for me. I have been here many times in the past over the years.

Chair, I just wanted to make a few general comments, and that is that I'm keenly aware of how important it is for our office to have a strong working relationship with this committee. The Public Accounts Committee and my office have a mutually supportive relationship based on our distinct roles in examining how public funds have been accounted for and used. Under the leadership of my predecessor, Merwan Saher, with great success much work was done to strengthen our working relationship. I'm interested in obtaining your views in the near future on how we can build on past successes and even strengthen our working relationship in the weeks and months to come. One of my priorities includes ensuring that my office is responsive to the needs of our stakeholders, and I consider this committee to be one of our key stakeholders.

Turning to the discussion of matters relating to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations, I do not have any substantial comments. However, I can confirm what the deputy minister noted, and that is that the ministry has informed us that they've implemented our recommendations and they're ready for us to do the follow-up work, and we plan to do that, Chair, this fall.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Well, thank you to the Auditor General for his comments.

We will follow the updated time allotment format for a one and a half hour meeting for the questions from the committee. For any time remaining following the rotations, we will hear from any of the independent, Liberal, or PC members in attendance wishing to participate. If none are in attendance, then the time remaining will be equally divided amongst the Official Opposition, the government, and the third-party member, with the final few minutes designated for any outstanding questions to be read into the record and to consider any other new business items.

We ask that officials at the table as well as those seated in the gallery provide their names before responding to questions. This is for the benefit of the members who may be participating via teleconference, for those listening online, and for the *Hansard* recording.

I will now open the floor to questions from members. Mr. Hanson.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, everybody, for being here today. I've just got to ask a couple of questions on the Auditor General's report with regard to the First Nations development fund. Number one, on page 12 it says, "Albertans should know that the program is operating as intended and that funded projects provide value to First Nation communities." Then it goes on to say that they had to repeat two recommendations from 2013. The one I'd liked to talk about is:

- Monitoring of First Nations compliance with grant agreement requirements; and
- Actions to correct non-compliance.

Now, the Auditor General's report came out in February, and I think you just stated, Mr. Young, that as of March 31 there are no issues and that you've all become compliant with that. Is that correct?

**Mr. Young:** Correct.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. That answers the question, then, for the two repeated recommendations.

When will implementation be complete? You say that that's all complete.

**Mr. Young:** We believe that we've met the Auditor's recommendations, and as Mr. Wylie indicated, late this summer or fall we'll be meeting with the office of the Auditor General to show them the work that we've done. We believe that we've met those requirements. Yes, absolutely.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. In your research and checking into the funding that's been put out, have you found any of those funding allocations that were noncompliant, that were not completed, or that the money was not spent where it was supposed to go?

**Mr. Young:** In this reporting year, '16-17, I don't believe – I mean, there were a number of outstanding milestones. Again, we've worked hard to fix those by March 31 of this year.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay.

**Mr. Young:** That's why we were cited by the Auditor for four outstanding deliverables. I don't have the list in front of me. In '16-17, going back, there were a number. The work that we've had to do over the past 12, 18 months was to get those nations in compliance with the grant agreements.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. When you're talking about compliance with the grant agreements, do you actually do your own auditing, or do you rely on reports from whichever First Nation has got the grant? What's the process, if you don't mind?

**Mr. Young:** Thank you. Good question. It's both, sir. We endeavour on a three-year rotational basis to do a compliance audit internally, within our department, of each of the 48 nations. So every three years we try to hit each nation once. As well, they have to report financially in terms of an activity report on their deliverables.

**Mr. Hanson:** You have somebody monitoring, like, rather than just receiving a report about where they are milestonewise? You have somebody that goes out and actually checks on the progress?

**Mr. Young:** Yes. We have a small team of FNDF folks. We have a director. We have about four or five liaison officers. Each has been assigned a number of communities, a number of nations. They are, quote, their nations, and that person works closely with that nation. In addition, apart from the FNDF team, in our finance department we have three auditors who do compliance audits on a three-year rotational basis.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. It's a pretty substantial amount of money. I think you'd agree. So you've got – what? – about seven people that are monitoring that between . . .

**Mr. Young:** Seven or eight.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay.

**Mr. Young:** Yeah. In total.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. Thanks.

I'm going to jump over to some more specific stuff regarding Siksika First Nation. I know that we're talking about the 2013 flooding, but recent reports are showing that they've got some substantial flooding there again. Do you foresee any amount of money coming from FNDF to help support the recent flooding as well?

8:50

**Mr. Young:** Not specifically from FNDF, but FNDF, sir, is really driven by the communities. They submit applications. If they wanted to use their FNDF funds for flood-recovery measures, they certainly could. They submit the applications. Essentially, the money flows through our department and out to the communities based on their applications to us. So it really depends for FNDF specifically on if they chose to use their allotment for that. We've been in close contact with Siksika. We have not had any funding requests over the last, you know, several weeks to help them with the flood measures for this spring.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. A couple of the highlights or hot spots that I see when I'm out visiting are the condition of roads. You talked about green infrastructure programs. Would water or road infrastructure programs take precedence over green energy programs if people were applying for grants under the First Nations development fund, or does the green energy come specifically from the climate leadership plan?

**Mr. Young:** The green energy work does come from the climate leadership funding that we have available. That is what I would call, you know, more departmental funding that we have more say over in terms of where and how those funds are spent.

Again, the First Nations development fund: we're sort of a holder of their money. So if community X came to us and said, "We would like to use \$200,000 of our annual allotment for this project X," there are only three things they cannot use their funding from FNDF for. They cannot use their funding for a per capita grant distribution, they cannot use their funding for a gaming-related activity, and they can't use their funding as collateral on a bank loan. If it's not in violation of those three conditions, First Nations communities can use their FNDF grants for, really, any community economic or social development area, including roads, including infrastructure, including climate leadership if they wanted to. At this point I don't believe any have for climate leadership because there's other government funding available for that.

