

Tłichọ Government

# Iłè dọ gha gọita

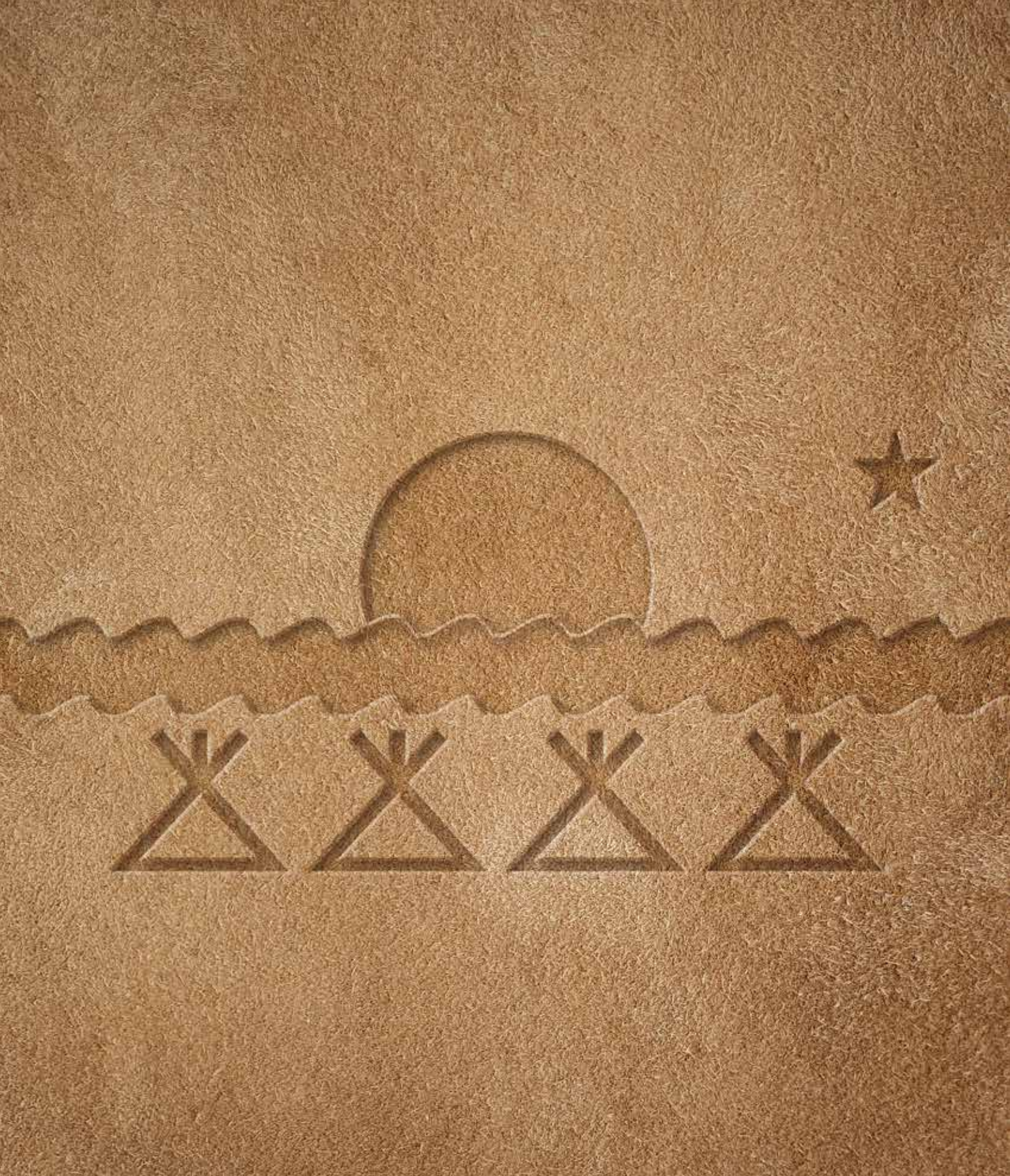
In Tłichọ Unity: Our Strategic  
Framework and Intentions 2021-2025



Tessa Madnosh / Tłichọ Government









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# Message from the Grand Chief

Jamie Stevenson / Tłı̨chǫ Government



**Grand Chief  
Jackson Lafferty**

We live in a time of extraordinary change – a change that is reshaping the way we live, the way we work, our planet and our place in the world. It is change that promises amazing opportunities for our communities and citizens, but there also may be economic disruptions that may strain our citizens, particularly our youth. Change promises success in our efforts to strengthen our language, culture and way of life; but it also deepens our connection to the varying cultures, perspectives and values of the world. It is change that can broaden opportunities or widen inequalities. Whether we are ready or not, the pace of this change is accelerating.

But we have been through big changes before — the introduction of the fur trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought a new economic system to our people, the signing of Treaty 11 in 1921 brought an influx of settlers into our territory, and when the administrative and political body of the Government of the NWT moved from Ottawa to the north in 1967 it brought foreign ways of governing to our communities. Each of these changing times we faced new pressures, conflicts and adversities; and each time we overcame the obstacles set before us. We made change work for us by finding ways to co-exist, building relationships based on peace and respect, and always remaining unified as the Tłı̨chǫ Nation. In responding to the changing world, we held onto and protected our language, culture and way of life, yet we still embraced the broader world and what it had to offer us; and because we approached change in this way, we took the opportunities that came before us and emerged stronger and better than before.

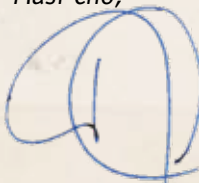
What was true then can be true now. Our unique strength as a Nation — our optimism, our commitment to care for one another and our unity — gives us everything we need to ensure continued prosperity and to remain grounded in our language, culture and way of life for generations to come.

However, progress is not inevitable. It is the result of the choices we make together. These strategic intentions set out a roadmap for us — as a Nation and as a government — to respond to the challenges of our time. It recognizes the importance of our youth, who will carry our culture and unity into the future; and the incredible value of our elders, who ensure continuity with our past. It seeks to strengthen our language, which not only signifies the connection to our origins but carries with it the values of our ancestors. It builds on our unique Indigenous knowledge that ties us to our lands and is crucial to our survival. It promotes our economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance that will generate sustainable economic growth, community control and an increased capacity for our people to participate in the economy. Our culture, unity, language, Indigenous knowledge and economic self-sufficiency will ultimately support us in becoming a healthier, stronger, more resilient Nation.

We cannot do this work alone. Climate change, education, health, and caribou are just a few of the many issues where our security is linked to that of our neighbours and the rest of the world. We must continue to invest in our treaty relationship with Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. We must continue to nurture our relationships with our Indigenous neighbours. Building on the values our ancestors gave us — peace, harmony, and co-existence — we will continue to develop renewed, respectful relationships with our treaty partners and neighbours. It is through a positive, stable relationship that we can attack the shared challenges we face and leverage common opportunities to support social and economic growth and protect our environment, lands and wildlife.

We do not do this work for ourselves. We do this for the Tłı̨chǫ people of today and the future Tłı̨chǫ generations. Our Constitution states the purpose of the Tłı̨chǫ Government, that we must “act in the best interests of the Tłı̨chǫ ... acting to preserve, protect and promote our Aboriginal and Treaty rights and way of life — including our culture, language, heritage, lands, economy and resources — for all Tłı̨chǫ today and for future generations to come for as long as the land shall last.” These words of our elders are a powerful statement about the importance of putting the health, happiness and prosperity of our people today and in the future at the center of everything we do. This does not mean we can respond to every request made by every citizen; it means we must set out to do work that benefits all Tłı̨chǫ people. It is about being accountable — as you will see in this document: we detail how we will report back to you, our citizens, on our progress so you can be confident we have heard your concerns and that we are working for you. I encourage every Tłı̨chǫ citizen to read these strategic intentions and to seek out the programs and services offered by our government. Your involvement and engagement are important as it ensures our policies and practices reflect the ideas and expertise of our people.

I proudly put forward *Itè dǫgha gǫita ... In Tłı̨chǫ Unity: Our Strategic Framework and Intentions 2021-2025*. It is with a common purpose and common effort outlined in the plan and fueled by the dedication and passion of our leaders, administration and Tłı̨chǫ citizens, that we will carry our strength, our unity and our culture and our way of life into the future, for our children and our grandchildren, and for all Tłı̨chǫ generations to come.

Masi-cho,  


Grand Chief, Jackson Lafferty



# Executive Summary

*Itè dq gha gqita, ... In Tłchq Unity: Our Strategic Framework and Intentions 2021-2025* is the Tłchq Government's fourth strategic framework and intentions. The purpose of this document is to communicate what our government will do, our motivation for doing what we do and how we will monitor and evaluate our actions. It is an invaluable tool as it provides direction as we make fundamental decisions and actions throughout our term.

To develop these intentions a planning team engaged with stakeholders including the youth, the elders, the Tłchq Assembly and the Tłchq Government administration. Through visioning sessions with these stakeholders, we identified priorities for our government and provided direction on how we should conduct ourselves and how we should work with others.

Our vision has remained consistent since our inception — “In Tłchq Unity”. This signifies our unity as a Nation with a shared history, experiences and lands, and our language, culture and way of life. Our mission is given to us in our Constitution: that we act in the best interest of the Tłchq people today and for future generations as long as the land shall last. Our principles also come from our Constitution and the wisdom of our elders and focus on values of respect, fairness, cooperation, healing, self-sufficiency, reciprocity, and the importance of our lands, water, resources, language, culture and way of life.

