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Wednesday 19 November 2014

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Mercredi 19 novembre 2014

**Standing Committee on
Public Accounts**

2013 Annual Report,
Auditor General:

Ministry of Community
and Social Services

Ministry of Citizenship,
Immigration
and International Trade

**Comité permanent des
comptes publics**

Rapport annuel 2013,
vérificateur général :

Ministère des Services sociaux
et communautaires

Ministère des Affaires civiques,
de l'Immigration
et du Commerce international

Chair: Ernie Hardeman
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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Wednesday 19 November 2014

Mercredi 19 novembre 2014

The committee met at 1234 in room 151, following a closed session.

2013 ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

Consideration of section 3.10, violence against women.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We call the meeting to order. I thank the deputations for already being ready at the table to do business. Obviously, I was a little worried that we would be losing time because I was late eating, but now, at least, you were moving right along anyway. So we do want to thank you for being here, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Rather than go through the whole introduction, we would just ask you to start the presentation, maybe 20 minutes for the presentation, and then, hopefully, we can start the rotation and have people ask questions. So you can keep that in mind. With that, if you would just introduce yourself for Hansard when you start to speak.

Again, thank you very much for being here, and we'll get on with our meeting.

Mr. Chisanga Puta-Chekwe: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My name is Chisanga Puta-Chekwe. I am the Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Before I begin, I would seek your permission to leave shortly after my presentation, because I need to be at cabinet to support my minister on another matter. I don't know if that's acceptable.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Very good. Thank you.

Mr. Chisanga Puta-Chekwe: Thank you very much.

Chair, I welcome this opportunity to talk to this committee about the important work of the Ontario Women's Directorate in ending violence against women. This is an important issue to all Ontarians.

In recent weeks, violence against women has dominated media and public discourse, but it remains a com-

plex issue that crosses all boundaries, and no province, nor country, has come up with a magic solution to end it once and for all. While progress is being made, turning around entrenched attitudes and behaviour takes time, and there is much more to be done.

In Ontario, the government is focused on working with community partners and other government ministries to end violence against women. I would now like to address the auditor's sole recommendation: that the Ontario Women's Directorate ensure that commitments within action plans have measurable goals and targets, and that progress is regularly assessed and reported.

As you can see from your table, the Ontario Women's Directorate has already taken several steps to measure the effectiveness of our action plans, and more are underway. For example, the Ontario Women's Directorate has implemented province-wide training for 37,000 front-line workers to support survivors of domestic violence. More than nine in 10 of the people receiving training report that they are better able to do their jobs as a result of this intervention.

The Ontario Women's Directorate has also supported the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign in more than 200 Ontario communities. This campaign has been cited by the coroner's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee as an important initiative for the prevention of domestic violence.

I would also highlight the work that is underway with Statistics Canada to address the limitations of its general social survey. This is the main statistical source for measuring reductions in violence against women, and we are working hard to get better data from it. The Ontario Women's Directorate is currently exploring whether to commission an even larger sample in the next general social survey that would enable analysis of impacts within different regions of the province and a wider range of population groups. This would give us a much more informative baseline for analysis of the effectiveness of our programs.

We continue to focus on those areas of society where violence against women seems to be in greater prevalence. We know, for example, that aboriginal women and girls are particularly at risk. Ontario is investing \$2 million over the next two years to support the work of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women, a broad coalition of five aboriginal organizations and 10 government ministries working together to end violence against aboriginal women and girls. As

well, the Premier and aboriginal organizations are calling on the federal government to establish a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Activity is also underway to prevent sexual violence in another high-risk group—university- and college-aged women—and to measure its prevalence. We know that these young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. Many are living away from home for the first time and facing entirely new social circumstances.

The Ontario Women's Directorate has created a resource guide to support Ontario's colleges and universities in their ongoing efforts to prevent sexual violence. Many of them are undertaking campaigns themselves. The University of Ottawa, for example, is conducting a campus climate survey of 5,000 students that will be invaluable in measuring attitudes and experiences of harassment and violence on campus, and changes over time.

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The Ontario Women's Directorate has also asked involved ministries to report on their progress in meeting their commitments and targets. As you can see again from the table provided, they are doing exactly that.

I believe all of these initiatives will contribute to the success of our programs to end violence against women, and I thank the committee once again for its time today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: I'll speak next. Good afternoon. I'm Bohodar Rubashewsky. I'm the interim Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services. I'm pleased to discuss the Auditor General's recommendations on our ministry's violence against women services.

With me from MCSS are Karen Chan, assistant deputy minister, community and developmental services, and Erin Hannah, acting assistant deputy minister of social policy development.

I want to start by thanking the Auditor General and her staff. The ministry welcomes her recommendations, and I'm confident that our response will help to strengthen the delivery, oversight and overall effectiveness of our violence against women services.

These programs are critical to the safety and security of tens of thousands of women and their children every year. They reflect an integrated system of community services designed to meet the diverse needs of women and children.

A key component of this system is the 96 emergency shelters we fund, which provide just over 2,000 beds for women in crisis. These shelters supported approximately 10,700 women and 7,400 children in 2013-14.

In addition to providing a place to live, shelters provide crisis phone counselling and safety planning, as well as information on rights, options and available services to help women manage an immediate crisis.

Last year, we also funded 177 counselling agencies that helped 45,300 women and 4,400 children; 64 agencies to deliver the Child Witness Program that provided support to 2,700 women and 4,900 children; and 127 community agencies to deliver the Transitional and

Housing Support Program that helped 20,300 women connect with housing, counselling, job training and other supports.

Our provincial crisis lines are often the first step toward a new life for many women who are suffering abuse. These include the Assaulted Women's Helpline, which serves people in many languages as well as English; Fem'aide, the province-wide French-language line; and Talk4Healing, Ontario's aboriginal women's help line, an essential lifeline for aboriginal women in northern and remote communities. Last year, these lines received 53,900 calls from victims of domestic violence who were in urgent need of information and referral to appropriate services through provincial crisis lines, and about 2,450 calls came into Talk4Healing.

We also support 48 domestic violence community coordinating committees across the province, to improve the community response to domestic violence and women abuse. Committee members include abuse survivors, along with representatives from the VAW, justice, health and education sectors. In total, in 2013-14, the ministry invested \$145 million into these services, all aimed at helping support women who are victims of violence, and their children.

The 2014 budget increases this investment with \$14.5 million in new funding over three years to support the agencies and their front-line workers who are so critical in a woman's journey to safety.

I'd now like to turn more specifically to the Auditor General's recommendations. The ministry recognizes the importance of balancing accountability with the need for women's shelters to be reasonably autonomous in carrying out their day-to-day responsibilities and responding to the distinct needs of their communities.

I appreciate the Auditor General's recommendation to establish quality standards for shelter services and to regularly monitor agency performance against standards. It's important for VAW shelters to provide consistent services for women and children across the province.

The ministry is working on developing a quality standards manual for shelters, which will include standards on Canadian police information centre checks. More importantly, we're developing instructions for regional office staff on regularly monitoring women's shelters to assess compliance with quality standards.

The Auditor General identified that the data gathered by the ministry should allow for effective analysis of service costs and the identification of service gaps. The Auditor General also recommended that the ministry should do periodic spot-checks to ensure the accuracy of agency-reported data.

The ministry's transfer payment budget package includes all the tools and information required for agency budget submissions, contracting and reporting. We update this package annually. In the past three years, there have been numerous changes to streamline processes, increase ease of use and build in functions that improve data integrity.

Further to the 2013 audit, the ministry made significant enhancements to the transfer payment budget

package to strengthen accountability. We now have standardized expenditure categories and additional information on staffing costs that allow us to review and analyze service costs. We're planning more changes to further enhance data accuracy for the 2015-16 budget package.

We've also launched a business intelligence project to strengthen data integrity and analytical capacity, allowing for more effective operational oversight in decision-making. Full implementation is planned for 2015-16.

The Auditor General recommended that the ministry develop ways to increase the response rate for the VAW client satisfaction survey, and to examine the results by the service provided, whether that is emergency shelter, counselling or transitional housing and support.

In May 2014, the ministry revised and implemented a new survey, in consultation with the VAW sector, so that we can understand women's level of satisfaction with the services they received. VAW agencies can now offer incentives to clients for completing the surveys. We hope that this will encourage more people to complete the survey and provide better results. We will monitor whether this promotes an increase in the survey response rate and continue to look at other options to improve the response rate while respecting personal choice.

The Auditor General also recommended that the ministry implement a plan to address safety and security issues identified in our 2009 building condition assessment. Over the past five years, we've provided more than \$32 million to VAW agencies in capital funding, including for safety and security projects. This year, we've committed a further \$800,000.

We acknowledge that we need to understand the service pressures of VAW agencies, and whether women and children are receiving the services they need. The Auditor General recommended that agencies be required to maintain wait-lists for their services. Additionally, she recommended that the ministry determine whether women who requested VAW services and were referred elsewhere actually received the needed service.

I want to be clear that women sometimes are referred to more appropriate services, such as mental health and addiction services, hospitals, aboriginal-specific services, legal aid or child protection. Referrals do not, per se, mean a lack of capacity within a specific agency.