**Mr. Hanson:** I was just wondering if somewhere through the grant process you would prioritize which is most important. If one First Nation needed a water project, can you allocate funds to help that? I hear a lot of issues, especially at this time of year, out in Saddle Lake for instance, where water trucks can't get in to deliver water to fill cisterns and school buses can't access to take kids to school. My focus, I guess, would be on prioritizing some of that infrastructure through the First Nations development fund. I'm just wondering if you have any of that kind of power within your department, to say, you know: we need to focus on this kind of area.

**Mr. Young:** We would have a conversation with the nation, typically, but we wouldn't – again, speaking specifically about the First Nations development fund, which is a little bit different than the other funding available in the department, the FNDF funds really are driven by the community. So on FNDF funds we could have a conversation with them, but as long as they're not in violation of any of those criteria I mentioned, we really rely on their priorities to us.

Let me also say this, sir, that we have dedicated funding in the department for many of these activities. For instance, drinking water: the funding is dedicated only for drinking water, and there is prioritization within that envelope of drinking water funding. The same with climate leadership. That funding is only for climate leadership initiatives. There would be prioritization within that funding envelope. The same with our economic and business development funding. It's only for that purpose; it can't be used for something else. It's economic and business development funding. But there would be prioritization within that funding envelope, again, working closely with the nations and the communities around their priorities. We very much try to work in collaboration in each of those funding envelopes.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. Thank you.

From the new houses that were built after the . . . [Mr. Hanson's speaking time expired] Boy, that went fast.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hanson.

Ms Luff.

**Ms Luff:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks, everyone, for being here today. I just have a couple of sort of general questions regarding the annual report, and I'll probably share my time with some of my colleagues. My question just entails page 17 of the annual report. You talk about strengthening relationships, and throughout the report there are a number of initiatives that speak to strengthening relationships with First Nations and Métis people. I'm just curious how you go about it. Like, the strength of a relationship is perhaps a difficult thing to measure, so I'm curious what methods you use to measure your success in relationship building.

**Mr. Young:** Yes. Thank you. It's a good question. You're right; there is really no formal tool to measure the strength of the relationships, but we have a number of what I guess I would call success indicators, certainly. First of all, we're really relying on those protocol agreements with the treaty nations, with the Métis Nation of Alberta, a funding agreement we have with the Metis Settlements General Council. Those are sort of our foundational relationship agreements. Those agreements are working fine, and the chiefs and ministers are at the table meeting together. Most of the agreements call for an annual meeting with the Premier, and the Premier just met last week with Treaty 8 First Nations in Slave Lake. All of those point to success, if you will, in that relationship. So no formal tool, but Minister Feehan, as I said, has been out visiting 48 out of 50 of the First Nations and all eight Métis settlements, again, a strong indicator of success, that the relationship is certainly growing in the right direction.

**Ms Luff:** Yeah. It's nice to hear the number has increased since this report was written. That's fantastic.

Then just as a follow-up it also mentions on page 17 that you're seeking enhanced relationships with the three treaty areas, the Métis Nation, urban indigenous organizations, indigenous women. Being a city MLA, I do have a large urban indigenous population in east Calgary, so I'm curious if you could speak specifically to work that you've been doing to advance your relationships with urban indigenous people.

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask ADM Clay Buchanan to answer that question.

Thank you.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Thank you. Our ministry has been addressing the most appropriate approach for the government of Alberta to assist urban indigenous peoples when they are transitioning from one life

stage to another. That could be for school, going to university. It could be for a job, a variety of different things. This is a very complex issue that not only involves the ability to transition but includes transition from being potentially incarcerated to not incarcerated, from the child welfare system to being an adult, and from being unemployed to employed. Our ministry is currently working with a plan with other ministries within the GOA, the government of Canada, and indigenous communities and organizations to determine what role each ministry would play in supporting an urban indigenous transition strategy. Really, the key to this is working with the communities and ensuring that whatever you do is in collaboration with the communities and supported by the communities.

**Ms Luff:** Thank you.

I'd like to pass it to my colleague.

**The Chair:** Absolutely. Ms Miller.

**Ms Miller:** Thank you, Chair. I have got many relatives that live on three different reserves in Alberta, and they are very pleased that the minister has been coming out to visit them. I'm wondering if you could give me a little bit of an update on what kind of support the reserves are asking the minister for, like, what kind of supports for their communities.

**Mr. Young:** Go ahead, Clay.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Thank you. The minister has been out, as the deputy minister has indicated, to 46 of the 48 First Nations and to all eight Métis settlements. A variety of requests come back from meeting with the First Nations chiefs and councils and the many Métis chairs and their councils. Like any community in Alberta, from infrastructure needs to support for employment for their members and everything in between, a variety of different requests come back from those visits. Typically what we do is work with other ministries to identify what the GOA can do to accommodate and support those communities, and that could be working with the Department of Labour on a training program or with the Ministry of Transportation on an infrastructure program.

9:00

**Ms Miller:** Okay. Thank you.

My next question is about the outcomes that the ministry with the indigenous communities and the people – that they can fully participate in Alberta's economy and society. The annual report outlines a variety of related initiatives, yet an apology for the '60s scoop isn't one of them. I went to school with some of the kids that were part of the '60s scoop, and I know it was a pretty traumatic experience. Can you explain the process and the steps that your ministry has to go through before an official apology can be issued, and when can it be expected?