The goals and direction that will guide our work for 2021-2025 are outlined in six intentions: Sustain Our Lands, Water & Wildlife; Revitalize Our Language, Culture & Way of Life; Build Strong Healthy Communities; Build Tłchq Self-Sufficiency Through Traditional Economy & Economic Development; Build Tłchq Capacity Through Training and Research; and, Create Opportunities for Healing & Wellness. Activities and initiatives we will engage in to achieve these goals are outlined for each intention.



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We have also outlined the goals for developing our governance and institutional capacity as well as building our relationships with public and Indigenous governments. Our objectives for these activities focus on strengthening our capacity, developing policies and processes, and building relationships and initiatives beneficial to Tłchq citizens.

Finally, to ensure accountability we will monitor and report our progress. Departments will develop operational plans that set out specific activities and initiatives they will undertake to achieve our intentions and will report their progress to the Chief's Executive Council. Every quarter the Tłchq Assembly will be provided with updates and annually we will report to our citizens at the Annual Gathering and through the Annual Report.

# Background

Since the creation of the Tłchq Government in 2005 there have been five Tłchq Assemblies.

The first Tłchq Assembly, 2005-2009, did the work of creating the Tłchq Government. This Assembly passed the first budget and developed a new set of laws to govern the newly created Government, guided by the Tłchq Constitution. The first Tłchq Assembly also established the Tłchq Investment Corporation, intending to bring all Tłchq-owned businesses together under one entity.

The second Tłchq Assembly, 2009-2013, began to organize its work into a formal strategic plan by setting out a vision, mission, guiding principles and a series of core supporting goals and objectives. The planning work done by the first and second Tłchq Assemblies was put together and explained in the *Iłè dɔgha ɔɔita ... In Tłchq Unity: A Strategic Framework and Intentions 2009-2013*.

The third Tłchq Assembly, 2013-2017, validated the foundational work completed by the first and second Tłchq Assemblies and added six planning themes: Sustaining Our Lands and Environment; Sustaining Our Language, Culture and Way of Life; Strengthening Our Communities, Our People; Increasing Our Financial Strength and Economic Development; Strengthening Tłchq Governance, Institutions and Organizations; and, Managing Effective Intergovernmental Relationships. The work of the third Tłchq Assembly was captured in the document *In Tłchq Unity: A Strategic Framework and Intentions 2013-2017*.



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The fourth Tłchq Assembly, 2017-2021, continued building on the work of the previous three Assemblies by further defining the six planning themes and outlining key initiatives and plans for each intention. The six strategic intentions established by the 4<sup>th</sup> Tłchq Assembly were: Sustain Our Lands, Water and Wildlife; Revitalize our Language, Culture and Way of Life; Create Strong Healthy Communities with Opportunities for Healing and Wellness; Strengthen Tłchq Governance and Institutions; Build Tłchq Prosperity and Employment Through Economic Development; and Create Effective Intergovernmental Relationships with Other People. The work of the fifth Tłchq Assembly is captured in this document *Iłè dɔgha ɔɔita ... In Tłchq Unity...To Preserve and Protect Our Lands, Language, Culture and Way of Life: Strategic Framework and Intention for the 4<sup>th</sup> Tłchq Assembly 2017-2021*.

This document captures the work of the fifth Tłchq Assembly and continues the development of a road map to guide the work of the Tłchq Government from 2021-2025.



# Our Process – Development of Our Strategic Intentions

The Strategic Intentions reflect the values of the Tłıchǫ Nation and provides a road map for the Tłıchǫ Government to achieve its purpose. Developing strategic intentions that are relevant and reflective of the goals and aspirations of Tłıchǫ citizens requires careful consideration, engagement, and input from internal and external stakeholders. To achieve this and to ensure the intentions are embraced by Tłıchǫ citizens, Tłıchǫ leadership and the Tłıchǫ Government Administration, a strategic engagement plan was prepared and approved by the Tłıchǫ Assembly. The Department of Planning and Partnerships (DPP) lead the development of the 2021-2025 Strategic Intentions and facilitated workshops with the Tłıchǫ Assembly, Tłıchǫ Government administration and elders and youth.

## Tłıchǫ Assembly Workshop



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The Tłıchǫ Assembly is the law-making authority of the Tłıchǫ Government. It is composed of 13 members: the Grand Chief, the Chiefs of the four Tłıchǫ communities and two councillors from each community. A three-day working session brought together the Assembly Members to discuss the Tłıchǫ Government's achievements and the challenges encountered in implementing the 2017-2021 Strategic Framework and Intentions, and to begin envisioning a strategic direction for the Tłıchǫ Government for the next four years. Assembly Members were divided into breakout groups to brainstorm key issues and challenges facing the Tłıchǫ Government including: language, culture and way of life, housing and infrastructure, climate change, training and capacity building, community wellness, and mining and economic development. Assembly Members provided strategies for addressing challenges and issues faced in these areas and put forward other areas of interest to be considered during the development of new strategic intentions.



## Tł̄chq̄ Government Administration Workshop



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Tessa Machinosh / Tł̄chq̄ Government

The head office of the Tł̄chq̄ Government is located in its largest community, Behchokq̄. The Tł̄chq̄ Government has Community Presence Offices in the four Tł̄chq̄ communities of Behchokq̄, Gamètì, Wekweètì, and Whatì. The Tł̄chq̄ Government continues to grow with over 100 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$65.4 million. The Tł̄chq̄ Government Administration is the frontline of the Tł̄chq̄ Government and its work is guided by the Strategic Framework and Intentions set by the Tł̄chq̄ Assembly. The Tł̄chq̄ Government Administration's work includes:

- delivering programs and services to Tł̄chq̄ citizens, such as traditional on the land programs, language and culture programming, education, social services and justice, and human capital investment;
- building relationships with other governments and external stakeholders; and
- ensuring continuous economic growth and investments.

In this capacity the administration are an essential component of delivering the spirit and intent of the Tł̄chq̄ Constitution and operationalizing the mission of the government. The administration plays a critical role in setting the Tł̄chq̄ Government on the right trajectory as the strategic intentions are implemented.

A two-day Strategic Intentions Development workshop was held with Department Directors, Community Directors, Managers, the Tł̄chq̄ Executive Officer and other senior staff. The intent of this workshop was:

- to hear directly from key staff on programs, services and activities delivered by departments and communities that are central to the day-to-day functioning of the Tł̄chq̄ Government in achieving its mission and vision; and
- to provide an opportunity for senior staff to provide input on the Tł̄chq̄ Government's strategic direction for the next four years based on their expertise.

## Elders and Youth Workshop



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Elders are storytellers, teachers, protectors, healers and a vital piece of our Tłı̨chǫ identity. They link us to our ancestors, our past and our spiritual traditions. They keep our language vibrant and play an integral role in preserving our traditional knowledge. They are pivotal in helping us to tackle the broader community issues we face today in a way that honours our history and cultural knowledge.

The youth are our connection to our future. As an empowered and resilient group, they ensure the survival and continuity of our unique Tłı̨chǫ identity, culture and language. They continue our connection to our lands and way of life. Bringing together our youth and our elders ensures that our language, culture and way of life will continue to thrive and prosper.

During the development of these strategic intentions, a two-day workshop was held with Tłı̨chǫ elders and youth from our four communities. This combined approach allowed for important elder-youth interactions. It also contributes to the transmission and preservation of cultural knowledge and certifies the continuity to our past as elders share their wisdom, guidance and direction.

The strategic intentions must ensure that there is relevance into the future. The youth play a vital and important role by representing the interests and values of the next generation. Youth involvement in the workshop provided them with space to engage in a visioning process and made certain that their voices are included in the Tłı̨chǫ Governments priorities for the next four years.



# Our Vision, Mission & Principles

The **vision** for the Tłı̨chǫ Government, “In Tłı̨chǫ Unity”, is the aspirational description of our future. This vision statement has been affirmed by each successive Assembly and speaks to being one people, united by a shared history and experience, shared lands, language, culture and way of life.

Our **mission** articulates why we exist and how our founders envisioned we would achieve our vision. Our mission emerges from the Tłı̨chǫ Constitution that was created by our Tłı̨chǫ elders and approved at the 2000 Dogrib Treaty 11 Council Annual Assembly in Behchokǫ .

Section 2.1 of the Tłı̨chǫ Constitution states:

*The purpose of the Tłı̨chǫ Government and its institutions is to act in the best interest of the Tłı̨chǫ and to respect all laws including Tłı̨chǫ laws, by among other things, acting to preserve, protect and promote our Aboriginal and Treaty rights and way of life — including our culture, language, heritage, lands, economy and resources — for all Tłı̨chǫ today and for future generations to come for as long as the land shall last.*

Our **principles** guide the planning and the decision-making processes from which our laws, policies, and actions as a Government take their strength and direction.

These principles are taken from the Tłı̨chǫ Constitution:

<b>Nohtsi eyitso assii hazoo</b>	The expression of our relationship with the Creator and respect for the interconnectedness of all living things.
<b>Tii eyits’o nde wek’e ts’edi</b>	To act as the custodian of our lands, water and resources.
<b>Goyati fonawo wek’e ts’edi</b>	To protect our language, culture and way of life.
<b>Hazoo ele k’e ahts’iwo</b>	To strive for representation and work towards consensus.
<b>Elesee ts’idi</b>	To act with respect and fairness without discrimination or abuse.
<b>Elexe eghalaets’eda</b>	The importance of cooperation and working together.
<b>Dets’o ts’ewhi ts’eda</b>	The importance of healing, harmony and self-sufficiency.
<b>Eda ts’iwo sii wek’a yahts’e Ti ha go?o</b>	The full, free expression and participation of Tłı̨chǫ citizens in their government.
<b>Dedaa ho ts’idi</b>	Respecting the needs and interests of other people.