We have been collecting data on the number of women waiting for VAW services since 2013. The revised VAW client satisfaction survey is a starting point as it now collects information about wait times and clients' level of satisfaction with the amount of time they waited to receive service.

In regards to the Auditor General's recommendations about analyzing agency costs and variances across service providers, we expect that our business intelligence project will greatly enhance our ability to conduct comparative analyses of funding and service costs. We're customizing tools and processes for each program area, including our VAW programs, to allow for more effective review and analysis of financial and service

data information. We expect this initiative will allow us to more readily identify and follow up on variances.

We appreciate the Auditor General's recommendations related to improving service planning and coordination of supports for abused women and their children. This is a key goal of our VAW programs.

The services we fund provide a continuity of community support. At the local level, VAW agencies have protocols and procedures for how they work together to support the needs of women and children. MCSS provides support for various coordination mechanisms, including the Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees, as well as children's aid society/VAW collaboration committees and service system planning between regional offices and VAW agencies. The ministry recognizes that effective information sharing can help improve services, and so we're working to find ways to better report on the outcomes of these committees.

The VAW service system is also made up of services funded by other ministries such as the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ministry of the Attorney General. MCSS regularly engages in discussions with partner ministries on the government-wide response to preventing violence against women.

The Auditor General recommended that the ministry establish performance measures, targets and benchmarks to determine how well we're doing in enhancing service coordination. The ministry's focus for 2015 is on better using our VAW transfer payment data. Once this is done, we'll review our VAW program objectives, performance measures, and possible targets and benchmarks.

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The Auditor General further recommended the ministry compare pertinent results for Ontario from Statistics Canada's biannual transition home survey and compare these to past performance and to results in other jurisdictions. Work is under way to review data elements and performance measures in our VAW programs and make the changes we need to ensure that the data being collected is of value and applicable performance measures are in place. We're currently gathering more detailed data from the transition home survey and other relevant sources to improve our understanding of VAW services in Ontario as compared to other jurisdictions.

Once again, I'd like to acknowledge the important work of the Auditor General and the role she plays in ensuring that the government is accountable and that public funds are used as effectively as possible. We've already taken steps in response to the recommendations, and we will continue to work to improve and strengthen our VAW programs to ensure the best possible supports for women and their children.

We'll now be pleased to provide members of the committee with any additional information you need and respond to your questions.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much for your presentation. We will now start with the official opposition, and we'll rotate in 20-minute intervals for questions. Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have one question: Is it possible to use a portion of the 20 minutes and pick it up on the next round?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): That's going to be very difficult.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Okay. Well, I just wanted to clarify.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): It's hard to keep track because we're going to keep going around, so I don't know when you would make up the time.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Okay. All right.

Thank you very much for coming. I certainly appreciate the light you have been able to shed on some of the issues that, quite frankly, for an MPP, are really important, because you're talking about the most vulnerable, I would argue, group in our communities. One of the things that we hear is certainly the frustrations that people have, the kind of opportunities that seem to be there for somebody else but not for them. Do they fit into a category? Are they with or without children? There are just a number of things that serve, to the individual who needs that help, obviously, to be a bit confusing.

I wanted to focus my questions on some of the issues that you alluded to a moment ago, but before I do, I want to just get a sense of the macro picture, if you like. You are charged with the creation of program policies and procedures. You have approximately 200 not-for-profits. Now, that seems to me to be a very tall order, to deal with 200 not-for-profits, and you're responsible for program policies and procedures. My concern is the question around equity, the question around measures, because we're not talking about how many widgets get produced on a certain day; we're talking about how effective you are in changing the course of life for both women and children. So it seems to me that in that kind of a challenge that you have, those qualitative objectives are the things that need to be measured.

I think that when you talk to people that are in one of these agencies or in a like agency, they are conscious of administrative time—you know, a "When do I get my front-line money?" kind of thing. I think that's a fair question to ask. Certainly, you have referenced some of the measures that you've taken, but I think historically, the problem has centred around being fiscally accountable. We all agree with that as kind of a base. But your area is a human services area, and human services areas don't get solved just on the basis of money. So one of the things that I was looking for in this presentation was the question of: Okay, so you've got program policies and procedures in place, but where are the details? Where is the story that I can go home with that says, "This is a measurable outcome. This is what makes this organization stand above everybody else"?

In today's world, when we're talking about deliverables and we're talking about outcomes—I mean, we all know the lingo—the question of how you make measurable standards in the human services, to me, is the challenge. Obviously, the auditor's report indicates that there has instead been a reaction to, "Well, we've done

this, and we have so many groups that do that." You make reference to the question of surveys. Well, in our document, we know that 4% of the people—that's not a good enough measure; 4% isn't good enough. Do they understand what has been asked of them? Do they understand that this isn't an invasion of privacy? This is quality control. Are we getting the value for the money that we spent?

So my questions, then, really focus on the issue around the performance measures. When you have 200 not-for-profits—and you have a complication here that I'm going to ask you to uncomplicate for me, and that is the role of the women's directorate coming out of a different ministry than the MCSS, where most of these functions would normally be thought of as the appropriate place for them. I think that there would be people that would have trouble figuring that one out.

The other thing that they would have trouble with is, for instance, if a woman goes to a shelter and it's full, we, as I understand it, don't have any idea where she goes or what happens after that. What happens if she goes to one and then, for whatever reason, moves on? Again, being able to identify the percentage of occupation of the shelter, whether there is an adequate alternative—these are the kinds of things. The service delivery, frankly, obligates the funder to be able to demonstrate that there is value for money, that you have measurable outcomes and you're able to see—for instance, you have identified the \$60 million that went for other supportive services, but do we know how well they're doing? We can keep track of people coming to a shelter and staying or not staying, but if someone has an hour of counselling, how well are we able to establish that that was an hour well spent for that person?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Ms. Munro, you must have misunderstood me. You get the 20 minutes—we can't split that—but you can split your questions up so we get an opportunity to get answers back.

Mrs. Julia Munro: So I don't have to do them all at once?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I'm sorry to interrupt in that way, but I know you have put a number of questions, and it would be quite helpful in our deliberations to get answers to those as we move forward in the study.

Mrs. Julia Munro: So I should pause for a moment; is that what you're saying? Okay. I'll pause.

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: Ms. Munro, thank you. I'll try to, with my colleagues from MCSS and OWD, kind of sequentially answer some of the questions.

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First of all, your comment about measurable service and value for money: In any kind of transfer payment governance process, quantitative measurement obviously is very important. We do undertake not just a value-for-money measurement—although those measures are there; we have to ensure that, on an objective basis, there is consistency of funding but also that return on investment, the services provided for the investment made, is meas-

ured, because that, to a great extent, measures quality as well. How effective is that service with the investment made? But we also measure a variety of other, call it, outputs. We have 21 of what we call service data elements that we measure. They range from individuals served to the individuals who receive service in a shelter having safety plans, because that is an essential expectation that we have of our VAW agencies: that clients who are served by them also have a service plan established and worked out with them to ensure that there is a plan going forward. We have different measures that relate—you're right, it's easier to measure in shelters because beds are being occupied, but we also have measures for counselling: the number of interactions, the number of group sessions and the like.

Qualitative measurement comes in two ways. One is the client satisfaction survey. I can't speak to the design of the survey previously, but certainly the current survey—last year, I believe, in 2013, we had 4,200 surveys completed when the Auditor General undertook the audit. I think it was 3,200. So that is a good sign. I can't speak to the participation rate and how that was calculated, but we make it clear, first of all, that the survey is entirely confidential. We have expanded the questions to really try to get a handle on how women were referred to the agency; who referred them to the agency, whether it was a doctor, a hospital, the justice system; across the range of services that they received from the agency, be it shelter or counselling, how satisfied they were—we have a range that we ask them to speak to; whether they felt that their concerns were understood; and whether they felt, coming out of this experience, that they were safer.

So qualitative measurement from the client's perspective occurs, but also, it is done by the staff that we have in the regions who interact with the agencies. They rely to a large extent on quantitative data, the data that they receive from quantitative sources, but they also spend a lot of time actually interacting with the agencies—the executive directors, their program directors—assessing, on a qualitative basis, based on their experience and looking at the agencies that they have responsibility for in a region or a community, what their views on that service are and interacting with the agencies to try to improve those services.

I don't know, Karen, if you have anything to add to these and other questions.

Ms. Karen Chan: Yes, maybe I can pick up some of the other questions. I'll try. I've got a few notes here. It's Karen Chan.

You talked about the fact that it's really hard for individuals to figure out where to go and what to do. I think it's important to note that while we're focusing on the shelters, and this audit focused on the shelters, in fact, many, many people who are victims of abuse come forward for some of the other kinds of services. Some people don't come to shelters, so it's really important to think about the counselling services that were provided over the years, the supports for transitional housing, the supports for children as they recover from witnessing

abuse, and our crisis lines that are very, very, active. It's important to note that women who've been abused cross all walks of life. They cross all cultures. They cross all income brackets. Different people have different needs depending on their life situation. I know the women's directorate can probably speak a little bit more to that when I'm done, around how we actually work together to try to link the services, and how important that is.