**Mr. Young:** Okay. Thank you for that question. Indigenous Relations and Children's Services have been working closely with an organization called the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta – the acronym is SSISA – to develop an engagement plan that will lead to a meaningful apology to '60s scoop survivors. Over the course of the winter and into the spring we held six engagement sessions with '60s scoop survivors. The last one was on March 1, 2018, in Edmonton, but we were also in St. Paul, Fort McMurray, Lethbridge, and Calgary, and we were at Blue Quills as well. The purpose of the engagement sessions was to meet with all the '60s scoop survivors and ask, you know: what would a meaningful apology look like? We got some really good feedback. We're now

working closely with Children's Services and with SSISA on the potential elements of an apology. I can't give you a date yet. I don't believe that the government has settled on a date, but I understand that it's coming soon. Like all Albertans, we're certainly looking forward to that apology.

**Ms Miller:** Thank you.

I'd like to pass the rest of our time on to Member Carson.

**The Chair:** Member Carson, you have one minute and 38 seconds.

**Mr. Carson:** Okay. Thank you. On pages 27 and 28 of the annual report it states that \$100,000 in core funding was provided to the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, which is in my constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark. A grant of \$50,000 was provided to establish a committee to support ongoing engagement of government priorities, so I'm hoping that you can share with the committee what this \$50,000 specifically was spent on and what we can see coming from it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask Kristina Midbo, who is the senior director of aboriginal women's initiatives, to answer that question.

**Ms Midbo:** Good morning. Thank you for the question. That \$50,000 was used to support the establishment of a mechanism and engagement structure for indigenous women in the areas of the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous people. The capacity funding was used to support a number of meetings hosted and led by the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, who brought together on numerous occasions other indigenous women and other partners to the table to create that mechanism and establish the terms of reference. Following that they also hosted a number of engagement sessions with the committee and other indigenous women on areas such as the UN declaration and gender-based analysis plus, the indigenous learning initiative, and the affordable off-reserve housing program.

**Mr. Carson:** Sounds like money well spent.

Thank you very much, Chair. I'll save my questions for the next round.

**The Chair:** Okay. You've got two seconds. That's great.

All right. Let's move on to Mr. Clark. Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Nice to be here. I'm going to start on the annual report, page 21, where you've talked about the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention. That was something I was honoured to be a part of. One of the things that came up in that panel was that the Ministry of Children's Services was revising the child intervention policies and processes to become more culturally competent and responsive in particular as it relates to indigenous children in care, who are vastly overrepresented. My question to you is: what progress is being made and what work is being done from your ministry to work with Children's Services or other areas of government to strengthen the capacity amongst child intervention workers to build policies, et cetera?

**Mr. Young:** Thank you for the question. I'll offer a bit of a sort of overarching answer and then Clay Buchanan, the ADM of First Nations and Métis relations, will provide some additional information.

Our role in this issue, like many issues, is one of supporting the ministry in its work. We work hard to support Children's Services or Education or Health to really ensure that they get, quote, the

aboriginal or the indigenous question and issue canvassed and hopefully addressed. I just wanted to sort of clarify that, really, the policy and program resources for this issue aren't in Indigenous Relations; they really are in Children's Services. The expertise that we always bring to the table is one around relationship building and how to, you know, properly and faithfully conduct engagement with First Nations and Métis communities and to ensure that those communities are fully engaged. That's sort of Indigenous Relations' overarching responsibility.

I'll turn to Clay to fill in some of the blanks.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Sure. Thank you, Donavon. To answer the question twofold, I would answer, one, that we do have different committees that IR staff participate on in supporting child welfare. As an example, one would be working with Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 and with the feds, both Indigenous Services and with First Nations health, on child welfare. We do have an action plan that's been developed, and we look at various initiatives through that crossministry committee with the federal government and the treaty representatives.

In addition to that, I would say that, really, a lot of the work we do is working with communities to improve the socioeconomic outcome in those communities. As indicated in some of the previous questions, we have different programs that support communities, from economic development, small-business supports to entrepreneurs to employment training and working with some of the First Nation and Métis asset holders on training initiatives. We do a lot of programming to support the overall community but specifically... [Mr. Buchanan's speaking time expired]

**The Chair:** Did you want to finish your response real quick?

**Mr. Buchanan:** Just as it relates to your question, sir, we do have various crossministry committees. As Donavon indicated, we do a lot of work on the relationship piece with First Nations and Métis communities.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Hanson:** I'll just try and finish my line of questioning and then switch over and pass my time to Mr. Gotfried. Specifically, with Siksika funding this year could you tell us how many families are affected, how many houses are affected currently, and is there any potential for any others? Maybe just touch on whether some of these are some of the same houses that were affected in 2013.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you. I'm not able to answer the first part of your question, how many homes have been affected. I don't have that right in front of me, but we can certainly supply that information. To my knowledge, none of the homes that we repaired in 2013 or rebuilt after the 2013 flood are impacted because we built those on higher ground.

I can say that both the minister and the department are in close communication with those impacted communities who are seeing some flooding in their communities this spring. You know, while roads have been washed out and so on, our intelligence is that clearly it's not nearly as bad as it was in 2013.

**Mr. Hanson:** So you don't have access to some specific numbers of how many families are in evacuations or anything?

**Mr. Young:** I don't have that in front of me today.

**Mr. Hanson:** Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Great. Thank you, and thank you to your staff for joining us today. I'd like to start out with the second recommendation from the Auditor General's report, about monitoring compliance. It's noted that department liaisons are "expected to visit each [First Nation] community at least twice each fiscal year." Why has the department not met this expectation for more than half of the communities?

**Mr. Young:** Thanks for the question. There are a couple of reasons. The first is that not every community wants us to come out and visit them in their own community. Many communities actually prefer to come to Edmonton and meet with staff. That's one reason. The second reason would be that we just haven't been able to and we don't have the capacity to visit each community twice yearly. Again, they're prioritized. We visit those communities that, quote, need our help the greatest, if I can sort of put it that way.