# Our Intentions

The following intentions are created in tandem with our vision, “In Tłchq Unity”. They are the desired results to fulfill our mission to act in the best interest of all Tłchq today and for future generations to come for as long as the land shall last. They also take into consideration our principles and our ways of working. This section also includes our key initiatives and plans: they are specific, measurable actions to accomplish our intentions.





## Intention #1 – Sustain Our Lands, Water & Wildlife

The Tłıchǰ Government has the responsibility of managing 39,000 square kilometers of Tłıchǰ lands, including surface and subsurface rights. This land is one of the largest single blocks of privately owned land in Canada. The preamble of the Tłıchǰ Constitution, “Affirms our relationship with God and respects the interconnectedness of all living things. We acknowledge our responsibility to serve for all time as custodians of our lands, including our water and resources.”

Based on this primary commitment in our Constitution, the Tłıchǰ Government is committed to the intention of sustaining our lands and environment for “as long as this land shall last”.

### • Strategic Directions

- Develop and implement environmentally sustainable practices and energy sources and encourage the use of green energy.
- Further develop caribou protection strategies and encourage the recovery of the caribou population.
- Promote the Tłıchǰ role as stewards of the land and raise awareness of and involvement in environmental issues affecting our lands and wildlife, especially amongst our youth.
- Improve food security and protect fresh water sources.
- Strengthen the Tłıchǰ Government’s understanding of climate change and its impacts on our lands, water and wildlife.

### • Key Initiatives & Plans

- Research and utilize alternative and green energy sources, retrofit infrastructure and transportation options, and promote policies, practices and techniques that are respectful of our natural environment.
- Research and develop protective measures for bird, wildlife and fish populations and their habitats.
- Research ways to improve food security and protect fresh water sources.
- Develop and implement land, resource and environmental monitoring programs to protect land-based activities, utilizing Tłıchǰ families and youth including the Tłıchǰ Wenek’e/ Tłıchǰ Land Use Plan, Tłıchǰ lands administration processes, mapping, GIS information systems and protected areas.
- Participate in regulatory review processes for projects that may have impacts within Mq̄whi Gogha Dè Nı̄ttèè.
- Monitor land and resource development activities and enforce regulations and land remediation programs.
- Research the impacts of climate change and implement mitigation and prevention measures.
- Protect forestry resources through enhanced monitoring of wood cutting.



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## Intention #2 – Revitalize Our Language, Culture & Way of Life

The Tłı̨chǫ Constitution states that the purpose of the Tłı̨chǫ Government is “to preserve, protect and promote our Aboriginal and Treaty rights and way of life, including our culture, language [and] heritage.”

Therefore, a major intention of our government must be to implement and support a variety of strategies and initiatives to sustain our Tłı̨chǫ language, culture and way of life.

### • Strategic Directions

- Promote the use of the Tłı̨chǫ language in homes, workplaces and public spaces in Mq̄whi Gogha Dè Nı̨łłtłèè.
- Encourage and support the transmission of Tłı̨chǫ cultural knowledge, practices and way of life.
- Advocate for the Tłı̨chǫ language, culture and way of life when actions by the Territorial or Federal Governments endanger our interests.

### • Key Initiatives & Plans

- Develop and implement legislation and policies related to Tłı̨chǫ language, and cultural knowledge and practices.
- Invest in Tłı̨chǫ immersion programs, Tłı̨chǫ language media and the use Tłı̨chǫ in meetings and government activities.
- Invest in Tłı̨chǫ land-based cultural programming, trapper and harvester programs, sewing, crafts and other forms of art.
- Invest in land-based and cultural infrastructure such as cabins, trails and archives.
- Maintain heritage sites (including grave sites and spiritual areas) so Tłı̨chǫ history and related values can be passed to future generations.
- Develop a Tłı̨chǫ language, culture, knowledge and history curriculum for delivery in regional primary and secondary schools.
- Develop culturally-based mentorship programs.
- Set up inter-community training and sharing of local cultural knowledge.
- Research language revitalization strategies and implement them in the Tłı̨chǫ region.





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## Intention #3 – Build Strong Healthy Communities

Our people expect the actions of the Tłıchǵo Government to strengthen our communities and our people. For our communities to be healthy and sustainable they must have quality buildings and infrastructure that support land-based activities, the economy, recreation, health services, and our spiritual needs in a culturally relevant way. If our communities have these, it will help our people to maintain their mental and physical health and build a community that cares for its people and elders while instilling community and cultural pride and unity. We intend to improve our communities and build strength in our families and people.

### • Strategic Directions

- Prepare our communities for climate change by developing strategies and adaptations.
- Provide affordable housing and infrastructure in Tłıchǵo communities to improve the quality of life for Tłıchǵo citizens including community-based infrastructure for wellness and healing programs.

- Develop community safety and security programs and partnerships.
- Provide for Tłıchǵo elders who have needs that are not met because of gaps in existing programs and services.
- Advocate on behalf of the Tłıchǵo people for improved programs and services delivered by the GNWT and Federal Government.

### • Key Initiatives & Plans

- Invest in the implementation of the Tłıchǵo Early Childhood Strategy and Framework, develop legislation on early learning and childcare and invest in related infrastructure.
- Research sustainable and alternative transportation methods and alternative energy sources.
- Provide shelters to house and protect community members in need.
- Develop partnerships to improve policing services, community safety and crime intervention and prevention programs.
- Develop strategic plans and invest in housing and infrastructure.
- Provide financial support for elders with extraordinary living expenses, especially regarding fuel subsidies.
- Provide financial support for the construction of community infrastructure including Tłıchǵo Community Presence offices, recreational facilities, office infrastructure for the Tłıchǵo Government and other necessary facilities in communities.
- Work with community governments to improve services in communities.



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## Intention #4 – Build Our Self-Sufficiency Through the Traditional Economy & Economic Development

We have always sustained ourselves from the land and what the land provided was shared with everyone. We continue to endure hard times as one and share equally in times of prosperity. Development has put pressure on our traditional economy as the modern economy operates differently; however, Chapter 26 of the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement states that all Tłı̨chǫ people should have the opportunity to participate in the traditional economy and share in the wealth and prosperity resulting from activities in the contemporary economy on Tłı̨chǫ lands. It is our intention to develop both the traditional and contemporary economies and to provide all Tłı̨chǫ citizens and the Tłı̨chǫ Government the opportunity to be self-sufficient.

### • Strategic Directions

- Support the collective production and circulation of goods among Tłı̨chǫ citizens.
- Expand culturally-based industries and land-based economies.
- Develop the local economy and invest in Tłı̨chǫ labour and local resources to produce goods and services that meet the needs of Tłı̨chǫ people.
- Support the development and utilization of traditional skills by developing an economy around these expertise and skills.
- Prepare Tłı̨chǫ citizens for employment opportunities and encourage the employment of Tłı̨chǫ citizens.
- Negotiate economically sustainable IBA's that are longstanding and can support Tłı̨chǫ programs (such as the Tłı̨chǫ ONE program) and benefit Tłı̨chǫ citizens in the long-term.

### • Key Initiatives & Plans

- Implement benefit agreements and scope future business opportunities with the mining industry.
- Develop and implement economic and capacity development programs relating to tourism and the traditional economy.
- Implement Chapter 26 procurement commitments.
- Research mine remediation business opportunities and invest in their development.
- Prepare for mine closure by retraining existing employees and researching alternative economic activities.
- Implement food-sharing programs to support traditional values of sharing.
- Develop harvesting programs to teach youth how our ancestors harvested and used caribou.
- Develop a regional position to support the development of sustainable small businesses.
- Research job opportunities that utilize traditional skills to develop business opportunities in the region.





## Intention #5 – Build Our Capacity Through Training and Research

Our people seek opportunities to expand their capacity so they can take on professional, administrative and leadership opportunities in our communities with confidence. Our government needs program data and information to make decisions and contribute to the expanding knowledge about the health, education, lands, culture and economy in Indigenous communities. We intend to have the data and information we need to make informed decisions and to ensure Tłchq citizens have the tools and resources they need to pursue their professional and educational aspirations.

### • Strategic Directions

- Increase the employability of Tłchq citizens through community-based training and professional programs.
- Improve education outcomes by removing the barriers for Tłchq citizens to pursue post-secondary education.
- Strengthen the research capacity of the Tłchq Government and develop relationships and partnerships with researchers and post-secondary institutions.

### • Key Initiatives & Plans

- Provide financial assistance to Tłchq citizens for academic upgrading and post-secondary studies.
- Provide training and educational courses in each Tłchq community to prepare people for employment and/or improve their employability including trades training and apprenticeships, small engine repair, small business development and management.
- Develop incentive programs for students, Tłchq citizens and Tłchq Government staff seeking to pursue any form of education.
- Create co-op and internship programs within the Tłchq Government from high school through to post-graduate studies.
- Invest in developing an accredited Tłchq training institute and library which would serve as a one-stop-shop for all Tłchq related course development, training and professional certification.
- Create partnerships with research institutions and invest in the Tłchq Government database and data collection methods.
- Develop professional development plans for Tłchq Government employees to ensure they continue to advance their career with the government.
- Develop partnerships with Yellowknife trades persons and businesses and create apprenticeship opportunities for Tłchq citizens.



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## Intention #6 – Create Opportunities for Healing & Wellness

We know that to prosper as a Nation our citizens must be healthy and strong. It starts with individual healing, then moves to family and finally community. We have endured a history of colonization and, although our people are resilient, we have been left with a legacy of oppression that strains our mental, physical and spiritual health. It is our intention that Tłchq citizens have access to high quality, reliable, and culturally relevant services that are consistently delivered to promote healing and wellness. Providing opportunities for healing and recovering from addictions is one of the main priorities of the Tłchq Government.

