

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Support for Performing Arts**  
**Committee of the Whole—2017-2018 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment—February 20, 2017**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Sorry, I thought we were going through this page-by-page, so I did have one question about -- it's on page 35 and it's about Support to Northern Performers. Back in 2015-16 there was \$185,000 in that budget for it; now it's down to \$101,000. Can someone from the department explain what happened? Thank you

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Just a reminder to committee: we're looking at pages 34, with information found on page 35 to 38. With that, we go to Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. What ended up happening was, over the course of the past year in 2016-17, we had changed how we fund different organizations based on a risk-based approach. So when we fund a smaller category of funding up to, let's say, \$5,000 we do it through a grant; anything over and above that amount we would do it through a contribution agreement. So what ended up happening is in 2015-16 they were operating under the old grant program and this has been since changed in 2016-17. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's a helpful explanation, but what I see here is support over time declining for our arts and performers. Is that the case? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and just further to Mr. Lovely's comments earlier, we did change it so it would be easier for artists to get the contributions, moving it from the grants down to the contributions. Funding hasn't really changed; we still give strong support there. It's just in terms of how we set up these agreements with Northern performers. I'll go to Mr. Lovely for a little bit more clarification on that. Thank you

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Mr. Lovely.

**MR. LOVELY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. In 2015-16 what you see under the Support to Northern Performers item is \$185,000 in actuals, and we have since changed that program and moved that funding down into Arts Organizations' Operating Funding. Because there wasn't any program in 2015-16 you're not going to see any actual expenditures in that year. So as we move forward in 2016-17, the new organizations, or the organizations that had previously applied under the Support to Northern Performers, will probably apply under the Arts Organizations' Operating Funding. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's a very helpful explanation, and I can see it now.

I also note that the NWT Arts Council in 2014, they developed a strategic plan. Are there any plans by the department to increase our support for arts and performers? Thanks, Mr. Chair. Sorry, and the reason why I say that, Mr. Chair, is this is an area of our economy that has tremendous paybacks; it can help diversify our economy, showcase our culture. Is this something that the department is looking at increasing, say, funding to the NWT Arts Council and/or Support to Northern Performers? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our department continues to collaborate with other departments such as ITI when we're supporting Northern performers, Northern artists. In this budget there is no increase, just for confirmation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm glad I got a straight answer there from the Minister; I appreciate that. I guess, though, is this an area that the department is prepared to do some more work on by developing its own strategy or action plan around support for performing arts and our artists here in the Northwest Territories? So can you make that commitment to begin work on a strategy or an action plan of some sort? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have an arts strategy. It is probably a few years old, but we can take a look at it again and evaluate how it's working. Thank you, Mr. Chair.