**9:10**

Some communities who are doing very well and meeting their targets and providing deliverables and so on: there really isn't a need to meet with them as much as there is to meet with another community or a basket of communities that are perhaps struggling a little bit more, so a little bit more attention would be paid to those communities. Honestly, some communities prefer to meet in Edmonton.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Okay. So that expectation is really just a guideline rather than an expectation?

**Mr. Young:** Right. Thank you.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Okay. I guess in my world it's always good to go out to businesses and places of work and things and, you know, to be able to offer assistance, so that's unusual to me, but that's the guideline, not an expectation.

The Auditor General's report has found that the department does not always follow established processes on overdue reporting. Who has the discretion of when not to follow an established process? I guess my question is: is there is a process not to follow the process?

**Mr. Young:** Yes. Thanks for the question. Again, that is an area where we really had to pull up our socks, and we've acknowledged that. Where common sense should always prevail for those people who are working these files, these liaison officers – I mean, the only thing I guess I would say is that common sense should prevail, but there really isn't the discretion for, you know: I'll turn a blind eye to that, but I won't turn a blind eye to that. That's not acceptable, and that does not occur.

As we've acknowledged, we had some work to do to ensure that the nations are in compliance, meeting their deliverables. That work, we believe, has been corrected and has been done over the past 12 months or so, and we'll be meeting with the office of the Auditor General in the fall to show them our work. We believe we've met that requirement.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Okay. I mean, it concerns me. Is it staff discretion? Is it management discretion? Is it DM or ADM discretion? So some of that concerns me, but I'll move on to my next question, which relates to that.

What will the department do to alleviate the concerns of noncompliance by improving its monitoring processes to ensure required reporting on the use of FNDF funds? I guess my question is: what tools do you have to ensure compliance, and what are you doing to ensure that those tools are utilized in each case?

**Mr. Young:** Yes. Thank you. Well, we do have a few tools. I mean, I guess the first and most obvious one is the audits that the department performs on a rotational basis every three years, going into communities and performing those audits. That's the first obvious one.

The second one really is around the annual reporting of the projects that have to come in from the nations to the liaison officers. There's a strong working relationship that's been developed between those liaison officers and the nations. Really, what we try to have happen especially is for a direct conversation to take place between the project manager or the liaison officer and the nation with respect to their projects and their outstanding deliverables. Those are some of the tools we have.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Have you done any correlation between those First Nations that are not meeting, not getting the two visits per year, and the ones that are noncompliant? Have you actually sort of overlaid your visits and those that are coming to Edmonton and those that you're going out to visit and those that are getting one instead of two visits a year with the compliance issue? Have you overlaid those two?

**Mr. Young:** We haven't. It's a good question you ask. I wonder if there is a relationship between, you know, visits and compliance, but we haven't. I'll take that back. Thank you.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Yeah. I guess to me it's a relationship when you go and see where things are happening and help people work with things.

That leads to my next question. Why does a challenge with reporting arise? Why do you feel that that is arising? Has the department worked to assist with the challenges you face? I guess my question is: have you identified whether it's a problem with the processes, resources, manpower, technology, or other impediments, and what can your department do to help all the parties involved in the funding to improve reporting and compliance to ensure the appropriate allocation of these funds?

**Mr. Young:** Right. Another good question. Thank you. A couple of things come to mind. I mean, the question of capacity at the nation level is an ongoing challenge. Some nations have really good capacity, really good professional and technical capacity. Some nations struggle a bit on that front. That would be the first thing, working with those nations who have sort of less capacity to offer assistance and be perhaps a tiny bit more hands on, if I could use . . .

**Mr. Gotfried:** Do you have the manpower and resources to do that?

**Mr. Young:** Yeah. I mean, that's the job of those liaison officers within the First Nations development fund. As I say, it's very deliberate in terms of how we structure the relationship. You know, liaison officer X will have 10 nations, and those 10 nations are his or hers to work with throughout the year. If some of those nations are behind, struggling a bit, then that liaison officer should be reaching out and providing more hands-on assistance.

**Mr. Gotfried:** So they have the expertise and the resources to do that, including technology and processes and those sorts of things? Do you feel that that's adequate?

**Mr. Young:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Mr. Gotfried:** Okay. Thank you.

In the Auditor General's report also around the First Nations development fund grant applications are said to lack a formal review process for assessing complex grant applications. What

additional processes – I'm sure this follows on the Auditor General's report – will the ministry institute to assess complex grant applications consistently?

**Mr. Young:** Yeah. Thank you. That is the second outstanding recommendation that the department is dealing with. For us complex grant applications are, you know, those applications of \$1 million or more and that have any potential to be tied to sort of gaming activity. There are a few things. One, now we have an internal review committee within Indigenous Relations, I believe. I'll get Clay to sort of fill in some of the detail, but we rely on, I believe, more of an external expert as well.

Clay, can you just comment on some of the specifics around complex grant applications?

**Mr. Buchanan:** Certainly. Thank you.

**Mr. Gotfried:** We're going to run out of time, so you better make it fast.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Thank you, Donavon. Clay Buchanan, First Nations-Métis relations. To list some of the improvements, we've developed a complex . . .

**Mr. Gotfried:** We can chat offline after. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Would you be willing to put that forward as a response to the committee?

**Mr. Buchanan:** Provide that in writing? Is that the question? Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

All right. Mr. Carson.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you, Chair. Just a couple of more questions. Then I'll hand it off to Dr. Turner.

On pages 28 and 29 of the annual report it references the First Nations and Métis women's councils on economic security. Can you share with the committee what role these councils play and what they are allocated in terms of funding?

**Mr. Young:** Thank you. I'll ask Kristina Midbo, the senior director of indigenous women's initiatives, to answer that question.

