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President
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October 18, 2025

Dear Ms. Acheson,

Thank you for your October 14, 2025 election questionnaire and for your advocacy work on behalf of organized labour in the Yukon. Please see below responses to your specific questions.

1. Housing and Affordability

We have met our goal of releasing 1,000 lots since 2021 and will commit to releasing 1,000 more over the next four years. We will work with municipalities on projects such as an incentive program to redevelop brownfield and abandoned lots and will seek private-sector partnerships to speed up development and reduce costs. To make building homes easier, we'll introduce a commercial lottery for land access, and explore partnerships and identify, then remove, barriers to residential development. We also support nonprofit housing initiatives, maintain the Housing Initiatives Fund for long-term affordability, explore partnerships with Development Corporations, and promote modular housing to increase density affordably. Public housing projects across Yukon communities, including Dawson, Teslin, Ross River, Burwash, Carcross, and Mayo, will continue to be developed to meet growing needs.

2. Environmental accountability

We have been working for a number of years with First Nations and industry to modernize Yukon's mining legislation and oversight to prevent incidents like the Eagle project. Our government also has a plan to increase the independence and capacity of inspections, monitoring, and enforcement, including exploring moving oversight to the Yukon Water Board.

3. Healthcare and community access

Our government recently completed initial steps towards opening a medical travel lodge in Whitehorse to assist Yukoners from outside the city who need to travel for medical purposes. Now, we will work to establish a similar residence in Vancouver.

We also established a bridging program with the University of New Brunswick to help LPNs become RNs while staying in Yukon; 17 LPNs in the first cohort, up to 20 in the second starting in Fall 2025. We have also reduced primary health care nurse vacancy rates from 47% in October 2022 to 19% in December 2024.

We also introduced the first resident orthopedic surgeon program in 2017 at WGH, allowing more Yukoners to get the care they need, closer to home.

Our 2025-2029 plan will continue to increase access to primary care across the territory, including more family-physician-led, team-based clinics that fully integrate nurse practitioners working to their full scope of practice, working closely with the Whitehorse General Hospital to expand services and beds, and building a new surgical tower.

We plan to investigate the feasibility of an urgent care centre in Whitehorse and to increase the capacity of the Whitehorse Walk-In Clinic, allowing Yukoners who do have doctors to access walk-in care, starting with residents from communities outside Whitehorse.

We will ensure that abortion services are confidential, accessible, and sustainable within our healthcare system and increase support and resources for women experiencing perimenopause and menopause symptoms.

Finally, we will ensure that working healthcare professionals are well supported through increasing training opportunities and focusing on preventing staff burnout.

4. Healthcare Workforce Wellbeing

Over the last number of years there has been labour peace in the health care field and we have successfully avoided job action such as we have seen in other Canadian jurisdictions.

This past summer we successfully continued signing bonuses and exam fee reimbursement for nurses through to March 31, 2027, retroactive to April 1, 2025. This applies to Yukon government-employed nurses and supports efforts to retain and attract qualified staff across the territory.

The Canada Labour Code guarantees that successorship rights exist for all bargaining unit employees. This federal legislation means employees currently represented by a union will continue to be represented – and will carry their existing, negotiated collective agreements, along with their corresponding pension and comprehensive benefits packages – over to the new health authority.

We also plan to expand home care support in rural Yukon communities, increase aftercare support for Yukoners who have completed addictions treatment but still need help maintaining a sober lifestyle, continue to implement the Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy, with a focus on increasing treatment options in Yukon communities and ensure our healthcare system is culturally safe by continuing work to create Yukon's first health authority, Health and Wellness Yukon (Shaw Kwa'a), in partnership with Yukon First Nations.

5. Wildland Firefighter Protections

Our party recognizes the invaluable contribution of every Yukoner who fights fires, whether full or part-time, urban or wildland, professionally or as a volunteer. Applying precautionary principles and taking measures to reduce harmful exposures for all firefighters is a prudent approach to prevent injury. A McGill University study confirmed that different fires in different areas produce different potential exposure risks. Furthermore, a recent article published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* found that the majority of studies show exposure to carcinogens for wildland firefighters did not exceed the occupational exposure limits.

Yukon Wildland Firefighters are not trained, equipped, or permitted to enter or apply water to structures once they are on fire; they may instead assist in applying structure protection such as sprinklers or pumps on buildings, assisting with evacuation, establishing fuel breaks and extinguishing organic materials near buildings.

Given the importance of prevention in preventing worker injuries, our government reviewed the possibility of implementing regulations that would set limits as a means to reduce on-the-job exposure to known harmful materials for wildland firefighters.

A regulation covering presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters under the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act* came into force on July 1, 2022.

There are now 19 cancers included under the presumption, including pancreatic and thyroid, alongside three cancers that primarily affect women. This latter addition recognizes the increasing role that women are taking on in fighting fires.

Any worker not covered under the presumption who contracts cancer as a result of their employment can still apply for compensation. These claims will be adjudicated by qualified and competent staff members of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Board.

An October 2024 paper noted the dynamic nature of wildland firefighting and suggested that in order to implement the most effective mitigation strategies, more research was necessary.

We agree that more research is needed, and WSCB is continuing to monitor that work.

6. Worker Safety and Compensation Reform

In December , 2021 our Liberal government passed a new *Workers Safety and Compensation Act*, demonstrating our commitment to workers' rights. It was a complete rewrite of the previous legislation, which hadn't been reviewed in more than a decade. The new law passed unanimously through the Yukon Legislature in 2021 and came into force on July 1, 2022.

The president and CEO of the Yukon Workers Compensation Health and Safety Board, said at the time the first indication the act will be more modern was its goals: preventing workplace injury and caring for injured workers.

7. Protection for Immigrant Workers

Our Party is committed to safeguarding the rights of immigrant workers. Our party has a long history of ensuring pathways to permanent residency are supported.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue and working together to build a stronger, more prosperous Yukon for all residents. Our full platform is available at https://www.ylp.ca/platform_2025

Sincerely,



Mike Pemberton
Leader, Yukon Liberal Party