



NWT Literacy Council

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Media Release

Aboriginal Literacy Analysis Points to Needed GNWT Policy Innovations

(Yellowknife, June 29, 2010) – The Government of the NWT should be addressing both labour market demand and supply if the territory is going to be economically competitive. This was the message this morning from Scott Murray, an international expert on youth and adult literacy.

Mr. Murray says that there will be vast returns on investment if the government spends \$23 million to improve the literacy skills of NWT Aboriginal people.

“Most literacy programs focus on those with the lowest skills. But many Aboriginal people have literacy skills that just need improving. The focus for interventions should be in the workplace, where people spend most of their time,” said Mr. Murray. “This is where interventions can really impact the economy.”

Mr. Murray presented his latest research at an event co-sponsored by the NWT Literacy Council in Yellowknife.

Among the policy changes suggested today are thoughtful adjustments to the social welfare program to improve literacy skills of clients and investment in long-term jobs that have an educational component.

“If we keep to the status quo, we will suffer economically and socially. NWT residents need to be able to compete for jobs and right now 50% of Aboriginal people here are not well situated to do that.”

Mr. Murray’s presentation will be available soon on the NWT Literacy Council website at www.nwt.literacy.ca.

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