**Ms Midbo:** We recognize that indigenous women play a critical role in ensuring healthy, safe, and successful futures for their families and communities. The purpose of the First Nations and Métis women's councils on economic security is to provide strategic advice and make recommendations to the government of Alberta to strengthen the economic security of indigenous women in Alberta. The councils recognize that economic security for indigenous women is dependent on a number of interrelated factors such as access to justice, child welfare, health, and education, which is why the councils have made recommendations in a number of those areas. They also approach their work based on an indigenous world view, where it's about the family and the community and it's not just about the individual person.

Council membership is voluntary, and they receive no payment other than compensation for travel and expenses. They meet three or four times a year, depending on their priorities and what they want to accomplish in the year. In 2016-2017 the councils each met twice, and it cost approximately \$27,000. That covered our hosting costs, elder honoraria, and their travel and accommodation expenses.

Thank you.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you very much.

On page 4 of the annual report it states that “indigenous participation in the development of the Climate Leadership Plan is a priority” for Indigenous Relations. Many references in the annual report relate to how indigenous peoples are able to participate in the results of the climate leadership plan. I’m just hoping that you can share how your ministry did support indigenous participation in the development of the climate leadership plan.

**Mr. Young:** Thanks for the question. I’ll ask John Donner, who is the ADM of the indigenous climate leadership program, to respond.

**Mr. Donner:** John Donner, indigenous climate leadership and corporate services. Beginning in 2016-17 we started a multitiered engagement plan, that involved the minister meeting with leaders, meeting with First Nations collectively, with MNA, Métis Nation of Alberta, and MSGC, Metis Settlements General Council, and other key organizations, supported by a number of what we called CEO-ADM conversations with both First Nations and Métis, supported again by a series of community workshops to provide community explanations of what the opportunities were around climate leadership, what climate change was, and what are some of the opportunities to participate.

**9:20**

In 2016-17 we also had a number of grants that we provided to our key organization partners to equip them, and through that they hired some climate change co-ordinators or climate leadership co-ordinators – the name changed a bit – who would actually provide a bit of a translation of information between government and communities.

Going further, we had a survey and we had opportunities for submissions to provide information, and then in 2016-17 we launched our pilot programs, that were responsive to some requests from First Nations for programs similar to what were available for municipalities. So we launched our energy audit program, and we launched the solar panel program. Those were programs targeted toward indigenous peoples, indigenous communities, but they were certainly eligible to participate in any other projects or programs that came out of the climate leadership program.

**Mr. Carson:** Thank you very much, Chair.

Now I’ll hand it off to Dr. Turner. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Absolutely. Dr. Turner, please.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the ministry for being here. I’m going to continue asking about climate change, but I do want to mention that as a member of the government and as an MLA I’m really very impressed with the work of your ministry on things like the UNDRIP process, the provision of clean water to the boundaries of the reserves, and an item that you did mention, the SSISA process or the ’60s scoop survivors. I know why you use the acronym now. These are very important to all Albertans, I think, and I really want to congratulate the ministry on that.

Turning back to the climate leadership plan, you know, we are signatories or the government of Canada is a signatory to the Paris agreement, and I think as Canadians and certainly as Albertans we have a responsibility to meet that. Again, I’m really pleased to see that your ministry has progressed on that.

On page 19 of the annual report Indigenous Relations is stated to have provided \$2.9 million for funding of two climate leadership pilots in ’16-17. Can you give me some details of how that funding was utilized?

**Mr. Young:** John?

**Mr. Donner:** Certainly. Those \$2.9 million were for two programs for energy audits and retrofits on the one hand and an indigenous solar panel program on the other. Eleven communities received grants under the indigenous community energy program, 14 under the Alberta solar program. Eight were in Treaty 8 territory, 14 projects in Treaty 6, and three projects in Treaty 7. Both programs were oversubscribed in the year 2016 and ’17.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you. As a supplementary to that – it’s very impressive, particularly the oversubscription aspect, and I presume that the program is going to be expanded – along those lines: what measures are the ministry using to assess whether these climate leadership grants are actually meeting the objectives of this important program?

**Mr. Donner:** Again, we are looking at and receive reports, of course, of deliverables against the individual grants as part of the further development of programs that you alluded to. In the following year the two programs were expanded to seven programs, and one of the functions there is to develop an evaluation framework. We have to report to the Alberta climate change office in terms of how these serve the key objectives of Alberta climate change, so there is that measurement, evaluation, and reporting through that process.

**Dr. Turner:** I appreciate it.

I’ll pass my time to MLA Renaud.

**The Chair:** You have a minute and a half.

**Ms Renaud:** Oh. Okay. Thank you. Actually, I’m going to ask some of the questions from Dr. Amato. Her report was excellent, and her questions were great. The 2016-17 annual report references the ministry’s recent engagement with individual First Nations on renewal of the government of Alberta’s policy on consultation with First Nations on land and natural resource management, 2013, and guidelines. What were the results of this engagement, and are changes going to be made to the policy or guidelines as a result of these discussions?

**Mr. Young:** Thanks for the question.

I’ll ask ADM Stan Rutwind to respond, please.

**Mr. Rutwind:** Yes. There’s been a substantial amount of work done in relation to this initiative. Back in April, I think, of 2017 there were initial engagements that were done with each First Nation, industry, municipalities, to hear their perspectives in relation to the First Nation consultation process and how ultimately it could be improved. They identified a number of common policy issues, which we were directed by government to then engage on more deeply. As a consequence of that . . .

**The Chair:** If you’ve got a short response, you can finish your answer.

**Mr. Rutwind:** Yes.

There was a second level or second round of engagement that led to a third round of engagement, which has just been completed. We are now at the stage whereby we are making proposals in relation to the matter to government. We expect to be able to come out with a draft policy sometime in June or July, and there will be discussion with stakeholders, First Nations, other organizations, indigenous organizations as required through the summer, with the hope that the new policy and guidelines will come into place sometime in the fall.