### • Strategic Directions

- Improve the mental and physical health of Tłchq citizens.
- Reduce the number of citizens suffering from addictions to alcohol and drugs.
- Support grieving families and communities and nurture the spiritual health of Tłchq citizens.

### • Key Initiatives & Plans

- Invest in mental health awareness and programming for all Tłchq citizens.
- Promote healthy living and nutrition by establishing community and health living hubs with accessible programs and services that incorporate the Tłchq culture and address healing, wellness, grief management, trauma and suicide prevention.
- Provide compassionate funding to support the traditional activities of our people and their families related to familial illness and deaths within Tłchq communities.
- Update and implement the Healing and Wellness Strategy.
- Develop programs and infrastructure to support those struggling with substance abuse.
- Continue to develop the land wellness and healing programs for Tłchq citizens.
- Develop new and more culturally relevant recreational programs for families and youth.
- Expand supports provided to youth at risk and those involved in the criminal justice system.



# Our Ways of Working and Relationship Building

Our government continues to grow its capacity to deliver programs and services by strengthening its governance and institutional framework. This work contributes to our transparency and accountability and as a result our citizens can have confidence in our government. Therefore, our staff and leaders will have the tools they need to be effective. The government also engages with and is engaged by the Government of Canada, the Government of the NWT and other Indigenous governments in a broad range of activities including co-management, proposed legislations and activities for the protection and support of Aboriginal Rights in Canada. How we work with others and what work we engage in impacts how others see and relate to the Tłıchǫ Government. This work impacts all government departments and activities as all departments are expected to work to achieve the outlined objectives and support their related activities.



The following objectives and activities provide the foundation of all our work, including how we serve our citizens, how we support staff and how we wish to develop partnerships and relationships with others.

### • Objectives

- Build strong partnerships with governments for the benefit of Tł̨ch̨q citizens.
- Continue to develop bilateral relationships and agreements with the federal and territorial governments to improve those working relationships and resolve issues of importance to the Tł̨ch̨q Government.
- Build trust and confidence in the Tł̨ch̨q Government and its governing institutions through an evaluation of the government's performance.
- Strengthen the capacity of our staff and leadership so they work with the highest efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the work of the Tł̨ch̨q Government.
- Continually develop the comprehensive and effective framework of policies, processes and systems that are well understood and used by the Tł̨ch̨q Government departments to achieve effective control, monitoring, and enforcement of the Tł̨ch̨q Government laws and policies.

### • Activities – How we plan to deliver

- Research the necessary legislation, policy and practices, including the intellectual and cultural property rights to protect Tł̨ch̨q language, culture and way of life.
- Oversee, review, participate, collaborate, and intervene in legislation and policies developed by the Federal Government and the GNWT to ensure the protection of Tł̨ch̨q rights under the Tł̨ch̨q Agreement and the Tł̨ch̨q language, culture and way of life.
- Renegotiate and review inter-agency agreements to reflect the current and future intentions of the Tł̨ch̨q Government.
- Conduct a social audit of the Tł̨ch̨q Government to monitor, track, analyze and evaluate its performance.
- Develop content for the “Our Elders – Our History” platform which will be dedicated to elder management programs, curated work and recognition.
- Develop a readiness plan and framework that will allow the Tł̨ch̨q Government to begin the process of transitioning inter-agency programs such as education, health, justice and social services under the full authority of the Tł̨ch̨q Government.
- Organize semi-annual training sessions for managers to increase collaboration and communication among managers.
- Continue to improve information for Tł̨ch̨q citizens about government programs, services, policies and priorities through traditional communication practices and modern media.
- Construct a legislative building for the Tł̨ch̨q Government.
- Host celebrations for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Treaty 11.



# Our Story

This section outlines the history of the Tłı̨chǫ Governance as well as some of the issues and challenges we currently face as a Nation. This background provides the context for our planning and is important when considering and understanding our strategic directions and key initiatives and plans.

## The Origins of Tłı̨chǫ Governance<sup>1</sup>

As people and as a Nation, we are connected with our land and our landscape. We were not given our lands; they have always been ours and we have the responsibility to serve for all times as the custodians of our lands. We cannot and will not be separated from our lands. Historically, our lands provided us with everything we needed to survive. Through placenames and stories associated with placenames, our history and survival as a people are written onto the landscape. These narratives preserve our knowledge and culture and act as a medium to pass on our collective experiences and wisdom to

future generations. This ensures our survival as a people and informs our continued development as a Nation.

Beginning with the discovery of the Americas in 1492, our lands, language, culture, and way of life began to be influenced by outside forces. At first, the change was gradual and had little impact. Through trade with our southern neighbours, we gained access to new tools and technology that were brought to North America by the first explorers. As the years passed, the changes accelerated and their impact became greater. The settlers arrived on our lands and relied upon us for their survival. We taught these newcomers how to endure our territory and its harsh, unforgiving climate and landscape. The

settlers found commercial uses for our animals, our trees, and our water: they exploited and benefited from our resources, but we did not enjoy in the prosperity. They had discovered the riches of our land and took it from us.

Through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the buyout of Dominion Lands in 1870, the British Crown assumed ownership of Indigenous lands and expanded their control from the east coast to the west coast and north to the Arctic. To guarantee access to Indigenous territories, the Crown entered into treaties with Indigenous Nations. In 1867, when Canada was founded, the British Crown transferred the ownership of lands along with treaty responsibilities to the newly created Government of Canada. Canada continued the practice of entering into

treaties to access Indigenous lands and went a step further to unilaterally pass the 1876 Indian Act. The Indian Act gave Canada further control and oversight over Indigenous lands and lives: it gave them the authority to extract resources on Indigenous lands and decide on the education, religion, health, and social services within Indigenous communities.

In 1921 Canada signed the last of the numbered treaties, Treaty 11, with us and other Indigenous Nations in the North. These treaties gave Canada unrestricted access to Indigenous lands and resources. They began operating through entities (such as mining companies and crown corporations) to ensure their control over our lands and resources was maintained. The wealth generated from these activities was redistributed mostly

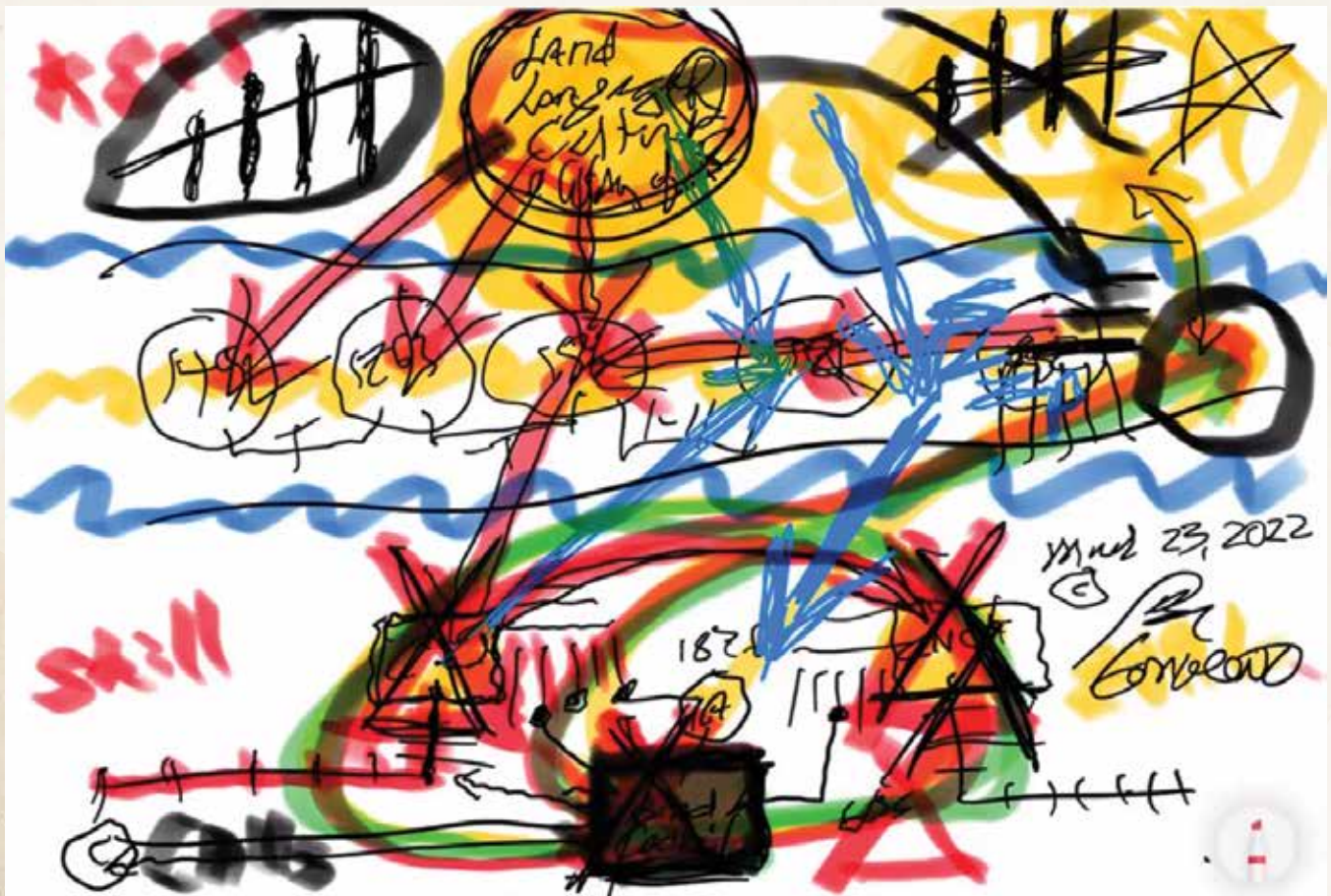


Figure 3: Tshq̓ Cosmology Illustration, John B. Zoe, March 13, 2022.



to non-Indigenous peoples through employment, the delivery of social programs and through other entities and non-government agencies such as regional and local governments. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) continued this process when its administrative and political body moved to the North in 1967 and they expanded their involvement in daily life of Northerners, including Indigenous peoples. The GNWT developed its own jurisdictions over health, education, social services, and municipal functions throughout the Territory. All the resources, lands and the decision-making authorities over our lives and our economy were controlled by Canada, the GNWT and their entities through this continual drawing down of power.

