

KATRINA NOKLEBY

FOR **MLA GREAT SLAVE**



Thank you to the Moose for the opportunity to answer these questions. I appreciate the hard work of the media in covering this election.

1. What made you decide to run?

Yellowknife is my home and I love the North. I want to ensure that the NWT is on a path towards a sustainable economy while addressing the social issues we are facing. With a strong background in sciences, experience working across the NWT, and my social advocacy background, I will bring a unique skill set to the Legislative Assembly. Through the sciences I have learned critical thinking, problem solving, the analyzing of data, and attention to detail.

2. In a short summary, what qualifications do you have to lead your region as MLA?

I've volunteered with many organizations during my time in Yellowknife including NAPEG Council, the YWCA-NWT, Girl Guides, and the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies. Being on boards and councils has provided me with valuable tools such as the ability to collaborate well with others; fiscal and budgeting knowledge; and strategic planning. I'm an environmental consultant, working across the territory on a variety of project sites and communities. I've worked closely with Indigenous people throughout my career, giving me a deep appreciation and respect for them as I see the struggles the communities are facing and the want for change.

3. In a short summary, what is the platform you're running on?

I believe we need to take a balanced approach to stimulating our lagging resource extraction sector through infrastructure development while combatting social issues such as addictions, homelessness, and family violence. We need to ensure we have both a robust economic framework as well as healthy families in order to bring the territory forward into prosperity.

4. If there was one issue affecting your region that you would like to change during your term, what would it be and why?

As Great Slave borders Yellowknife Centre, I believe the situation in the downtown is one of the biggest issues for residents in my riding. Many have expressed concern for what they believe is a worsening problem and want the 19th Assembly to effect real change in this area.

5. What is your strategy for tackling climate change in the North?

In order to reduce the territory's diesel dependency, I believe we need to explore more green energy options such as community-specific, hybrid energy installations; district heating systems; and the possible expansion of Talston. We also need to expand our all-weather road system to ensure that our transportation system can withstand future climate uncertainty. Each year our ice roads are becoming more unpredictable and without ice roads our communities become stranded with the cost of airfare prohibitive for most residents.

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6. What are your current and future plans for the NWT's mining industry?

Mining is over 30% of our GDP and with the diamond mines set to close within the decade we need to act now to stimulate exploration. Exploration companies say mining companies aren't interested in the NWT because they have green energy mandates for their mines. When all we have to offer is diesel operations, exploration companies can't sell their finds. We need to remember we are competing for mining dollars in a global economy and must make investment here enticing. This could be done by investing in infrastructure such as all-weather roads to reduce shipping costs and green energy sources.

7. The cost of living is a common issue in the NWT, how do you think the territory should approach the issue?

We need to work on building our economy and implementing more efficient energy systems so that we can reduce the cost of living and power for citizens. We should increase funding for greenhouses, agriculture, and country food programs to deal with food security issues. We should also incentivize home ownership by offering grants or subsidies to first time homeowners and increase funding to organizations such as Arctic Energy Alliance that aid homeowners in operating their homes more efficiently.

8. With the population of NWT continuing to shrink, what ideas do you have to combat it?

I think the Polytechnic University would be a great way to attract new people to the territory. We have amazing talent in the NWT and could become a world class leader in climate change and permafrost research. Upon graduation it's likely many of these students would stay in the territory and continue with their research and work, increasing the number of transfer payments from the federal government. Students from the University would be a potential labour pool to work lower paying, service sector jobs that are currently understaffed.

9. How would you improve post-secondary education in the North, and is a Polytechnic university a good start?

I believe there are fundamental issues with our education system that need to be addressed before northern students can even consider post-secondary education. Graduation rates across the territory continue to be low and many students are unable to meet post-secondary requirements even with a high school diploma. MLAs must strike a special committee consisting of Members and Ministers and subject matter experts early in the next Assembly to review early childhood development programs as well as Junior Kindergarten – 12. There must be a focus on coming up with real and meaningful recommendations for improving outcomes for children across the NWT.

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10. What support systems do you want to implement to make sure Indigenous communities are not left behind?

I think the GNWT needs to listen more than it speaks when it comes to Indigenous communities. There seems to be a real disconnect between the government and the Indigenous people of this territory and we need to move away from the colonial approach I often see. I have been told when working in the communities that people don't feel that they are heard. I would work hard to be a bridge builder and advocate for the Indigenous people of this territory, rather than speak for them.

11. Is there any infrastructure aspects of your region that you would like to see improved upon?

The proposed Con Mine boat launch to replace the one adjacent the Giant Mine Remediation Project would fall within the boundaries of the Great Slave riding. I would work to ensure that constituents of my riding had a say in its development and that impacts to residents such as increased vehicular traffic would be minimized.

12. What are your priorities in terms of healthcare in the NWT?

We are one of the only jurisdictions in this country that ships some of our most vulnerable citizens, who are struggling with mental health and addictions, to other parts of Canada. The Northwest Territories has no comprehensive relapse prevention program. If elected I will advocate for a review of current practices and work towards change for the better. We need to engage front line workers and those administering policies for their input as to how to serve our vulnerable citizens better. Ultimately, I would like to see a treatment center in the NWT including aftercare programs and family trauma counselling.

13. How would you confront substance abuse in the NWT?

We need to implement aftercare and trauma counselling programs in order to deal with the root issues causing addictions. It appears that we currently just detox people, sending them back to the same set of circumstances that lead them to abuse alcohol or drugs in the first place. We can't expect people to remain sober if we don't address the trauma they have endured. We also need to ensure there are sober activities and programs offered to give people an alternative way to socialize rather than getting high or drunk.

14. What ideas would you put forward to expand our region's commercial district?

We have amazing talent here and should work to assist artisans in getting their wares to market, perhaps by subsidizing shipping costs or providing business and accounting training. The GNWT should also evaluate its policies when it comes to payment of its small vendors. Many businesses in the NWT cannot wait extended periods of time in order to be paid for the work they do for the GNWT. This lag in payment causes an unnecessary hardship for northern businesses who may not have the backing of a large southern company with other revenues to cover the deficit until payment.

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