**The Chair:** Thank you, sir.

Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I want to move on to discussion of consultation on page 11 of the annual report, the consultation and land claims group. It talks about

determining if consultation is triggered... which First Nations/Metis Settlements to consult... ensuring that communities are provided with sufficient information... considering information regarding First Nations and Metis concerns specific to the project or initiative; providing consultation and engagement guidance to other ministries

and a variety of other things. What I'm curious about is what role your ministry has played, if any, with the Ministry of Transportation as it relates to the Springbank project west of Calgary, SR1, the Springbank off-stream reservoir. Has your ministry been involved in that process, in consulting with Tsuut'ina in particular?

**Mr. Young:** Yes. Let me begin, and then I'll ask ADM Rutwind to fill in any blanks that I might miss. The consultation engagement is led by the Department of Transportation. When the government is the proponent, our role is one of providing advice and assistance. We want to ensure that government departments are following the government's consultation policy and guidelines. So we assist throughout, you know, with Tsuut'ina in this case directly but also, most importantly, with Transportation to really help them along and to ensure that the consultation that they're undertaking really meets the duty to consult and that they haven't sort of left any gaps, if I can describe it that way. But the actual consultation is conducted by the Department of Transportation. Our assistance is really around the policy and the guidelines.

Stan, anything to augment?

**Mr. Rutwind:** No. Nothing really to augment. It's different than when we deal with matters relating to oil and gas, oil sands, and coal whereby we actually do preconsultation assessment, make decisions in relation to that, and also adequacy decisions of consultation. As Deputy Minister Young indicated, in this particular situation we only make recommendations, and Transportation is the one that carries it out in the end.

**Mr. Clark:** Have you made recommendations specific to Transportation on this project? I mean, it feels like there's some mistrust or some sense from the people I talk with at Tsuut'ina that they don't feel they've been adequately consulted through this process. Is that anything you can comment on in terms of the specific assistance you may have provided to Transportation or if in fact you've provided . . .

**Mr. Young:** We provided assistance, especially up front, on their consultation plan to ensure that they had a robust consultation plan. Again, it's really the department's responsibility to undertake that consultation. And throughout they'll check back with us, and we'll have sort of a back-and-forth conversation to ensure that consultation is ongoing, that it's deep and meaningful. Maybe I'll just quickly add, sir, if I can, that consultation is ongoing as we speak. We have not been asked to provide a recommendation around adequacy, so consultation continues as we speak.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Hunter, you have five minutes, sir.

9:30

**Mr. Hunter:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate being able to come here today and talk to you. My questions revolve around outcome 1, talking about improving socioeconomic outcomes for indigenous communities. The first question I have for you, Deputy Minister, is: how many employees do you have in your ministry?

**Mr. Young:** I believe the official FTE count is 236.

**Mr. Hunter:** Of those 236, how many are FNMI?

**Mr. Young:** How many are aboriginal employees, First Nations, Métis employees?

**Mr. Hunter:** That's correct.

**Mr. Young:** We don't know the answer to that officially or with any certainty because in the past the government has not asked a question around aboriginal identity. That will be changing beginning, I believe, next month, in June. The government, through an employee survey, will ask Alberta public servants to voluntarily identify their ancestry, so we will then have a benchmark. But at this point the question is not asked; therefore, we don't have the data.

**Mr. Hunter:** All right. Maybe you can answer this. How many of your ADMs or managers are FNMI?

**Mr. Young:** None of the ADMs are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. I would have to go back and look below that at the executive director level, at the director level, at the manager level. A number are, but off the top of my head, I cannot give you that statistic.

**Mr. Hunter:** Okay. Deputy Minister, isn't that kind of like having a majority of men on Status of Women?

**Mr. Young:** I'm not sure I'd quite sort of make that comparison, but I would acknowledge . . .

**The Chair:** I will rule that question out of order, sir. Thank you.

**Mr. Hunter:** Well, actually, Mr. Chair . . .

**The Chair:** Can we move on, sir?

**Mr. Hunter:** Yeah. Okay. I just want to actually come back to – that's why I referenced my question in the first place – improving socioeconomic outcomes for indigenous communities. Now, I appreciate that you're doing everything you can, but if we don't have our FNMI representatives here, how is it really meaningful, and how is it actually going to be successful? I can guarantee you that your department is doing everything you can under your knowledge about being able to help our First Nations.

The Blood reserve is in my riding, and I can tell you that there are a lot of problems they're struggling with. When I meet with individuals from that reserve, they tell me of those problems, but I have not had to deal with them myself. I've never lived it, so I can't even empathize with what they're having to deal with. I know this question has been asked before, Mr. Chair, and this is why I ask it again. I think it's incumbent upon this ministry specifically, in order for you to be able to accomplish your outcomes, which are noble outcomes – and I'm not trying to berate you at all. But I do believe that in order for you to truly be able to come up with those outcomes, you have to have that representation there. So I would recommend that a percentage – and if you can find it, I'd like to

know, and if you could present that to this council, that would be fantastic.

My next set of questions is actually specific to the climate leadership grants. What performance measures is the ministry using to track if the grants are meeting the programs' objectives?

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask ADM John Donner to respond.

**Mr. Donner:** Again, what we are doing with our grants is that we are tracking deliverables. We have criteria built into the grants that look at what the equivalencies are in terms of GHG reductions. We roll that up and report that to the Alberta climate change office in terms of the outcomes of emissions reductions associated with those grants. In some of the programs those are direct reductions as a result of energy efficiency investments or solar panels, which identify what the emissions are that are avoided. In some cases, those are more indirect because they are looking at developing, planning, and capacity within organizations, which enable what some people refer to as a pipeline of projects to be developed by those communities. So some are investments in capacity for further development; others are very specific to emissions reductions or emissions avoidance because they are capital projects that immediately trigger those results.