The Tłı̨chǫ have always been self-governing: we have never relinquished control over our lands, language, culture and way of life. Recognition of this by the Government of Canada began through the repatriation of the Constitution to Canada. The Canadian Constitution Act of 1982 recognized and affirmed Aboriginal and Treaty rights. This set the stage for the recognition of the Tłı̨chǫ Nation with an acknowledgement that we have lived on our lands since time immemorial. Canada developed a comprehensive claims process that included the negotiation of both land claims and self-government rights and obligations.

Our modern treaty with Canada and the GNWT, known as the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement, came in effect on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is, in part, about undoing the impacts of our colonial history and disentangling the unjust drawdown of powers and authorities by Canada, the GNWT and their related entities. The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is also about protecting and promoting our language, culture and way of life which we have inherited from our ancestors. It is this that sets us apart as a distinct people and it is our responsibility to ensure this legacy continues and thrives.



Tessa Macintosh / Tłı̨chǫ Government

Despite our history and our experience with colonization, we never ceased to be self-governing, we never ceased to practice our language, culture and way of life and we never ceased to be who we are as distinct Tłı̨chǫ peoples and a distinct Tłı̨chǫ Nation. The agreement has provided us with the legal framework and the means for Canada and the GNWT to better understand our treaty relationship and to negotiate our differences. The Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is an extension of our history and ensures the continuation of our peoples and our Nation. Understanding our history and the purpose of the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement is important as we consider how to move forward and work in ways that benefits our people.

## Current Issues & Challenges

While our history had its difficulties, today we face new challenges. There are trends and issues that influence the need, development and implementation of our intentions, strategies and key initiatives. The following factors are not necessarily listed in order of their importance. At any given time one element may take precedence over another but the changes to our community, our climate and the caribou along with the changing economic landscape need to be addressed. This is not a comprehensive list of the issues we face but an overview of some of the major trends and issues considered during our planning phase.

## Demographic & Economic Trends in Our Communities<sup>2</sup>

Three key demographic forces are reshaping the overall Tłchq̓ population in recent years: an increase in our overall population, rising numbers of older adults and a falling birth rate. But these trends play out differently in our communities, affecting some more than others.

Our population has continued to grow over the past 20 years, but this growth has not been experienced equally by all four communities. In 2001 our population was 2,698. By 2021 we had grown to a total population of 2,901, an increase of 203. Behchok̓ enjoyed most of this increase, with its population growing by 174. Whatì and Wekweètì experienced modest increases of 28 and 12 respectively while Gamètì suffered a decline of 11 in its population. It is important to note that these population figures do not account for the Tłchq̓ citizens who have moved out of Tłchq̓ communities and into Yellowknife and other urban centers in southern Canada.

Birth rates are a primary driver of population changes. Birth rates in the NWT from 2001 to 2015 remained consistent with 15 births/1000 people. Since 2015 there has been a gradual decline and in 2020 the birth rate for the NWT was 12 births/1000 people. The birth rates in the Tłchq̓ region have been higher but far more volatile than what is seen across the NWT. In 2001 the birth rate in the Tłchq̓ region was 21.9 births/1000 people. After a significant uptick in 2002 to 26 births/1000 people, the birth rate dropped to 17.4 births/1000 people in 2006. From 2006 – 2009 there was an increase in the birth rate reaching a record high of 28.8 births/1000 people in 2009. From 2009 to 2019 there has been an overall decline with the birth rate reaching an unprecedented low in 2019 of 14.2 births/1000 people followed by a slight recovery in 2020 to 15.6 births/1000 people.

The distribution of the population by age has also changed over the twenty-year period from 2001 to 2021. Although children and youth, those under the age of 20, continue to be the largest age group, their numbers fell over the past twenty years from 1,109 in 2001 down to 996 in 2021. As expected by this trend, the number of young adults, aged 20-39, has decreased from 926 in 2001 to 846 in 2021. Adults, aged 40-59, has increased from 424 in 2001 to 709 in 2021. Finally, elders, those aged 60 and over has also increased from 239 in 2001 to 350 in 2021.

Like our population growth, this change in population distribution by age has not been experienced equally by all four communities. Behchok̓ has seen a consistent decline in its population under the age of 15 over the past 10 years falling from 32% of the population to 27%, while the over-65 years of age category has seen a slight uptick from 5% to 7% in the same time. Whatì has also seen a slight decline in its population under 15 falling from 29% in 2011 to 24% in 2021 while experiencing an increase in the over-65 years of age category from 6% to 8%. Gamètì experienced the sharpest decline in its youth population from 26% in 2011 to 19% in 2021. Over the same period, Gamètì's population over the age of 65 grew from 6% of the population to 13%. Wekweètì saw a sharp decline from 2011 rates of 28% of the population to 22% in 2019 but recovered slightly to 24% in 2021. Wekweètì was the only community to experience a decline in the percentage of the population that is over 65 from 6% in 2011 to 5% in 2021.

There are other important metrics related to economic well-being that are impacting our citizens: rates and types of employment, education levels, and income. There are 2,149 residents in the Tłchq̓ region who are over the age of 15 and are eligible to be in the workforce. Of this number, almost 61% or 1,303 are participating in the labour force. Of those participating in the labour





force only 937 individuals are employed resulting in an unemployment rate of 28.5%. This is much higher than the NWT unemployment rate which in April 2022 sat at 5.3%.<sup>3</sup> High rates of unemployment are experienced in Behchokq̄ (27.4%), Whatì (30.1%) and Gamètì (34.8%). Wekweètì has the lowest unemployment rate of 14.6% but this is still almost three times higher than the NWT rate.

For those in the workforce, the type of employment available include: mining, oil and gas; construction; retail; public administration, education, and health; and other. The industry which employs the most residents in the Tłchq̄ region is public administration, education, and health with 508 individuals employed in this sector. The next sector providing the greatest employment is mining, oil and gas with 131 people. Although the public sector is an important driver of economic growth through infrastructure creation and expansion, an economy dependant on public sector jobs is vulnerable, particularly when governments implement austerity measures to reduce budget deficits. It is important to note that the NWT Bureau of Statistics does not track participation in the traditional economy. The production,

consumption, and distribution of goods in the traditional economy will have a positive impact on the economic wellbeing of Tłchq̄ citizens, which is not accounted for in these statistics.

A growing number of residents in our region have graduated from high school or attended higher education in the past 25 years. Wekweètì enjoyed the greatest improvement in education rates jumping from 18% of the population in 1994 to 47% in 2019; although Wekweètì, still lags behind Behchokq̄ who had a 54% completion rate as of 2019, as well as Gamètì and Whatì whose education completion rates in 2019 were 50% and at 51% respectively. Comparatively, all Tłchq̄ communities are far behind the NWT education completion rates at all levels. In 2017 the NWT graduation rate was 67.5%.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, average employment income mirrors these education rates. The NWT's average individual employment income in 2019 was \$64,408. Tłchq̄ communities lagged considerably behind this territorial average with Behchokq̄'s average income sitting at \$46,781, Gamètì's at \$40,294 and Whatì's at \$39,810. No data was available for Wekweètì.

These statistics tell the story we all know. Despite some advancements, our people still experience higher rates of unemployment, have lower education completion rates and earn less than other Canadians. Poverty undermines the quality of life for everyone in an economy as it is closely linked to higher crime rates, increased substance use, poor health outcomes and substandard housing.

A crime rate is based on all criminal incidents reported to the police. Behchokò has one of the highest severe crime rates in the country. For the past 22 years, the NWT has had the highest crime rate in the country and in 2019, for the 10<sup>th</sup> successive year, the NWT also had the highest crime severity index in the country. In 2019 the crime rate in the NWT was 51,236 per 100,000 as compared to the national average of 5,874 per 100,000.<sup>5</sup> The crime severity index tracks the changes in the severity of these crimes. According to Statistics Canada the crime severity index for Canada in 2019 was 79.5 compared to 388.6 in the NWT.<sup>6</sup> Even more shocking, the crime severity index in Behchokò for that period was 973.79.<sup>7</sup> There are reported increases in charges related to mischief, trafficking, production, importation or exportation of cocaine, sexual assault, common assault and uttering threats. In addition, and perhaps of even greater relevance, is the increasing rate of Indigenous incarcerations. According to GNWT Justice Department statistics, of the total number of adult inmates in custody at the Territory's three correctional facilities, 83% are Indigenous.<sup>8</sup>

Health indicators also point to a lower quality of life for residents in the Tłchq region. 43% of residents report being heavy drinkers, while 36% report having used marijuana in the past 12 months and 43% are currently smokers. This relatively high use of substances may be reflected in individuals reporting on their mental and physical health. Only 39% of residents reported excellent or very good physical health and only 44% reported excellent or very good mental health.