That's why the range of services that we've been able to develop are absolutely key to actually supporting women in our communities. And it's not just those services. What the counselling services and/or the shelter try to do is to then provide the additional services that individuals and families may need beyond that. They may need supports for employment programs. They may need supports for housing. They may need child care. They may need social assistance. They may need legal aid, or supports to get their child into—maybe they need to change schools. So all of those kinds of needs, people think about those, and the counsellors, the crisis lines or the shelters are very, very conscious of that as they move forward, looking at the individual and the family and all of their needs. So that's, I think, important.

You talked about that it's hard to measure those kinds of things, and it is. It really is, because every individual is different. I thought that was an important point to bring together, in that we're finding that more and more of our services are to the broader range of families and individuals, not just those folks who actually come into our shelters.

I don't know whether the folks from OWD wanted to add a little bit more about that.

Ms. Juanita Dobson: Sure. Hello, I'm Juanita Dobson. I'm the assistant deputy minister for the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. I have Susan Seaby here with me, who is the executive director of the Ontario Women's Directorate.

I would echo what's been said already in terms of the work being done broadly. I think, for the Ontario Women's Directorate, looking at this as complex issues involving a number of ministries, and our role, primarily around being the women's directorate and focusing on women's issues with our minister, certainly providing coordination across ministries, that sort of activity—a whole-of-government approach, because of the complexity and the number of services that need to be linked together, but also taking a strong role in public education and awareness, because we do believe that certainly starting with prevention is very important.

We are talking a lot about the service, but we want to back up a little on prevention. We know that public education and information need to be repeated over the long term. We have a number of relationships with community organizations around providing public education campaigns that are delivered at a local level, but in a number of domains, some focusing on men and boys, some focusing on young women. We talked a little bit—our deputy did—about colleges and universities as a real focus for us. That is about the prevention aspect, and

helping to equip young women, girls, boys and men around this issue. So in terms of that relationship and the work that we do, we're quite engaged.

We do have a number of evaluations that we've been doing on those public education campaigns. We can talk about those now or later, but there's a number of surveys we've been doing that have shown several positive impacts in terms of those campaigns. And the work that we've been doing, primarily with the aboriginal community—there has been a real focus, obviously, in the last little while in that area, ensuring that we've got good information, and good campaigns, supports and partnerships.

I don't know, Susan, if you wanted to add anything to that.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Well, thank you—

Ms. Juanita Dobson: We're good? Okay.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. That concludes the first 20 minutes.

Ms. Campbell?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you. I wanted to start by thanking the Auditor General for her excellent report that sought to determine what the government has in place to meet the needs of abused women and their children, and which also reports on the effectiveness of services and initiatives the government has implemented to address this very important issue.

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In her report, the Auditor General identified a number of gaps, shortcomings and, at times, a complete failure to clearly indicate the status of commitments. Just a brief overview: Some of the themes that we saw in this report, as we're all aware, are that the government doesn't seem to know how effective its programs are; the government doesn't seem to know how badly these programs are needed, what the quality of the services provided by the funding agencies is or how to improve its programs; and the government also doesn't know how many of the 506 security and safety issues the shelters have ever addressed or whether they've been completed. These are very serious issues that have been raised. I think, overall, the report highlighted that, as the Auditor General had said this morning, neither the action plans nor their commitments within the action plans had measurable outcomes.

I'd like to focus on a few key recommendations in the short time that I have with the ministry officials today. I certainly appreciate you coming to this committee and providing MPPs with an opportunity to weigh in on this very important issue.

I wanted to start by talking about meeting demand for services in that particular area of the report. The Auditor General mentions that the MCSS is lacking information to determine unmet demand and to allocate resources. It's unknown how many women are turned away or if they are ultimately helped, and the auditor recommends maintaining wait-list information for services, and having better inter-agency networks to communicate need and to

determine whether or not women are ultimately helped elsewhere.

This is a problem that we've certainly seen across the north, especially in the northwest. It's often the case that shelters are either over capacity, or it's my understanding that these shelters are unable to accommodate some clients, given the cost of receiving those clients. For instance, in my riding of Kenora–Rainy River, it's not uncommon for at least three of our main shelters in Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, and Dryden to face significant costs for bringing women down from Far North communities. A plane ticket, obviously, due to the nature of the circumstances, can't be purchased several days in advance. We're bringing these women down at a cost of several hundred dollars one way. I know that that's been a problem, as I said, not just because of overcapacity, but because of—I mean, ultimately, we're dealing with very small pots of money and small budgets and how much that's going to add to their bottom line. My understanding is, there is a bit of shuffling that happens between some of these shelters in order to kind of preserve that bottom line and make sure that they can make it through to the end of the year and keep their doors open.

My question to the ministry is: What statistics are being kept in the north that would account for some of the home communities of clients? Are you tracking where these clients are coming from, which shelters they're coming from, and what impact that would have on the bottom line of these shelters?

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: I'll ask Karen Chan to provide some details on this.

Ms. Karen Chan: Your questions are good ones, for sure. Certainly as it relates to the north, there are challenging circumstances as it relates to transportation.

I think you'll know about the new crisis line that's been established in the north as a pilot. To all accounts, it's doing absolutely excellent, excellent work. I think it's meeting some of the outcomes and will still grow and develop. That is a place, from what I understand, that we often find people, particularly in the remote areas, where they can actually use the phone and call. That's where they're able to actually set up transportation and bring people in.

I do know for a fact that we have, both through our Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy—because through the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, there are some additional shelters that are funded that are not noted in this auditor's report. It's just a different funding stream, but coordinated and absolutely essential and important, in that in many cases they will provide specifically aboriginal support.

We have provided, through both the strategy and through the VAW funding, additional dollars for travel when it is needed, when people do need to move.

It's always that sensitive piece, because in many cases people would like to stay in their own communities and get the services they need. Oftentimes, the crisis line or the counsellors will work with the women around other kinds of alternatives, because they often don't want to get

on the plane and move. So there is funding, for sure, to help with that, and we do provide additional funding, but oftentimes it's trying to look at what the alternatives are. Is there a friend? Is there a neighbour? Is there a safe place that they can go? So the crisis line has really, really helped in that particular area.

Of course we have, in addition, other shelters in the north. As you pointed out, they do work together. They do coordinate services. We haven't talked about this, and we could talk further about it if you wanted, but there are coordinating committees across the province that have been brought together, and they do exactly what you just said: They actually come together to look at, are there additional needs that we need to serve? How can we collaborate more? How do we collaborate with the broader agencies?

Those are some of the kinds of things that we've been working with in the north as it relates to the northern population, and as it relates to supporting some of the more remote communities in the north. I don't know whether—

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I certainly appreciate that. I just wonder, is there a mechanism, is the ministry tracking some of those statistics—

Ms. Karen Chan: Absolutely.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: —of where these people come from, how many are coming down—

Ms. Karen Chan: Absolutely.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: —okay—and which shelters? So is there a correlation, then, between the number of clients that are coming from these far northern places and what kind of dollars are flowing to these shelters?

Ms. Karen Chan: You're absolutely right, and there is additional funding provided to those shelters where we know they have to provide those kinds of supports. We think we can do a better job on some of the analytics. Absolutely we think we can.

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: If I could add, in that regard, that is one of the areas of development that we've undertaken really over the last year. A lot of our funding—I mean, there are known variations that we took into account historically to fund agencies, but we're taking a deeper approach to understanding what those cost-drivers are. When you look at a cost for a bed, it has to do potentially with transportation costs. It could be staffing costs based on whether it's a particular location or a particular region. So we are asking—balancing the necessity for information with the fact that we don't want information-gathering to be the main line of business for agencies—and getting more information on kind of common elements of information where there may be variation across the province and trying to collect that data and also analyze it in a way that's more effective than has been the case before, and to even display it for our own program development people, being able to really almost look at, and not just use computerized technology, to understand where those variations are.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I just want to say, I agree with you: We don't want the primary purpose of our shelters to be focused on information-gathering. But this informa-

tion that we do gather can help us improve front-line services, and especially as we distribute those services across the province. I suspect that in the north, and especially in the northwest, the costs of delivering some of these services that are very important could be a little higher in maybe other parts of the province. I've just heard from a number of shelters that that's something that they've struggled with.

The other thing I want to talk about is funding and value for money. In the Auditor General's report, she noted that funding that was previously allotted to shelters has been carried over, and it's been basically unquestioned. It becomes kind of like an annualized base funding. There hasn't really been a real, critical analysis of whether that funding was warranted—maybe it might be under, maybe it might be over, depending. She noted a very large spread between some 10-bed shelters receiving \$334,000 a year while others received \$624,000.

1320

Again, when I put my northern hat on, as this makes sense to me and what I'm seeing in my communities, I'm just wondering what information is being collected in the north in particular to determine how shelters receive their base funding.

Ms. Karen Chan: It is true, there is quite a variation in funding. That relates to a few things. I'll tell you what it relates to, and then I'll tell you what it is we're trying to do to actually sort that out so that we understand the full picture.