**Mr. Hunter:** Is the process effective in assessing that compliance?

**Mr. Donner:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hunter.

Ms Renaud.

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to go back to some of Dr. Amato's questions around crossministry committees and initiatives. The precise role and responsibility of the ministry with respect to those crossministry committees is not clear in the 2016-17 annual report. Does the ministry participate or play a leading role, and what does participation and/or leadership entail precisely?

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask ADM Clay Buchanan to respond.

**Mr. Buchanan:** We play a variety of roles in working with our ministry partners. On some crossministries we actually lead. One example of that would be around the UN declaration and 20 proposals and the work that we've done in leading that throughout the government of Alberta. This is somewhat of a new role for us, but we do a lot of work advising other ministries on how to engage, who to engage, when to engage, and how you do that activity. We hold the relationship in our ministry, and we provide that expertise and advice to other ministries so that they can do their own engagement. In a way, we provide that capacity development to other ministries in their work.

**Ms Renaud:** Okay. Thank you.

Throughout the 2016-17 annual report there are references to many instances where the Ministry of Indigenous Relations collaborates and co-ordinates with divisions in other ministries. Does the Ministry of Indigenous Relations have a leadership or a participatory role in the activities of other ministries that involves engagement with First Nations and Métis people in Alberta, and what precisely is involved in these activities?

**Mr. Buchanan:** Just to follow up on the previous questions, as indicated, we do a lot of work with other ministries in providing them guidance on moving forward on different initiatives. We did talk about the duty to consult, which is not what I'm talking about; I'm talking more on the engagement piece. We do lead various

initiatives, as I indicated, the UN declaration and the learning initiative for training employees on indigenous awareness, but our leadership is much more around the engagement and building on the relationship that we have with First Nations and Métis leaders and, really, the relationship that the minister has built in engaging chiefs and councils and chairs and councils on the Métis settlements.

**Ms Renaud:** Okay. Thank you.

The information on the 20 proposals does not appear to be publicly available. What are the proposals, what areas of focus do they address, and to the extent that there are many ministries involved, which ministry is taking the lead?

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask ADM John Donner to respond.

**Mr. Donner:** The 20 initiatives were developed following the Premier's direction to canvass all departments and ministries to identify how those principles could be implemented. After that review, they were brought forward, and those 20 initiatives were identified.

They're really grouped around six kind of focus areas. One is on enabling a new relationship, and that's looking at areas of training, data information, and how we engage, including how we make sure that information about that engagement is presented to cabinet as part of decisions. A second is around safe and reliable drinking water, and there's a major initiative that's been undertaken there, as we've talked about, in partnership with the federal government. The third is on economic and labour market participation, involving training. The economic and labour market participation is also one of the areas that is most familiar to me because we talk about trying to develop a joint decision-making organization with indigenous peoples around climate leadership participation.

Other areas are around improving socioeconomic outcomes – that's many of the things that we've already talked about – resource development and environmental management, including cumulative effects management, traditional environmental and ecological knowledge; the consultation policy renewal, that has already been referred to; and, finally, looking at treaty and aboriginal rights proposals to look at how we can move forward.

As you can appreciate, many of these are the substance matters of other departments, so they take the lead where they have subject matter expertise. As we've talked about with drinking water, the infrastructure and project management is the accountability of Transportation, but the relationship part is the part that is led out of Indigenous Relations.

9:40

**Ms Renaud:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm going to go to the annual report on page 64. We're into some numbers here. I'm just curious. On line 8.1, First Nations housing was the voted estimate of \$54.4 million. The unexpended was almost \$32 million. Can you explain why there's such a discrepancy between what was initially voted and why that number is so high?

**Mr. Young:** Thank you. I'll ask Olena Urban, the acting SFO for the department, to answer that question.

**Ms Urban:** Back in 2013-14 the Department of Indigenous Relations booked a liability and expense of about \$191 million, and each year we incur flood-related expenses for Siksika and Stoney.

All outstanding liabilities are in financial transactions, so this \$31.9 million was reprofiled to the '17-18 fiscal year, and whatever expenses will occur this year, it will reduce this amount.

**Mr. Clark:** Is that at all related to risk 3 on page 13, relating to the delays for building houses on Siksika Nation?

**Ms Urban:** Yes, it is.

**Mr. Clark:** Okay. So that's the same.

**Ms Urban:** Yes. It's the same. It's just that each year we reduce this amount based on how much we spent for those houses.

**Mr. Clark:** Okay. Good. Thank you.

In my remaining 90 seconds I'll go back to the annual report on page 21, compliance audits every three years to ensure compliance. You said that there were 14 audits conducted in '16-17. Do you publish the results of those audits? How do those audits compare year over year? And then what are you doing to ensure communities improve their results in compliance every year?

**Mr. Buchanan:** I'm assuming this is around FNDF, the First Nations development fund?

**Mr. Clark:** Yes. It is FNDF, 14 audits in '16-17.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Those audits are internal audits in working with the communities. Really, we release the audits from the perspective that when we work with the communities, the First Nations, we provide that information back to chief and council. So from that perspective, we do release it publicly to the chief and councils, their audit. We're working in collaboration with them towards improving the outcomes of the FNDF program.

**Mr. Clark:** Okay. And do you report sort of a rollup of the results? I mean, I realize they're internal audits, but is any information made public on these?

**Mr. Buchanan:** We do produce on an annual basis the FNDF annual report, where we identify projects by community. So we break down the funding by community, and we list those projects.

**Mr. Clark:** Okay. Thank you, sir.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hanson, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Hanson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just further to Mr. Hunter's question, because it's a question that I've asked every year for three years in estimates about representation, especially in senior positions, I know that it would never happen in the Health ministry or the Justice ministry, so I'm just curious as to why it's allowed to happen in Indigenous Relations. If you could endeavour to answer Mr. Hunter's question later.