Tłchq communities experience significant challenges related to housing. According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, affordable housing is defined as shelter costs (rent or mortgage payments, utilities, heat, insurance and property taxes) being less than 30% of household income. Adequate housing must have running water and must not require major repairs. Suitability is defined as having an appropriate number of bedrooms for the characteristics and number of occupants. In Behchokò 41% of households are in need of affordable housing — this is the highest rate of need in all Tłchq communities. The community of Gamètì has the lowest percentage of households in need, currently sitting at 24.6% which is still above the NWT rate of 23.6%. In all communities, adequacy was identified as the top issue facing households with a need, followed by suitability, suggesting that rundown homes and overcrowding are significant housing issues facing the residents in our communities.

This snapshot of socio-economic indicators reveals the need for continued efforts to increase education levels, provide suitable housing, positive health outcomes, employment opportunities and family income in our communities in line with the rest of the NWT and Canada. Government programs and policies may assist with addressing these gaps, and analyzing trends may provide evidence of the government's effectiveness; however, it is a complex problem to address as the areas requiring interventions include jurisdictions held by different levels of government including the Tłchq Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada.





Tchq Government



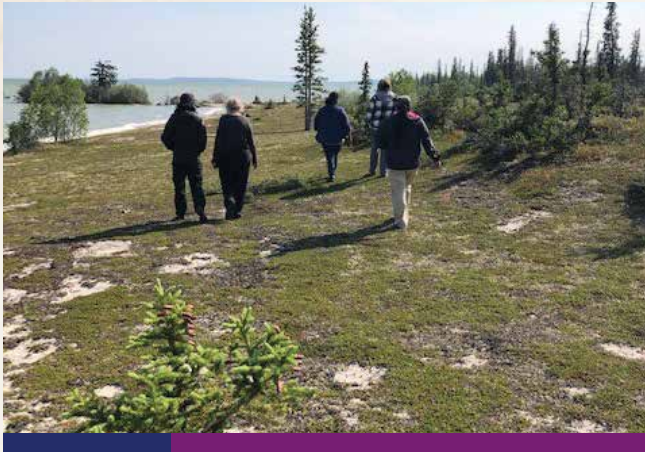
Tessa Macintosh / Tchq Government

## Climate Change and its Impact on Our Communities

Our climate is rapidly changing making it one of the most pressing issues of our time and requiring our immediate attention. An increase in greenhouse gas emissions is the primary driver in the rising global temperatures with industry being the primary source of these emissions. Their carbon footprint includes emissions from heat, electricity and vehicles from mining, oil and natural gas facilities. In the last two decades the Arctic has been warming at a rate almost twice as fast as the rest of the world. As the annual global temperatures rises, it is expected we will see impacts at all levels including: increasing vulnerability of our forests, thawing permafrost, and changes in ice and snowfall.

## Vulnerable Forests

Increase in the mean annual temperature combined with changes in annual precipitation amounts and patterns have already noticeably affected the appearance and function of northern forests. A recent report, *The State of Northwest Territories Forests in the Wake of Climate Change*, found that with the NWT getting warmer, the forests' growing season is getting longer resulting in trees wanting to grow faster.<sup>9</sup> However, precipitation plays a huge role in a tree's ability to take advantage of the warmer climate. Trees that don't receive enough water to match their growth rate will dry out making them more vulnerable to forest fires, disease and insects. It is predicted we will be seeing larger and more intense wildfires. If wildfires continue to grow in size and severity, the forest will begin to emit more carbon than it captures.<sup>10</sup> Over the long term wildfires also change the species composition of northern forests. An increase in forest fires and warming temperatures melting the permafrost leads to sink holes and melted ice flooding root systems and drowning trees. This will then result in a change in our forests as coniferous forests will be replaced with shrub and moss dominated plant communities. All these factors combined result in the degradation of the boreal caribou habitat. These changes to our forests will impact our planning over the next four years but will also impact future generations.



Tłı̨cho Government



Tłı̨cho Government

## Thawing Permafrost

Climate warming is projected to continue and as such permafrost will continue to disappear in many northern regions. Permafrost is essential for the landscape’s stability and the durability of structures on the land. Thawing permafrost results in the ground shifting and heaving, affecting roads, buildings, airport runways and traditional trails. Permafrost also plays an important role in the quality of groundwater. Ongoing permafrost loss will affect the quality of natural water filtration and the capacity for groundwater storage, while also increasing groundwater leaching: our water supplies are vulnerable as melting permafrost presents risks of hazardous materials leaching into water sources. Finally, thawing permafrost has already influencing retention ponds and lakes that rely on the permafrost to contain potentially hazardous materials.

## Changing Ice and Snow

Changes in the freezing and break-up of river and lake ice are affecting the composition and thickness of ice. With the changes in winter snowfall, this is increasing the severity of ice jams and overland flooding, as well as creating safety risks for over-ice crossings. Snow plays a significant role in northern ecosystems as it insulates the ground, determines permafrost distribution and contributes to surface water supplies. Furthermore, changes in ice and snow will also impact transportation to our communities. There is currently a high reliance on ice roads for transportation and resupply, particularly in Gamètì and Wekweètì. Considering overland and water transportation systems could reduce this dependency and ice crossings — for all types of vehicles and people — must be monitored to ensure they remain safe and stable as changes in water flow impact the thickness and stability of ice.





## Other Cumulative Effects

The changes to our natural environment can result (and in some case has already begun) in many negative effects on our environment and infrastructure.

Wildlife migration patterns are changing in response to changes to their natural environment.

For example, the number and variety of fish in our lakes change as their habitat struggles to support them.

Rising water temperatures will encourage algae and plant growth and alter spring run-off patterns, bringing in dead and decaying organic materials that have the potential to contaminate water.

Changes in the air temperature, soil, ice conditions, and increased precipitation will impact the state and life span of existing infrastructure. Much of our infrastructure depends on the stability of the land, created by permafrost. As permafrost continues to melt, there will be a need for design and engineering modifications to existing infrastructure as well as updated standards for new infrastructure.

Existing marine structures such as bridges, docks and waterways maybe impacted and destroyed by rising water levels, increasing ice jams and overland flooding.

## Hozìl ekwò

Hozìl ekwò (barren-ground caribou) is a cultural keystone species and have shaped the cultural identity of Tłchq over millennia. Tłchq relationship with ekwò maintains cultural identity as it provides a way for Tłchq to be who we are; and a way to maintain culture, language and way of life for the new generation of Tłchq. The ability to harvest ekwò is not only about hunting, but a hunt entails a purpose in life and a cultural tradition carried on from our ancestors from time immemorial.

Every year, Tłchq travel the land along an extensive physical and cultural trail network, as has been done over millennia, between the communities and the vast barrenlands to known ekwò harvesting locations. The Tłchq harvesting culture depends on seasonal movement of ekwò and travelling the trails to meet the ekwò at these specific locations, known in Tłchq collective memory.



### **Hozìi ekwò (Barren-ground Caribou)**

Hozìi ekwò connect the entire food chain of northern ecosystems through their simultaneous roles as large migratory grazers and primary prey for carnivores and peoples. The existence and constancy of ekwò movement through the landscape, maintains the abundance of other animal populations such as bears, wolves, wolverines, foxes, ravens and eagles that are linked to their presence either as primary predators or through ecological association, and thus ekwò are a keystone specie that ensures a healthy and resilient ecosystem. There are two migratory ekwò herds within Tłı̄chǫ lands: the Kokèti ekwò (Bathurst herd) and Sahti ekwò (Bluenose East herd).

### **Kokèti ekwò (Bathurst Herd)**

Every summer, the Kokèti ekwò starts its migration south from its calving grounds on the barrenlands near Bathurst Inlet, on the Arctic Ocean. The herds reach the treeline on Tłı̄chǫ lands in the fall for the breeding season and remains in the southern forest during the cold winter months. In the recent years, the herds have been wintering along the treeline and on the barrenlands between Beati (Winter Lake) and Nqđiikahti (Mackay Lake). In the spring time, around April and May, the herds migrate back north from the forest to the calving grounds, where they give birth to a new generation of ekwò.

For the Kokèti ekwò, the most recent calving ground survey, conducted in June, 2021, estimated the total herd population to be 6,243 ekwò - a 98% decline since its estimated highest recorded population numbers of 480,000 in the 1980s. This dramatic rate of decline for the Kokèti ekwò herd meets the criteria for being endangered, according to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. If current trends continue, the Kokèti ekwò will meet the criteria for critically endangered. In such a scenario, the herd “may not recover for decades to a size that could sustain a meaningful level of hunting” (TG - GNWT Joint Management proposal for Bathurst Ekwò 2019).