I think folks know that women's shelters have a history of—when they first started, they were really grassroots, mostly funded through either donations or United Way or those kinds of things. They then moved to being government-funded and being cost-shared. In many, many circumstances, almost exclusively, every shelter has a separate funding stream, and that funding stream comes from donations that people make. It comes from the United Way, it comes from other community agencies, in some cases Kiwanis—all the service clubs that often will fundraise for this, which is really important. It's important because that helps communities take ownership, and ownership of this issue is so important to us actually trying to solve it. It's not just the people in the shelter, and it's not just something that happened to somebody else. It's a community piece that we have to start to own. So that funding piece, that other element, is key to agencies moving forward, but also, I would say, community ownership.

But that complicates things. It complicates the funding, because some communities are better positioned to both have—some have stronger United Ways. Some have stronger service clubs. Some have a donor—I was talking to one shelter that has a donor whose family used the service a long time ago and feels so obligated that they provide very huge donations, quite huge donations, to that community—or a family that has experienced something and recovered. There are a lot of different things at play, so that makes it difficult. That's why it's different.

What are we doing about that? We're starting now to collect data. We've started collecting our data related to

what we fund—here's what we fund and here's what we're getting for what we fund—so that we can actually keep account of that. The deputy has spoken to all the categories that we keep track of on that. We're also starting to collect information on what we don't fund and what's available and those costs. Where, sometimes, some shelters get into difficulty is that maybe some of that other funding starts to get into jeopardy. If we can understand that more, then we can project and maybe support more in the future.

We're trying to collect both sets of data, but they are very diverse—and, I would hazard to guess, will continue to be quite diverse—and, while difficult to understand from an accounting perspective, important from a community ownership perspective.

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: If I could add that we're actually putting an emphasis on northern region agencies over the next couple of years. First of all, we want to ensure that the data that we're receiving from agencies is reliable, accurate and consistent, but we're also trying to gain an understanding of, really, what is that sum total of information that we need to look at and to consider. We need to do this across all of community and social service programs, and in the VAW agency world, across all agencies in the province, but we're starting with the northern region because there are unique characteristics. The agencies themselves, because of their size and scale, may not have the capacity to collect data the way that other agencies may or may not, and we feel that the northern region is a good starting point to really determine what our best practices should be across the province. That is going to be occurring, I think, over the next two years. We'll use that information and those learnings to design a better approach across the province.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you. That's encouraging to hear. Certainly a review, I think, would be warranted.

I've got some other questions about how the money is allocated in the north, if I could continue along with that. Is there one large pot of money that's sort of allocated to the northern region of the province that is then divided up further?

I've just got a few questions. Maybe I'll ask them and then you can respond.

How would this northern pot relate to other areas of the province, if one exists? And how would this base funding be determined? What's been relayed to me by some informal conversations I've had with a variety of people who work in this area is that there's always the perception—and it's the reality, actually—that there's never enough money. Everybody's kind of fighting with one another over this pot of money and everyone's trying to be considerate of what their next nearest shelter is going through in terms of their challenges, but all the while recognizing that they also need a certain amount of money to make their bottom line work. Can you explain how that money is awarded, that base funding?

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: I'll perhaps start and then I'll ask Karen Chan or Erin Hannah, as appropriate, to add more.

In fact, the approach that we take is more bottom-up than top-down. I mean, yes, sure, you're absolutely right; we do start in any given year with an allocation by program. It's determined based on historical need for that program, any changes in government policy that may be occurring and, obviously, fiscal considerations, any fiscal parameters that we have.

But in our transfer payment contracting process, which is really the heart of determining agency allocations, it really starts with a budget proposal from the agencies themselves, where they articulate—and a lot of it is based on historical precedent because, if they are a shelter, they have fixed costs. They have a certain number of beds. That submission, which includes what they are proposing or anticipating to provide in a way of service, whether it's beds occupied or clients served—they provide that to their program supervisors in any given region. Those program supervisors will analyze the data, confirm it, and there will be negotiations that occur to establish the service contract for the year.

Where there are anticipated gaps in service, anticipated needs, it's really within the hands of the region, initially, to determine whether any adjustments are required, but we do have the advantage of being able to look across the entire service system in a region—really, across the province—to be able to see what that picture is.

Karen, if there's anything—

Ms. Karen Chan: Yes, maybe just a couple of things, because I know we just probably have a couple—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Yes, the time is up for this. We'll go around to the government. Ms. Malhi?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: First, I want to thank you all for being here today and for all the hard work that the Women's Directorate puts in, as the PA for women's issues.

My question is about violence against aboriginal women. This has been a distressing topic that has come up quite a bit in Canada, in Ontario and across the country. We've been seeing a lot of important coverage over the past year. With the Idle No More campaign and the push by many to see action on the many murdered or missing aboriginal women across the country, there has been a renewed focus by many on making strides to both make sure that this crime is reduced and hopefully eliminated in the future, as well as having a broader investigation into murdered and missing aboriginal women. Can you please speak to what the Ontario Women's Directorate has done on the topic of violence against aboriginal women?

1330

Ms. Juanita Dobson: Yes, thank you for that question. As you said, there are a number of challenges in the aboriginal community, particularly high prevalence rates for women and children in violence. The government has actually formed a joint working group with five aboriginal partners and ministries across various portfolios that have an interest. We, the Ontario Women's Directorate,

co-chair that with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Some of the five groups that are on the joint working group, in terms of the leadership, are the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Independent First Nations Alliance, the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Chiefs of Ontario.

This working group, being charged with the task of developing a long-term strategy, is hoping to report—the plan is—within the next 18 months, in terms of that long-term strategy. But in the meantime, there are also a number of things we're doing with our aboriginal partners: investing in particular in public education, planning and community-based initiatives that are being led by those aboriginal organizations to prevent violence against aboriginal women and girls, and working very closely with the families and the communities.

For example, some of the public education campaigns are raising awareness of the warning signs and risk factors of domestic violence, and encouraging aboriginal men and boys to speak out against violence. That has been launched. The First Nations' Draw the Line project is also providing public education and raising awareness in First Nations communities about sexual violence, and how bystanders can actually play a role, step up and speak out in supporting survivors.

The Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership program is training aboriginal women to take on leadership roles in their communities because, again, getting at prevention and providing people—empowering them—with the confidence to do that is important.

The Aboriginal Sexual Violence Community Response Initiative is also conducting some research to improve community responses to sexual violence against aboriginal women, and the aboriginal leadership in ending violence against women project is supporting aboriginal partners and the joint working group to deliver on some research, planning and community-based initiatives.

We've also been working on, and have launched, the Talk4Healing helpline for aboriginal women living in northern Ontario, through Comsoc, community and social services, and providing funding to train front-line workers, improving their skills in providing culturally appropriate services to victims, which is very important in the aboriginal community.

We are also supporting national organizations in their call for a federal-government national public inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women, and also the call for a national round table. We're in the planning stages with the national aboriginal organizations and our Ontario partners to do the planning work for a round table with those groups.

When you talk about violence against women in the aboriginal community, there are also a number of things that interconnect with that. We talk about the broader social issues around economic development, training, housing, education, health and child care. These things can't be taken in isolation; many of these things relate to

the violence we see in communities. So, this round table is hoping to talk about a number of those things and how we can work together on some solutions.

On these important issues—the unacceptable high rate of violence in these communities—our Premier and other Premiers have also called for action at the Council of the Federation level. It's time for us to have some greater dialogue at a national level on this, but Ontario is certainly leading in the work we've been doing with this joint working group.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you. I have a second question around violence against women. It's seen as a societal issue as much as an issue of a perpetrator committing a violent act against a victim. It seems that changing public attitudes toward violence against women would be an incredibly important task as well.

I've seen public attitudes change over the years with respect to this issue, especially with respect to domestic violence. The issue was once treated as a private issue, but now it seems that it is seen for what it really is: a crime.

It would be helpful if that kind of change could come for the other issues of violence against women in our society. I was wondering what you were doing to support public education on violence against women.

Ms. Juanita Dobson: On this one, I could go on for a really long time, but I'm going to choose a couple of areas on public education. As you know, and as we talked about, it's a complex issue and deeply rooted in many attitudes, behaviours and so on in our society.

We know that public education is key to changing attitudes. We talked a little earlier about how making that impact means a sustained effort, and continuously investing in public education over the long term—a bit of a comprehensive strategy to address some of the societal norms that perpetuate these harmful behaviours.

The directorate supports several organizations that deliver public education. Some of these, like the White Ribbon Campaign, and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, are engaging men and boys. The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, and Action ontarienne are engaging diverse populations. In particular, we know there are a number of areas where we can do better to reach out, and those are where we're targeting.

These campaigns reflect what we know in terms of best practices in public education—for example, using social marketing strategies and non-blaming messages, equipping those closest to women to be able to identify domestic and sexual violence and to speak up and support victims, and to intervene effectively in the early stages on those things.

These campaigns also challenge commonly held beliefs, myths and stereotypes around violence against women, and engage all of us in the community around that dialogue and encourage developing healthy relationships and the importance of informed consent, in particular, for sexual activity.