But as far as collaboration with federal governments, Dr. Turner mentioned that, you know, we have water projects, and we bring them up to the border. It doesn't really make a lot of sense to me that we bring a project to that point and then somebody else has to take it over. It seems like it's kind of a redundancy and probably twice as much money to get a project done. Do you sit down with your federal counterparts on projects like the water projects, and is there some way that we could plan from start to finish and delivery rather than just stopping at the borders?

**Mr. Young:** Thank you, sir, for the question. Actually, these projects are very well planned out. We take it to the reserve boundary because that's, quote, provincial jurisdiction. There's

federal funding available to finish it on-reserve, so the question would be: why would we use provincial funds to step in and backfill for the federal government? But this is not done, sir, on an ad hoc basis. We work extremely closely with the First Nation, with the federal government, and with the water commission to ensure that we will never bring a pipe up to a reserve boundary and then have it sit there. Canada is ready to take it to the final step and do the distribution on-reserve.

You know, quite honestly, I think it is a real success story in this country because I'm not aware of another situation where the provincial government, First Nations, and Canada are working together so closely, hand in glove, to get drinking water on-reserve. Nothing is left to chance. We won't bring it up to the boundary unless there is a commitment from INAC, the federal government, to finish that project on-reserve. So the federal government is funding their portion, and the provincial government is funding its portion. I think that works really well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms Renaud, you have two minutes.

**Ms Renaud:** The Auditor General repeated two of the three recommendations made in 2013. Can you tell us what's prevented the department from implementing these recommendations over the last four years?

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask Clay to respond.

**Mr. Buchanan:** I think this question might have been answered in the past. Really, what's prevented the ministry from moving forward is that we really try to work with our partners, with our First Nation communities. Really, you can't rush these things. If we want to see improvements, it takes time and is a matter of building capacity. From an FNDF perspective we work very closely with their technicians to build that capacity to help them plan, organize, report, and implement projects. Really, one of the delays is to ensure that they can respond in delivering a program for their members.

**Ms Renaud:** Okay. Thank you.

One other question: what progress has the ministry made in implementing the two outstanding recommendations? What specific progress have you made since the November 28 Public Accounts meeting?

**Mr. Buchanan:** I'm just going to read into the record some of the things that we have done. We have a complex grant application assessment procedure that has been formally implemented and applied to all new complex grant applications. We have an internal peer review team that was established to look at complex grant applications. We work with First Nations and require them to submit documentation that confirms that they sought professional advice for their complex grant applications. The FNDF grant application has been revised. It is now a PDF fillable form so that First Nations can . . . [Mr. Buchanan's speaking time expired] We'll have to write this up.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Clark, you have two minutes, sir.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you very much. The Alberta indigenous intern program referenced on page 32 talks about 11 interns in six ministries, but I noticed none of those ministries are ED and T, Status of Women, Education, Community and Social Services, or Children's Services. I'll reference back to my first line of questions about the importance of making Children's Services in particular

more culturally relevant. I'm just curious if you could speak to why it is that we find AIIP not serving those particular ministries.

**Mr. Young:** Thanks for the question. I guess the quick and real answer is that it really is a voluntary program for ministries to subscribe to. They do have to provide the funding. They have to have not a formal FTE, but they need to have, you know, that room available for a person to come on. They have to fund it. This is a fairly new initiative. I believe we're in the third intake. If I'm not mistaken, each year that program is growing, so whereas we would certainly like every ministry to sign on to this, we are finding it growing over the years and more and more ministries funding interns. But that's the real answer. It's not sort of mandatory. They have to have the funding to fill a position, and perhaps it's not in their overall priorities compared to other things going on in their ministry.

**Mr. Clark:** Thank you.

Page 27 in the annual report, valuing mental health: I'm just curious whether your ministry is still engaged with Health on the implementation of valuing mental health, and if so, if you can tell us what specific recommendations you're working on with them.

**Mr. Young:** I'll ask ADM Clay Buchanan to respond.

**Mr. Buchanan:** We sat on a variety of committees with the Ministry of Health in working to deal with the opioid crisis, which was brought up earlier in the session here.

**Mr. Clark:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

We have time for one question from each party to be read into the record for a response. Mr. Hanson, do you have a question?

9:50

**Mr. Hanson:** Yeah. Actually, I will just reiterate the question that I asked previously and that Mr. Hunter asked. If you could

endeavour to give us some data as to any changes since I first asked the question back in 2015-2016, and then Mr. Hunter asked the question today. Have there been any improvements or attempts by your office to fill some of the senior management positions with people from First Nations, whether it be treaties 6, 7, or 8?

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Does the government have any questions?

Mr. Clark, do you have any questions to read into the record?

**Mr. Clark:** How much of the FNDF funds is administration, and is there any plan to reduce the amount that is spent on administration year over year?

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Clark.

All right. I would like to thank the ministry officials who attended today for responding to the members' questions. We would ask that responses to any outstanding questions from today's meeting be provided in writing and forwarded to the committee clerk within 30 days.

Moving on to other business, I wish to note for the record the government response to the October 2017 report respecting Better Healthcare for Albertans, a report by the office of the Auditor General, May 2017. The government response was tabled in the Assembly on April 3, 2018, by the hon. Ms Hoffman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Are there any other items for discussion under other business?

If not, we will move on to the next meeting date. The committee meets next Tuesday, May 8, with the Ministry of Energy. The committee meeting is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., and the committee's premeeting briefing will be at 8 a.m.

Would a member move that the meeting be adjourned? Dr. Turner. All in favour? Any opposed? On the phones? Carried.

Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 9:52 a.m.]