### **Sahti ekwò (Bluenose East Herd)**

The Tłı̄chǫ harvest the Sahti ekwò herd in the winter and spring. Particularly in recent years, with the decline of the Kokèti ekwò, the Sahti ekwò has become increasingly important to the Tłı̄chǫ people, with a focus on harvesting Sahti ekwò in late winter in the northern part of Tłı̄chǫ lands. The Sahti ekwò migrates from its calving ground west of Kugluktuk and spends most of the summer period in Nunavut before usually migrating east of Sahtu and Tlı̄chǫ lands in the fall and winter. Throughout the winter months, the herd usually settles down within both Tłı̄chǫ lands and the Sahtu region. The Sahti ekwò population has experienced a declining trend since its population estimate in spring 2010 at



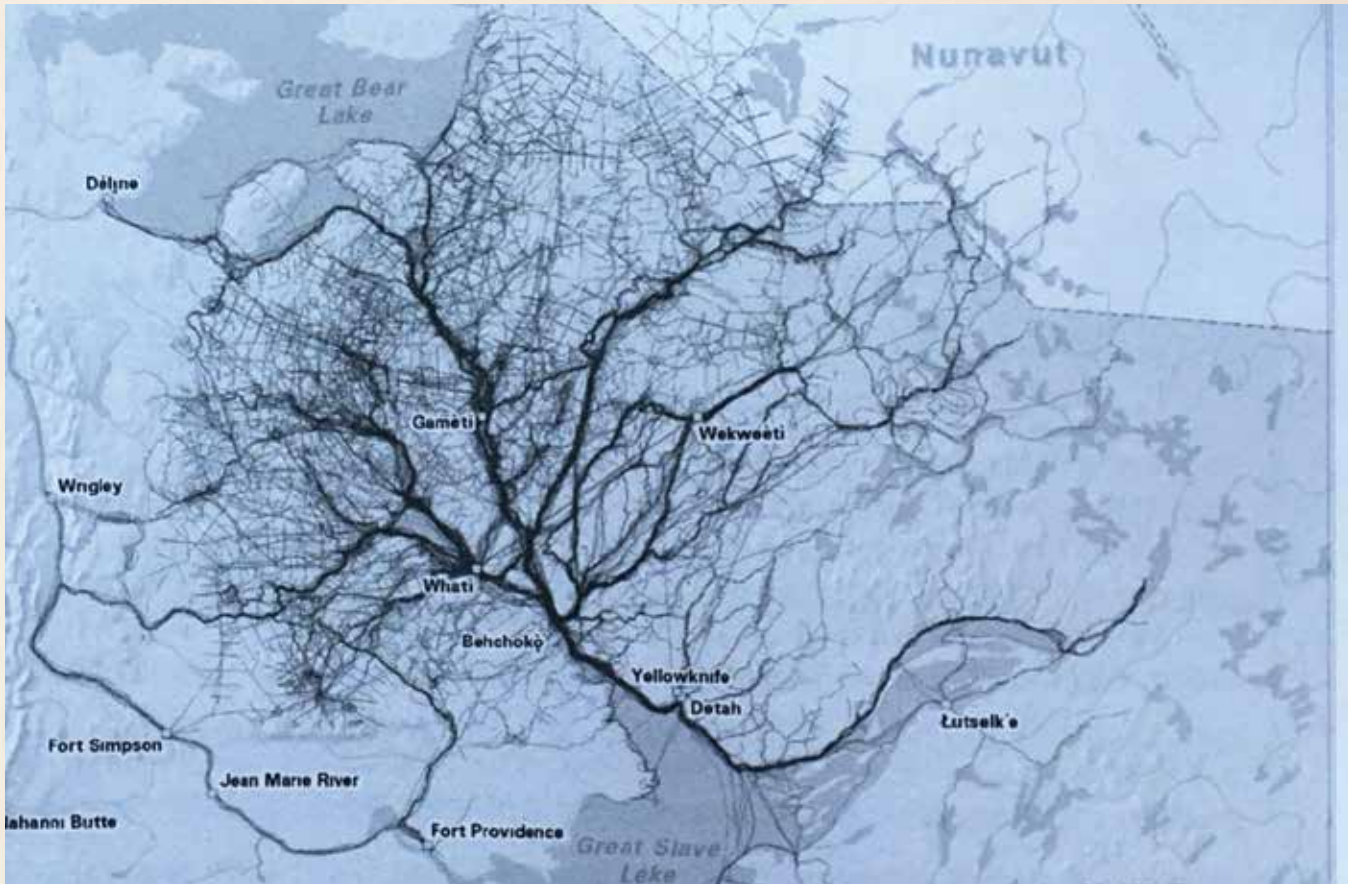


Figure 4: Map showing the numerous traditional harvesting trails, identified by Tłı̨chų Elders, throughout M̄owhì Gogha Dè Nì ı̄ t̄èè.

approximately 98,000, down to 19 000 ekwò in 2018. However, the most recent calving ground survey in June 2021 showed a slight increase in herd population and estimate the total herd to be 23 202 ekwò .

### Management

Since harvesting restrictions were introduced in 2010, the Tłı̨chų people continue to bear the heaviest burden for the decline of the hozì ekwò (barren ground caribou). The total ban on hunting Kokèti ekwò , (since 2015) and tight harvesting restrictions on the Bluenose east ekwò herd continue to this day to have severe impact on the way of life and well being of the people. Since 2009, the Tłı̨chų Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Wek'èezhìi Renewable Resources Board (WRRB) have been working together in

adaptive co-management. Management actions includes a ban on hunting Kokèti ekwò (since 2015) and tight harvesting restrictions on the Sahti ekwò ; an ekwo harvest monitoring program on Mackay Lake, and a diga (wolf) harvest program to help the Kokèti ekwò recover. The Tłı̨chų Government has been monitoring the state of Kokèti ekwò on its summer range at Kokèti (Contwoyto lake) since 2016 through the Ekwò Nàxoèhdee K'è (Boots on the Ground) program. These efforts to stop harvesting have placed hardships on the Tłı̨chų , culture, langue and way of life. This sacrifice by Tłı̨chų people reflect a deep respect and commitment to ensuring that ekwò continue to persist and thrive on the land for future generations.

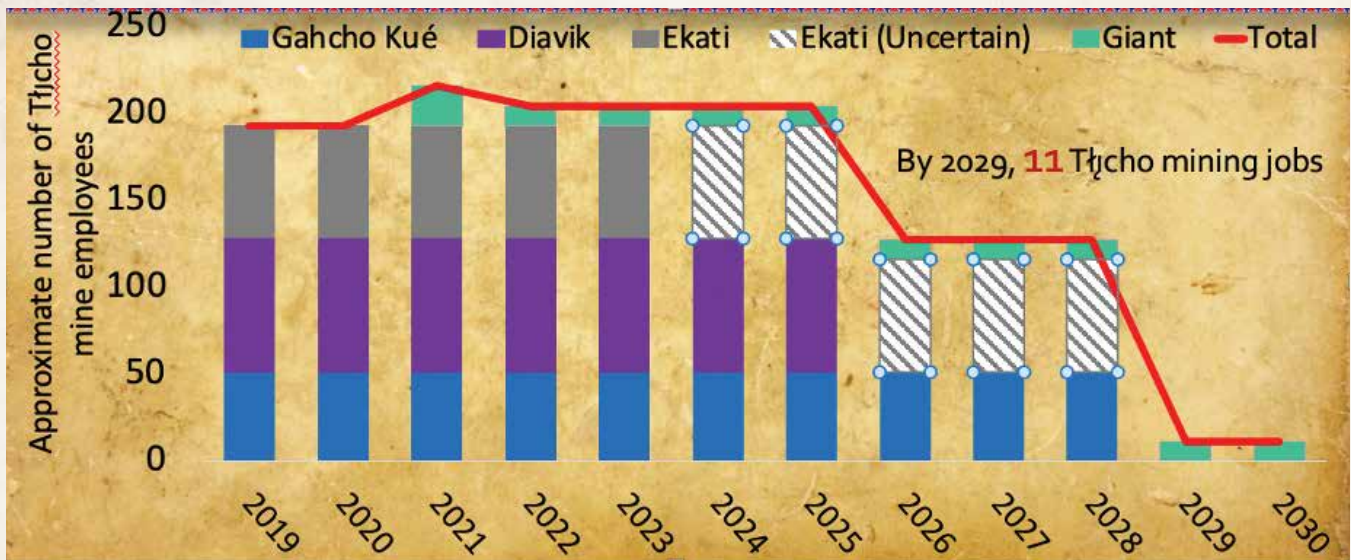


Figure 5: Estimate of Future Tłıchǰ Mine Employment, Firelight Group 2022

## Mine Closure – Impact on Our Economy & People

Since 2007-08, the Tłıchǰ economy has been dependent on the mining industry as a primary source of revenue, however, the life of the diamond mines are quickly coming to an end. There will be short-term remediation projects to reclaim the land that has been mined, but these projects will not require as many employees as the three operating diamond mines. This will result in decreased revenues for the Tłıchǰ Government and a loss of employment opportunities for Tłıchǰ citizens.

The income the Tłıchǰ Government receives from mining activities accounts for between 20% to 28% of its total revenue. These dollars come from resource revenue sharing, impact benefit agreements and income tax which are used to support over 70 programs including cultural promotion programs such as the Imbè program, Trails or Our Ancestors and Hand Games tournaments. They also support education and training programs such as the One Nation Education Student top up program. Starting in 2025, these revenues will begin to decrease.

Lost employment from mining will significantly impact our citizens. The following table records the approximate number of Tłıchǰ citizens employed at the three diamond mines (Ekati, Gahcho Kué and Diavik) and one gold mine (Giant mine) since 2019. It also projects how these numbers will be impacted by the closure of the mines up to the year 2030.

This severe drop in employment will likely result in Tłıchǰ citizens turning to the Tłıchǰ Government for employment or support as the labour market will be flooded with former mine workers starting in 2028-2029. Our citizens tend to be in the skilled, semi-skilled and entry level positions and due to the low education levels of Tłıchǰ citizens, they will be greatly disadvantaged when trying to obtain new employment at other mines and in other industries.





Tessa Macintosh / Tłı̨chǫ Government



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Furthermore, the closure of the mines will disproportionately impact men as they are more dependent on the mines for employment and currently hold the majority of mining jobs. Without a high school diploma and further education, their job prospects will be severely limited. We must prepare for this change to mitigate the negative impacts for our people. We are not alone in this as the mining industry has a critical role to play in supporting our communities and our people to develop the skills needed to fully participate in the northern post-mining economy. Partnership and collaboration are essential to navigate these challenges and to help our communities and citizens move forward.