These campaigns have been designed using the latest evidence-based research and input from Canadian and international experts. In 2011, for example, the women's directorate held a provincial conference on public education to share best practices and research. A tool kit was developed for this conference, which equips violence-against-women organizations' public education professionals with the knowledge and skills so that they can use this information to develop their own successful campaigns. The tool kit is a core resource now for the public education campaigns that the women's directorate launches and works with our community partners on.

In addition, we do fund a number of professional development and public education activities through the Learning Network, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. This is at Western University, and this is quite an impressive group. The Learning Network hosts a website that also includes resources for professionals, and holds regular knowledge-exchange workshops. We see getting this information out to people and into their hands so they can use it as a very important role for the Ontario Women's Directorate.

In addition to that, we evaluate these programs. It's not just doing these campaigns, but we've also done a number of evaluation exercises. Our transfer payment organizations report back to us on how these campaigns have been effective. We've had some surveys done through Environics, as well as other surveys that have added data that helps us to understand how we can adapt our programs in future and how they've been effective over time.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Mr. Fraser.

Mr. John Fraser: Again, thank you very much for being here today. I have a couple of questions about shelters, because we heard this morning, in reviewing the report, that women and children were turned away. Shelters are a very important part of protecting people who are in distress, and that's a concerning thing. The question has a few parts to it, so I'll try to keep it brief.

How many people are we turning away, and what does "turning away" mean? I know that in my community—and just anecdotally, I would think, as a person working in a service trying to protect an individual, if you were not able to provide assistance, you would try to get somebody else to provide assistance. So I'd like to get an idea of whether you somehow measure that, or if there is a way of measuring that in the system, and whether turn-aways are just simply turn-aways.

I guess the follow-up question to that is, I know that inside competing organizations that are working toward the same goals, there are different levels of collaboration, and they probably vary regionally. I don't know if you have a measurement, or a comment on that, or what the ministry is doing in terms of trying to build some integration or collaboration inside that. I know it's a big question.

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: On the first question, or the first part of your question, Mr. Fraser, maybe I'll start. Karen, you can chime in.

When a woman comes to VAW services, and in particular a shelter, an assessment is conducted on the situation that she is in and what the most appropriate service is. When a woman is in crisis and requires immediate shelter, even if a shelter is over capacity, no client is ever turned away who is in that circumstance. Our agencies have the latitude, even if an individual shelter is over capacity at that time, if the need is immediate, to undertake a temporary placement, in a hotel, even—again, on a highly confidential basis, and on a safe basis. But a bed is found whenever a bed is needed, and that is an expectation that we have of our agencies.

1340

Some of the other services that may be more appropriate, and I think we've referenced them previously, could include counselling; it could be housing, transitional or other housing; it could be referrals to mental health providers; it could be referrals to various justice services.

We do track, and our VAW shelters are required to report on, whether a woman is referred elsewhere because the service is at capacity at that location, or is referred to a more appropriate service. We didn't track that before. We do that now.

Karen, I'm not sure if you have something to add.

Ms. Karen Chan: Sure. Maybe I'll just add a little bit there. I think it's important to note, too, that for every individual who actually comes to a shelter or calls in, where there are some immediate needs, there are safety plans that are developed. That is a requirement that we make, that there is a safety plan for everyone who does come.

It is important to note that some people, some of what would be called "turned away" or "not served"—sometimes a woman might call in, and there might not be capacity at that shelter at that time. They may be offered other shelters in other communities, and they may choose not to take it. They may choose to find an alternative, or they may choose to not come at that moment, because of various needs that they have.

When they've done an assessment, it may be that they need to go to another service, as the deputy has said—maybe a mental health service is more appropriate—and then they may want to come back to that shelter. There are also instances that we know about where someone might not want to share a room or an accommodation, and that might be what is available, and they may choose to wait.

In these cases, it is important to note that if we've done a safety assessment and someone is at risk, they will be dealt with. The person will talk to them about their own safety concerns and they will be offered support. In some cases, we know that people are actually housed in hotels when the need is immediate and there is not the service provision in there.

We do expect, when there are safety concerns and when the woman needs and wants services at that moment, that they are found a place.

Mr. John Fraser: I don't want to miss the question on collaboration. How much time? Five minutes? Okay.

Before we get to collaboration, just in terms of getting back to measuring, you have a large number that says, “We had 15,000 turn-downs.” The other thing that I hear is, “We turn them down, but then we find them help. Nobody goes without getting help.”

To measure the effectiveness of the way the organizations work, are you measuring referrals? Are you measuring expenditures? Like, if you’re a more expensive cost—there would be a greater cost to hoteling somebody.

Ms. Karen Chan: As far as measuring, we do measure people more discretely than we did. We did appreciate the Auditor General’s report and some of those comments, because we didn’t have the discreteness. So we did change our requirements, and we now do know women who were referred to more appropriate services, in actual fact: In 2012-13, more than 11,700 people were referred to more appropriate services. Again, that comes back to the fact that they might have needed a mental health service; they might have needed some other kinds of services when they came in. The good news is, they’re calling. The good news is, they’re coming.

There were about 14,000 women who were referred elsewhere due to capacity. So they were able to get some additional services across the province.

Mr. John Fraser: So I guess just in terms of the assurance that everybody gets referred and gets service, would it be fair to characterize it to say that those 14,000 individuals got service? Is there a way of measuring that? Or is there a way of—I don’t want to say it in the general sense, but you see what I’m getting to.

Ms. Karen Chan: We exactly do. That is a complication for two reasons, and let me—quickly, because I know you’re running out of time. One is the confidentiality of the situation in tracking where people are going. That’s a concern for women and women’s shelters.

The other one is really around, to be honest, being able to do it from the agency perspective, being able to say, “Mrs. Smith went here and then went here for those kinds of additional referred services.” We’re looking at mechanisms to try to figure out how best to do that, and we do have what we call a data group that actually meets with the shelters to try to figure out, how better can we say that “Mrs. Smith ended up here”? We can be assured that if the individual, if the woman, needs service immediately, that does happen. But what doesn’t happen is where they’re tracked after that.

Mr. John Fraser: I do believe that people do the best they can to serve the individuals in front of them. I guess the question goes back to: Are we putting our money in the right spot when we do that? So that’s part of the measurement. Are we spending a bit more money than we—because I think what you’re saying goes to collaboration, which was the second part of my question, and I don’t want to lose that, because we’ve got three minutes left.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: One minute left. One minute on collaboration, folks.

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: In terms of collaboration, there are really two mechanisms—one that I spoke to in my opening comments: the domestic violence community coordinating committees. Also a very important one, and I think I may have mentioned it in my opening comments as well, is the children’s aid society-VAW collaboration agreements, which are really important, because obviously children are as much victims of domestic violence as women are. Having that interaction between child protection agencies and VAW services so that the children are as cared for, if I could say, as the women is very important to us.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We’ll now start the second round.

If I could, just before we start, remind primarily the committee, but the deputants too, that this is a review of the auditor’s report. So if we could make sure we focus on the report and the challenges that the auditor found, and if the panel could kind of keep the answers to what you are doing about the problems that are there. I’m not directing what your questions should be, but I think it would be more helpful for the—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You were the only one who was right on the money.

Interjections.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: How much time do we have?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): We have just over 15 minutes per caucus.

Ms. Scott.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you very much for appearing here today. It’s complicated, as you have set out. There are many factors involved. Confidentiality is one. To try to continue what Mr. Fraser had brought forward, we’re trying to track where the money is being spent in the programs delivered.

We have boards for each of the shelters. Is there any way—and maybe you’ve addressed it and I’ve missed it earlier—how you see where maybe best practices are followed: if my women’s shelter, for example, has a better success rate, in a way? It goes back to tracking and it goes back to best practices that we can share.

1350

In a sense, how does the ministry work with the boards of these shelters? Does anyone actually track recidivism? How successful are these programs? If you can summarize as best you can, because we don’t have a whole lot of time, on some of those, because I do have a couple of more questions after that, please.

Ms. Karen Chan: Okay, so I’ll try to be quick in my answers.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes. It’s all kind of tied in together.

Ms. Karen Chan: I think we started on that question. It certainly does relate to coordination. There are now community committees that are in place across the province. We are in the process of establishing some common—I’m going to call them “guidelines” because every community is slightly different. We want to allow

enough flexibility but also enough guidelines where they actually can bring data to the table, local data and local best practices, and share those locally within their 48 communities, and also track the data. That's one part of the answer.

We also do bring people together. I think the women's directorate can talk a little more about that around the training opportunities as they relate to the boards. We have brought people together on a regular basis to, again, share best practices. That's more on a provincial basis.

As far as tracking recidivism, that's an interesting one because that's hard to track, given the services that we have. I think it's a broader issue. I'm looking over at my colleagues here. I know we've had some data and I know we're pulling out new data. So maybe they'd like to speak to that.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes.

Ms. Karen Chan: Okay.

Ms. Susan Seaby: Something on the recidivism issue: It's actually difficult to interpret that information as well. We do know from studies that women will often leave a relationship several times before they leave permanently—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Could you just move the microphone?

Ms. Susan Seaby: Sorry.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you.

Ms. Susan Seaby: There are cases where women will go back because they want to preserve their marriage; they want to preserve the relationship that the father has with the children. Sometimes that works out and sometimes it may not, but it is the women's choice, looking at all of the factors, as to whether that's the right thing to do—to go back or not.