## Climate Change Resiliency & Adaptation

To address impacts due to climate change we can build resiliency and adapt. Climate resiliency focuses on finding ways to withstand climate change-related changes that are occurring or yet to come. It also includes the capacity to absorb stress and continue to function in the face of external stresses. Adaptation measures relate to modifying decisions, activities and ways of thinking to adjust and respond to negative and positive impacts of a changing climate.

Recently it has been acknowledged that scientific knowledge alone is inadequate in addressing the crisis created by climate change. Our unique Tłı̨chǫ traditional knowledge and expertise are vital sources of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. Enriching climate science with our knowledge can create local community-driven solutions to complex and unpredictable challenges brought by climate change.

# Our Approach

This plan is not static — it needs to be consistently monitored to ensure goals and objectives are being met and the original mission and vision are adhered to. This section outlines our performance measurement: how we will track and report our progress and how we will continually receive feedback to ensure our intentions and actions reflect the needs and aspirations of our citizens.

## “Nàdàa Gètsèti” ... Looking Forward

“Nàdàa Gètsèti” or ... Looking Forward is the process for creating and managing our strategic planning framework. The strategic framework contains our vision, mission, guiding principles, and intentions.

A key component Nàdàa Gètsèti is the strategy for implementing and monitoring progress on our objectives and keeping our citizens, leadership, management, and staff informed and engaged. Looking forward and following through guarantees resources are allocated appropriately and work is completed as intended. All this ensures our citizens, leadership and staff are aware of the government’s investment in achieving our goals and objectives.

## The Roles of Management and Staff

The work of implementing our strategic intentions begins with the government’s management and staff through the creation of operational (work) plans. These operational plans answer the question, “How do we implement the strategic intentions of the government?” Each director determines the most effective organizational design for their department and formulates actions plans through the production of departmental operational plans that detail the necessary actions to achieve the Tłchq Government’s objectives. These plans should include strategies and milestones, as well as consider the potential threats/objections/obstacles that may be faced and what they will try to do to overcome these hurdles.

Figure 1: Departmental Operational Planning





Staff and management document the progress made by their department in implementing their departmental plans in the quarterly reports.

## The Role of the Chief’s Executive Council

The Chief’s Executive Council monitors the performance of the government through policy development, the implementation of Tłchq laws and by monitoring each department’s operational plans. Through effective government-to-government relationships with other peoples and a deep connection to our communities they ensure that the activities outlined in the strategic intentions take into consideration the needs, wants and desires of the Tłchq people while respecting the interests of other peoples.

## The Role of the Tłchq Assembly

The Assembly gives voice to the Tłchq Nation’s expectations and answers the questions: “What do we do as a government?” and “What are our strategic intentions?”

Bi-annual reports provided to the Assembly allow them to monitor progress in achieving the Government’s strategic intentions. They review the intentions, take into consideration external factors and trends, and give a voice to the Tłchq people. They grant the Chief’s Executive Council and the administration the power to move forward through the approval of the annual budget, and laws and the validation of the strategic intentions.

## The Role of Tłchq Citizens

The Annual Report and updates given at the Tłchq Annual Gathering assist in reviewing our progress and as necessary making changes to our intentions and strategies. Reporting at the Annual Gathering provides the administration the opportunity to account for outcomes and indicators of performance. It also allows for communication and feedback from our citizens, which in turn, will be used to shape existing intentions and plans and create new ones.



Figure 2: Reporting and Accountability Flow Chart

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Zoe, John B. “Presentation on the Tłıchǫ Cosmology” Lecture, Strategic Intentions Development Workshop – Tłıchǫ Government Administration, Yellowknife, March 22-23, 2022.
- <sup>2</sup> Statistical data in this section, except as otherwise noted, is taken from a presentation by Vishni Peeris. Vishni Peeris. “Tłıchǫ Socio-Economic Statistics” Lecture, Strategic Intentions Development Workshop – Tłıchǫ Assembly, Yellowknife, April 13, 2022.
- <sup>3</sup> NWT Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Activity. <https://www.statsnwt.ca/labour-income/labour-force-activity/>. Accessed May 24, 2022.
- <sup>4</sup> NWT Bureau of Statistics, Numebr of High School Graduates and Rates. <https://www.statsnwt.ca/education/high-school-graduates/index.html>. Accessed May 24, 2022.
- <sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas. Accessed June 8, 2022  
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- <sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0064-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, police services in the Territories, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006401> Accessed June 8, 2022
- <sup>8</sup> Brendan Burke. News article. “83 per cent of inmates in NWT are Indigenous.” NWT News North, January 24, 2020. <https://nns1.com/nwtnewsnorth/83-per-cent-of-inmates-in-nwt-are-indigenous/>. Accessed June 8, 2022.
- <sup>9</sup> Huberman, Y., Beckers, J., Brett, R., Castilla, G., Errington, R., Fraser-Reid., E.C., Goodsman, D., Hogg, E.H., Metsaranta, J., Neilson, E., Olesinski, J., Parisien, M.A., Price, D, Ramsfield,. The state of Northwest Territories forests in the wake of climate change. Canadian Forest Service Publications. Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service Northern Forestry Centre, Edmonton, AB. <https://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/publications?id=40703> [Accessed May 26, 2022], 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> Walker, Xanthe J., Brendan M. Rogers, Jennifer L. Baltzer, Steven G. Cumming, Nicola J. Day, Scott J. Goetz, Jill F. Johnstone, Edward A. G. Schuur, Merritt R. Turetsky, and Michelle C. Mack. “Cross-scale Controls on Carbon Emissions from Boreal Forest Megafires.” *Global change biology* 24, no. 9 (2018): 4251–4265.
- <sup>11</sup> Firelight Group, “Northern Economies: Summary of Mineral Dependance and implications for education employment, and cultural programs” Lecture, Strategic Intentions Development Workshop – Tłıchǫ Assembly April 13, 2022.



# Notes

A series of horizontal dashed lines intended for taking notes, occupying the majority of the page.

# Notes

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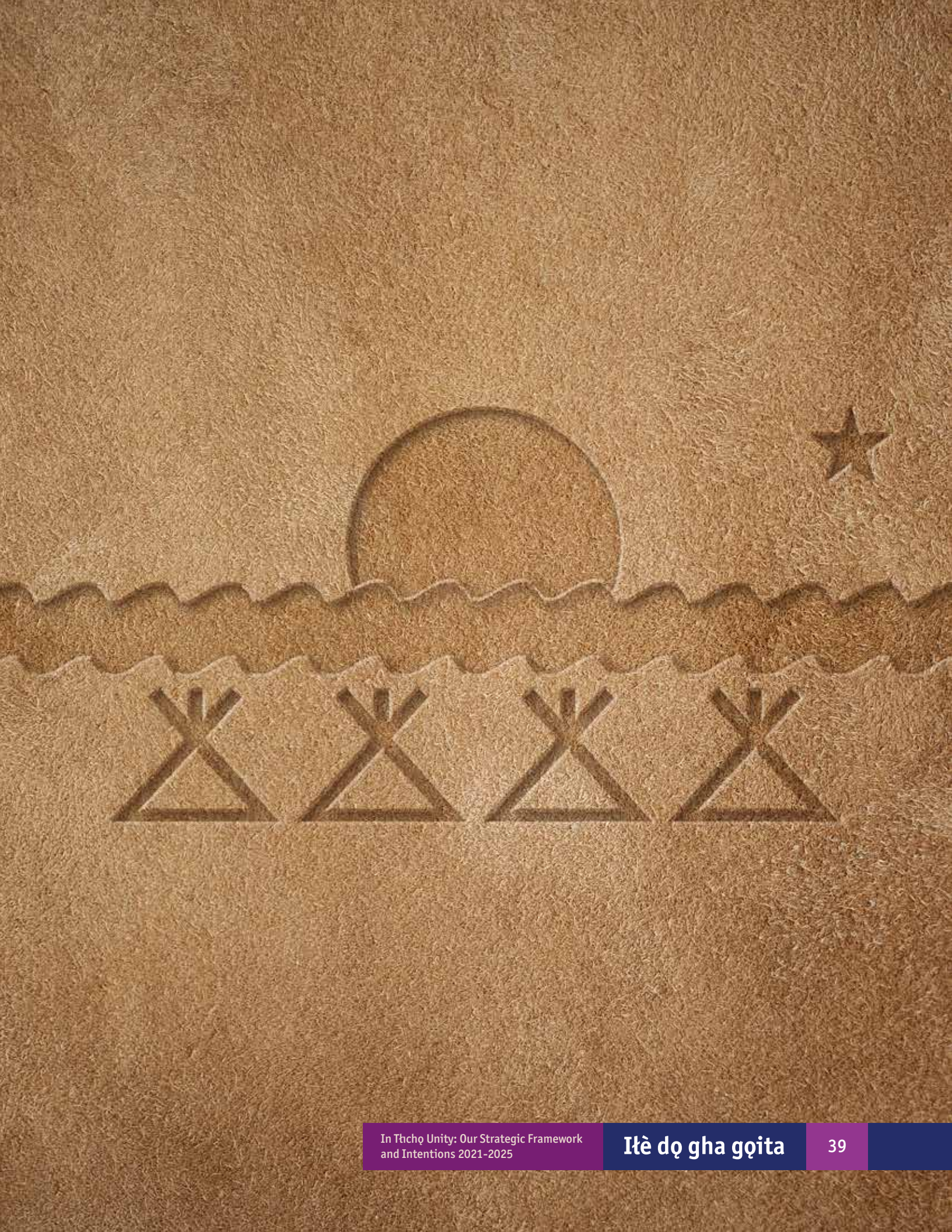
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