Even when you see recidivist figures, while sometimes it might be a failure of the organization to have helped a woman develop a new life separate from her partner, sometimes it might have been the right thing for that woman and that child. So we can't use those kinds of figures to evaluate qualitatively: Is the agency doing the right thing or not?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I understand. That's why I started off with saying that this is incredibly complex. It's just that I know that the Auditor General made the recommendation about—we've discussed it earlier—the response rate on the client satisfaction survey. Not a great response rate—very low—and you can't even really determine the answer there, but also to analyze the results of the service being provided. That's why I was tying it into—nobody has the magic program, but sometimes there are programs that are out there.

If you've produced a program for the shelters to use, I guess the question is, are the service providers also giving you feedback on some programs or initiatives that, obviously, if they're successful, can be shared? I just wondered: Are the service providers giving their feedback to the programs that you've maybe initiated?

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: If I could speak to the ministry programs, the answer is yes. I think I referenced

this in one of my earlier answers. In addition to the quantitative information that we collect from agencies, our program supervisors and our regional office executives do meet with their agency counterparts, the program supervisors, which are really the front line of support to agencies. They meet with them on a monthly basis, and agencies share best practices with these program supervisors. That's taken back for consideration and for dissemination to other agencies, and for inclusion in policy guidelines. We're working on a more detailed policy manual. The guidelines and procedures that we provide to our agencies are evolutionary, and they do take into account what we hear and what we see in the regions.

The regional office itself meets with local agencies on a quarterly basis for more rigorous discussions, not just on the conduct of the service during the course of the year but also best practices, potential innovations, and proposals for new types of service offerings that we hear about and we consider.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay. Just for time, I'll just move over to another topic.

Figure 3: I don't have a page number, but it's the percentage rate of self-reported spousal violence by province. I don't know, if I hold it up, if that helps you, because I've got a black-and-white copy here.

In someone's opening remarks—obviously, the reporting is difficult for workplace harassment. We're talking sexual harassment etc., but there's a tie-in with it all. So there are barriers, whatever, that I think need to be investigated as to why more women, especially, are not coming forward.

In this figure 3, the number of cases reported since 1993 until the 2009 figure dropped dramatically. I wondered if you could comment on how you thought—is there less, in this case, spousal violence being reported, or is it happening less? Why is there less reporting happening? Just to help, maybe—yes, it's a StatsCan.

Ms. Susan Seaby: Yes. The Stats Canada data is based on telephone surveys of people, so it's probably our best statistic. The other statistics, related to reporting to police, are less reliable. They don't really tell us about prevalence. They tell us about how comfortable people are reporting to the police.

So that is the best of what we have so far, and it is a definite decline from the 12% in 1993 to the 6.3% today in Ontario. But still, it's a lengthy period of time between 1993 and 2009. We know that change will take time, but it is a change that we've seen here in Ontario and in terms of the national average as well.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Go ahead.

Ms. Juanita Dobson: That's part of the reason why we're actually looking for another increased sample for Ontario, to get a better sample size through the general survey—because we actually want to drill down a little bit more and find out; maybe we can start to put some dots together about why that is happening—and a little bit more information from StatsCan and also the research organization that we have a partnership with at Western

Ontario. They're also doing research and looking at different things that can feed into that StatsCan data.

Ms. Laurie Scott: How much time do we have?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You've got about six minutes left.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay. There are some regional disparities of services offered. Ms. Campbell mentioned northern Ontario, aboriginal women—we don't do too badly in my rural community, but if I just say rural Ontario in general, right, there are some deficiencies.

Can you just explain—you seem to have identified the regions that are underserved. Did someone say that they knew the regions that they felt were underserved in one of the openings? Okay, so there are certainly regions—maybe it was in the Auditor General's report that she identified some inconsistency in regions that were underserved. Is there a plan for how to compensate for that?

1400

Ms. Karen Chan: It's really hard to determine the underserved—again, if you look at the whole problem and all of what I would call the bucket of services that we provide to the wide range of people. But let me just talk about two things we've done that I think are really key.

One is the committees we've set up across the province; I've talked about them a couple of times. These are 48 committees, made up of people who are actually providing those services and other service providers who are the supporters that we talked about. We are asking these committees, as we work our way through—given the response from the Auditor General, we're being more specific around what it is we'd like them to do, and reporting. So we'll be asking them to actually write a report so that we'll be able to roll that report up and look at the kinds of issues they're identifying, community by community, and then try to take that look at where we have issues that go right across the province and where we have issues in particular geographic areas in the province. So we'll be able to take the 48 committees and we'll be able to map them. We will be asking them, as we work our way through this—we haven't done this; this is as a result of the recommendations of the Auditor General. We'll be more specific about what we want each of those committees to report on so we can look at both regional and province-wide data.

I think that's really important, and we're really quite excited about moving forward with that, as are the committees. They're quite new, so they needed to grow and develop a little bit before they would be ready.

The other piece that I think is important is our new regional office structure. We've created new regional office structures since January. There are now five regions. Some of the things we are driving to, as it relates to the regional office structure: First, we work together collaboratively with youth justice, our children services and our adult services. The three of us, across two ministries, actually manage the regional offices together. We have joint meetings, and we're looking for joint issues, again, across the province. In addition, our expectation of our new regional directors in those five regions is that they look horizontally as well across the

region. So we'll be able to identify more specifically, given the requirements we're asking across more than one ministry, the issues, whether they're related to violence against women or some of the other program areas we have responsibility for. We're finding, again, that that's actually quite new, because it's only since January, but really quite successful in both exchanging good and best practices and having that continuity.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Two minutes.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Two minutes. I just wanted to ask you a couple of things about Ontario's Sexual Violence Action Plan. There's very good news in there in terms of being able to look for prevention items you have undertaken. So my question, like the one for family and encouraging men to take an appropriate role, the one on the human rights code changing, and the third one was practitioners in community health care, education and justice sectors need access to ongoing professional development—tell me it's all taking place and what is happening.

Ms. Juanita Dobson: Actually, there have been a number of pieces of work launched on that. Susan can probably tell you in more detail. I know there have been, I think, about 6,000 or so professionals who have gone through training programs. These are a wide range of professionals. We've started work on that.

We've also launched some of the things I spoke of earlier: some the public education campaign components, funding interpreter services for people who don't speak English as their first language. That's through the other part of our ministry, which is the citizenship and immigration side doing that work. I think there has also been some work around the colleges and universities. We can talk a little bit about that.

Susan, are there other things that we can highlight?

Ms. Susan Seaby: For sure, the public education programs have been really important. I think what everyone is telling us is that we need to start changing the attitudes that perpetuate the violence in the first place, as much as we need to support victims when it happens.

There has been a real concerted effort, and we are providing funding to organizations like the White Ribbon Campaign, which is working with men and boys, and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, which is working in the aboriginal communities with men and boys. We also have the Ontario association of settlement programs, which is working with newcomers throughout the province on this issue, and a number of other partners who have joined in on the campaign.

We're starting to get some baseline data. The White Ribbon Campaign did work on a survey of men's attitudes—

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much, and I'm sure the rest of that great answer will fit in with the next question. Ms. Campbell.

Ms. Susan Seaby: We do have one in the north, with Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: With all due respect for some of the comments that the Chair made, I'm going to continue along with some of the questions that I have as they relate to this report. Certainly, we're talking about

these themes, and I'm raising some important anecdotes that I see are happening in the north that I think highlight some of the key deficiencies that we have been seeing.

I wanted to move on to the monitoring quality of services. Particularly, I wanted to talk about the 2009 building security assessment and the fact that there are greater than 500 safety and security items requiring attention in women's shelters across this province. The thing that really stuck out to me is the fact that as of March 31, 2012—this is three years after this information was compiled—only 10% of these safety and security items had been funded. It's not known what the status is of these things, as was mentioned, and the ministry doesn't perform site inspections, which is very, very important. It's shocking to me. What also is shocking is that it's not until 2019 that another building condition assessment will be performed.

When I hear of this issue, I instantly think of Dryden's Hoshizaki House. I'm not sure if the ministry is aware of this. Just to provide the members in this committee, as well as the ministry, with an update, this facility is over 100 years old. It is a former residence that was converted into kind of a makeshift shelter. The foundation is built onto the edge of the rock. The foundation shifts. It causes the doors to stick and waves to develop in the floors. There's sealant that covers the mould in the basement, and the air quality is poor.

We talk about the mandate of this particular ministry to provide a safe space for women to go to in their time of need. What happened in one particular storm was the entire building shifted. Believe it or not, it severed the phone lines, so there were no phone lines going into this emergency shelter. We have all these women and children who are there, and they can't communicate with the police, which is a huge concern.

What also is concerning, though, is that when it comes time to do some repairs around this place, there is expensive ongoing maintenance. This points to value for money. There are routine repairs that turn out to be very costly. I'm going to give you two examples.

There was a water leak with a washing machine, a pretty routine thing that should cost about \$1,500. It resulted in a \$10,000 bill. Once they started pulling up the floors, they were noticing mould. They were noticing some of the joists that have been cut over the 100 years that this building has existed, things that may have been okay—or may have happened when a family was living there—but with the modifications over the years, they aren't.

The other example I wanted to give is with bathroom repairs. What should have been a \$5,000 or \$6,000 job has turned into a \$25,000 bill.

Many of these costs are paid internally. They're taking money, their operational dollars that should go to providing front-line services, to do this patchwork. Again, I'm mentioning this for value for money.

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When Hoshizaki House did go to the ministry, the ministry stated that since 2006-07, Hoshizaki House has received over \$290,000 in infrastructure funding to help

maintain its site in a "state of good repair." So what they're doing is throwing good money after bad. We have replaced windows. We need it, and we have the best bullet-proof windows on this place, but, meanwhile, what is the rest of the structure built out of? It's drafty. The heating costs, the mould problems, the air-quality problems, the fact that the building is shifting, we're severing phone lines—I mean, this is all serious stuff.

The problem is, as I said, it's clearly a value-for-money issue. I would like to know, recognizing that infrastructure dollars are tight, are there any plans to build Dryden a new shelter? Because I think we would all recognize that spending \$290,000 for these little band-aid solutions—and that's not including, like I said, that \$25,000 or that extra \$10,000. These things are always happening. It just doesn't make sense to keep doing this. So the question is simply, are there infrastructure dollars that are coming for Dryden?

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: If I could ask Karen to speak to this.

Ms. Karen Chan: It would be hard for me to speak directly to Dryden, but I can tell you what the process is a little bit, if that would be helpful.

There has been, we noted, just over \$32 million in infrastructure money that has gone to shelters across the province over the last five years, so that's within the last five years. In fact, there has been some money in some cases for replacement. Some communities have done their own fundraising and have done replacement.

I need to be honest and say that we don't have a large capital budget; we have a minor capital budget. In some cases, we have been able to help out some communities, and over the past five years we have been able to help out either to expand or in some cases to replace facilities.

Maybe I'll just tell you a little bit about the process. It is true that building condition assessments are done and they were done, as the auditor noted, and they help us to identify—they help, actually, the agency to identify—some of their high-priority needs. Some of them they can fund out of their normal operating budget and they actually take care of them that way, because every shelter would have some of those kinds of dollars in. Other times they apply for what's called the partner renewal funding, and they bring those applications in. They are assessed across the province. They are assessed first within their own region—the north, if it was in the north—and then they are assessed across the province. We do allocate dollars for repairs and maintenance. It would appear as if maybe this organization has received some of that funding specifically, although I can't speak specifically to one shelter.

So those come in. We do allocate funding. If we have any flexibility, we actually continue to go down the list of applications that have come in.

If we have any flexibility, we also look to see if we have any dollars for replacement in situations maybe similar to the kinds of conditions that you are talking about, where it maybe isn't the best option to keep putting money in. So we have done some of that in some

cases. In most cases—in almost every case—communities and organizations have done some of their own fundraising that actually supports that.

Then there's just one piece that I want to add: We are actually in the process of tendering out to do additional building assessments, which the ministry will pay for. That is, though, a tool that goes back to the agency to help them manage and also help us prioritize so that we have a common tool. So it helps both the agency that has that responsibility and the ministry in the prioritization. Does that help a little?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: A little. Speaking to the larger issue of value for money and, again, this sense of pouring good money after bad: Failing the idea of building Dryden a new shelter, what is the ministry prepared to do to address this serious safety issue, hopefully before 2019, and what can we expect to see around the province? Dryden can't be the only case. I raise this as an example.

Ms. Karen Chan: Again, I can't speak specifically to one organization and what we can do in one particular community. There is a process, and we do have some applications. We do have a list—I have it here—of those who have actually gone through the process of saying, "We want to replace." The board has made that decision. They have put together an application. They have sent it in, and we can look at it. So that would be a process that the board would need to engage in, and then we could look at it.

Again, I think I need to mention that in every case, there is co-funding, because we don't have money for major infrastructure kinds of projects. Where we've been able to help out, in some cases, we have.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you. I'm glad to hear you mention that there's a list, because Dryden has undertaken this process. The board has agreed.

Ms. Karen Chan: Good.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's a very easy decision to make. They've also put together a package or they've had a report done that has identified the needs—whatever the builders do. They've kind of done that, but the problem that they have experienced, and again this speaks to a larger issue, is that every time they've gotten one step closer, they've been told by the ministry—there was an article that was published in the local paper that exposed all of the problems that we have in Dryden. We were told that no such infrastructure list exists. So my question is this: Is there a northern infrastructure list? Is Dryden on that list? How much of a priority is Dryden?

Ms. Karen Chan: I can't speak exactly to the whole list. What I have here is some of the list. I don't have all of the repairs and maintenance list with me. So it's hard for me to speak to one particular application. We could certainly discuss that offline, though, and have a conversation specifically about Dryden and specifically about their needs.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Sure. Didn't the report—in response to the auditor's report, I should say, you mentioned that you have an asset management framework

that the ministry is developing to better support capital funding decision-making. Can you elaborate on that process and that framework?

Ms. Karen Chan: It is similar to what I've just talked about. What we've been driving towards are, actually, some more consistent criteria. It is true that the requests outstrip the dollars that we do have available; I need to be honest about that. One of the conditions, though, is the age of the asset and really, is it worth continuing to put money in? So asset age is for sure a criterion. The timing, health and safety kinds of issues, some of the things that you've already identified—what does the building condition assessment report say? What are the types of repairs? Those are the kinds of things that are used as criteria to actually assess the prioritization of the various projects.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: How much time do we have left?

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): You have about three minutes left.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Okay, that's good. Just to be absolutely clear, then, is there a northern priority list? Whether or not Dryden is on the list at this point, I understand you can't speak to that, but is there a northern priority infrastructure list?

Ms. Karen Chan: There is a total list that we could actually divide by region. It can be sorted by region.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: That's fine. And there are, at this point, committed dollars towards infrastructure each and every year? Is there?

Ms. Karen Chan: There is.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: How much is that, for the province?

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Ms. Karen Chan: It has varied. It has been \$32 million, and so far this current fiscal year we've committed about \$800,000. Last fiscal year, there was about \$1.8 million, and then we were able to commit \$2.4 million in addition to that. So \$1.8 million plus \$2.4 million, and we hope that we can commit more this year. Funding has ranged anywhere from about \$10 million to about \$5 million in availability over the last five years.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: And that includes renovations as well as new facilities?

Ms. Karen Chan: It does.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: There's no doubt that there's a lot of positive work that's being done across the province to combat violence against women. But as the Auditor General's report identified, we have a real lack of monitoring progress and targets, and we're left with a sense that we don't really know who we're serving, if we're helping, who we're leaving behind, and how to get the most value for our money. I recognize the position that the ministry officials are in. Certainly you're proud of the work that you've been doing, and we've seen that a lot of that work is good that's happening. We do have a way to go.

In recognizing that, what is the ministry's response to some of the criticisms that the Auditor General has put in her report in terms of some tangibles? What are we going

to do to improve the reporting with the surveys to make sure that we are actually getting the most value for our dollars when it comes to infrastructure and all of those other things that were mentioned?

Mr. Bohodar Rubashewsky: I'll ask Karen to add to this.

I would say that, like many programs, we are rich in collecting information but not necessarily in analyzing it—or at least, that has been the case. I've been the interim deputy for several weeks now and I've noted, as I've looked back at this report and previous reports, that variability of service, differences in benchmark costs and things like that are a bit of an undercurrent in previous reports. This is why we are really focusing our efforts on taking the information that we collect not just for service contracting purposes but actually rolling it up and doing assessments of cost per resident served, cost per bed provided. It's not just restricted to VAW programs; it's the case across all of our programs.

To provide some more comparative analysis, I would have to say that some of the measures that we know we have to consider and work on are measures that the Auditor General has actually highlighted in some of her and her predecessor's reports. So we're putting an emphasis on working with the data, working with our VAW-sector partners as well as our regional and corporate offices to make that data more valuable so that we can measure service more effectively.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. We'll extend the rest of the answer on to the government side. Mr. Potts.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much for coming.

This is one of those really interesting subject areas. I noticed that in the deputy minister's initial remarks he talked about "eradication." And it's one of those interesting files where the best-news story would be giving less and less money towards it. It's like a food bank: We'd rather they weren't there. But they are there, and we need to address them.

The first part of my question would be on establishing the assessment of the needs of the overall population of women who would want to be served here. And I think this speaks to the auditor's comments about regional distribution of needs. In her report she talks about Peel, Dufferin, Waterloo and Halton. Her analysis is based on the proportion of women in the population compared to the amount of monies that are spent in those neighbourhoods. So the proportion of women is some kind of a proxy of where needs may be available. Of course, just the proportion of women in that community isn't in itself necessarily indicative that there needs to be support. You think of an area like Halton and Oakville; in economically well-off areas, maybe the needs will be different.

It's not a perfect measure, but I think it speaks to the fact that maybe we don't have a measure. Maybe you could comment on what we are doing to establish what the population needs are with respect to different parts of the province.

In my capacity in rural affairs, as parliamentary assistant, I share the concerns of Ms. Scott, Ms. Campbell and Ms. Munro about how it's important that there be fair and equitable distribution of needs where the needs are. If it's more rural, more urban, that's to be decided. Are we doing work in that area to assess where needs are, and how are we doing that? How are we doing the assessment? Maybe you could comment on that first.

Ms. Susan Seaby: I'll start. This is a very difficult issue and we all know that. This is a problem that crosses social classes and income groups and so on, but at the same time, we know from research studies that certain populations are at a higher risk. For example, aboriginal women, which were mentioned earlier, we know have a higher prevalence rate in Ontario and in Canada than some of the other population groups. We know that immigrant women, for example, if they are women without a lot of social supports—obviously not every immigrant woman—may also be at risk and not be able to access services in the same way as others, if they don't speak English or French or have that kind of family connection here in Canada. Disabled women are another population group that has been shown to be at risk of violence, particularly with respect to caregivers and so on.

We do need much more nuanced data, and that's part of what Juanita was talking about earlier when we were looking at a combination of what we can get that's sort of better, in terms of Stats Canada surveys—it's a much larger sample size—so that we can look both geographically to get better differences and also look at specific populations. I think in the current round, Stats Canada—they have a lot of demands on their research time, but they are looking more at immigrant populations, trying to get better questions on that, and also with respect to dating violence and youth and so on. We're hoping that that will give us more to work from in the future. We're also looking to see if we can—this is expensive—purchase deeper samples in future years.

We have to ultimately also combine the data that's being collected that way through population surveys with other kinds of studies that are not as expensive but that also can give us more qualitative information. That's some of the work, which I think was mentioned earlier in our chart, that's being done to look at, for example, young women; as you know, that's another population that's really at high risk. So looking at colleges and universities is quite important, as well as other settings.

Also, workplaces is an area where we're trying to get better information. We have funded the centre for research on violence against women and children, which is forming a national network to look more at workplace violence and specifically domestic violence in the workplace, which has been a concern.

So there are lots of efforts under way to better understand this. We don't have perfect information yet, but I think it's been getting better all the time.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Okay. The social awareness information, of course, is so important. Again, that's where

you would see, potentially, reductions in the need for services if the social awareness campaigns were working.

Anecdotally, some 25 years ago at city hall, when I worked down there, I met up with a Metro councillor, Roger Hollander, who was one of the original founders of the White Ribbon Campaign, with Jack Layton, down there at the time. I remember very early on, in my sort of public engagement process, following along and understanding very much that this is not a women's issue; it's a societal issue, and men play a very important part in it.

So I appreciate the work you continue to do; White Ribbon you mentioned a couple of times, and that's excellent.

I guess one of the concerns we were having as we had our briefing this morning is, again, at the targeted goals, and that the responses seem to be always coming back to, "This is the money we're putting in, but are we really getting the results back that we want?" What I've heard here—which is great, because I didn't see it as much in the report and the recommendations—is that in fact we are establishing the targets. I think that's excellent.

To Ms. Campbell's comments about capital funding, I know Beaches–East York is a high-needs neighbourhood. We have a number of shelters there in the capital pool. I hope we didn't jump a priority queue, but it was represented by a member of another party in the past. We had, I think, almost 10% of the capital grants into my neighbourhood addressing issues like rotting foundations, fire safety issues and such, and that's been really helpful for very important agencies. Is that atypical?

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The report talks about some 500 items that were to be addressed in safety and security and building maintenance issues. Are we catching up on that? What's happening in that area, or are we typical?

Ms. Karen Chan: That speaks to the building condition assessments that were done.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Right.

Ms. Karen Chan: As we pointed out, the building condition assessments are a tool for both the boards and for us in approving funding. We actually pay for that, so that the boards can understand the building condition needs and think about how they can help deal with those and/or think about, in some cases, do they need to think about a different kind of location.

It's hard to say whether we're catching up on those. We'll get a better idea on that when we do the next phase of the building condition assessments that's just about to go out to RFP, and we'll be going out and doing them. Then, we'll be able to compare the original data with the new data, and we'll be able to look at, again, if there are common areas and what the common areas were before. Are we catching up?

We know that, in all of our programs in MCSS, many are small infrastructures, houses. We all know, many of us who have houses, that the repair budget never really quite ends. Even if we did our own building condition assessments on our own homes, it would be interesting to see how far we're getting, because you meet some and

then you have to add some on. So I think the fact that we're doing the building condition assessments will give us some of that information and some of those tools, and we'll be able to see if we're making any progress. It really will be interesting to see, too, if the agencies identify to us that those tools have been helpful to them in actually planning out their own repair needs.

Some of them can actually—what comes up in the 400 could be something relatively simple that boards can manage within their own funding formula. So many, many of them could be things that they could manage themselves.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Right.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Mr. Dong, you have a further question?

Mr. Arthur Potts: You want to go—

Mr. Han Dong: Sure, I'll ask one. My question is to the Ontario Women's Directorate. As you know, I'm the parliamentary assistant to training, colleges and universities, so I'm particularly interested in violence or sexual assault against women on university campuses or college campuses. Recently, we've heard that there were some high-profile tragedies that happened in GTA universities. I know those cases are extremely rare, but the severity and the impact to our reputation across the world is noticeable. I know that universities and campuses have done quite a bit of improvement. I personally visited there and I asked the administration about the things they're doing. Even the students are organizing clubs and programs to help each other out.

I had numerous meetings with them, and they all told me that they know that this is a rare incident, nevertheless still quite shivery to them because these things—they always feel that there's a possibility of this happening.

In that context, what has the Ontario women's secretariat done—any initiatives, any programs you've seen that are really yielding results in the aspect of protecting female students and giving them a safer environment to advance their post-secondary education?

Ms. Juanita Dobson: Thank you for that question.

Interjection.

Ms. Juanita Dobson: Oh, do you want to go ahead? He's back. Do you want me to go ahead, or are you going to go?

Mr. Chisanga Puta-Chekwe: I did not wish to disrupt proceedings, but we're getting a few more questions than I had anticipated. I'm sure that my ADM is going to want to add to this.

I think it's a very important point that you raise. Young women are extremely vulnerable when they go to university or college, because they are leaving a familiar environment. They're going into entirely new social circumstances. They are forming new friendships without having a basis. They're taking a lot of risks, and in that space they make themselves vulnerable to sexual attack, certainly.

The Ontario Women's Directorate, as you indicated, has worked with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and

Universities, the post-secondary education sector and women's organizations to create Ontario's resource guide for colleges and universities. I actually remember that when this resource guide came out, I thought I was reading it privately and confidentially at the Art Gallery of Ontario; I was waiting for some friends. Two women sitting next to me were quite interested in this, without my realizing it. When I finished, quite sure that this document was secure and nobody else had looked at it, they said, "Hmm, that looked very interesting. What's your concern?"

So I said, "Well, actually, it's going to be made public very soon anyway." I told them what it was, and they were very excited that, at long last, action was being taken on this very, very troubling issue. That was in 2013; that's the year that the guide was actually introduced.

The value of this guide is that it provides very valuable support to universities and colleges in their ongoing efforts not just to prevent but actually respond to sexual violence. I think, as you will appreciate, that the huge challenge we have in this area is people just being able to accept the reality of having been assaulted, and that leads to reluctance to report. This guide addresses issues like that, and in that respect alone it has been extremely invaluable.

Do you have something to add?

Ms. Juanita Dobson: Absolutely, that piece of work has been very well received. We've gotten positive feedback, and the universities and colleges are using that, actually, to support their campaigns and the work they're doing with their organizations.

Another thing I just want to mention quickly, before we run out of time, is that the University of Ottawa campus climate study is actually underway. This is going to help inform the OWD and others about campus safety

initiatives. The survey is being facilitated by the University of Ottawa Task Force on Respect and Equality. They're surveying 5,000 students, with a view to measuring attitudes and experiences of harassment and violence on the university campus.

When we get these findings—we anticipate they're going to be released in maybe late December or early January—the director will be taking a look at that and reviewing that study to determine whether or not a similar study could be done on other campuses. It might be helpful to sort of get a bit more information, but also help inform some of the work we already have underway and things we might be planning in the future, based on some of those survey results. We're looking forward to having an opportunity to review that.

Mr. Han Dong: I look forward to that survey result. Just to add to what the deputy was saying, I personally have a friend who went through this terrible experience, and I kind of helped her along the way. She was a classic example of what you just said: someone who was here alone, away from family and relatives, and completely taken advantage of by someone she barely knew. I'm very happy to know there is something being done about this. Hopefully, going forward, these things will become even more rare than we have experienced in the past.

The Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much, and it's a good thing there was no question in that because there's no time for the answer. But thank you all very much for being here this afternoon. We very much appreciate you taking the time and helping us out with our deliberations. Thank you for coming in.

The committee will now go in camera for a session with our leg counsel—leg research, not quite counsel—to talk about the process from here on in.

The committee continued in closed session at 1441.

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Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

Ms. Sarah Campbell (Kenora–Rainy River ND)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

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Ms. Bonnie Lysyk, Auditor General

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Research Services

Mr. Ian Morris, research officer,
Research Services