



## **GNWT REFUSES UNION OFFER OF BINDING ARBITRATION**

*Binding arbitration—a process used for avoiding strikes—rejected by the GNWT*

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YELLOWKNIFE, NT—The Government of the Northwest Territories has refused offers by the Union of Northern Workers (UNW) to agree to voluntary Binding Arbitration in order to settle three year old labour negotiations with the GNWT and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC)—and avoid any potential strike.

“We know families are worried. For over three years, our members have been working hard, making compromises and trying to reach a fair deal,” said UNW president Todd Parsons. “Binding Arbitration is an evenhanded process agreed to by both sides. Unfortunately, the government said no.”

Despite comprehensive offers from the union to settle outstanding items, talks between the government and the Territories’ largest bargaining units at the GNWT and NTPC, broke down after the government refused to budge on many key issues and flatly rejected UNW’s offer of Binding Arbitration.

“We believe a fair deal is one that means stable jobs and keeps up with the cost of living,” continued Parsons. “Let’s be clear—if the government was serious about fixing this situation and settling this dispute they could do so today, right now, and simply agree to Binding Arbitration.”

“Unfortunately, the government has refused to even agree to a fair process that could help us reach a fair deal. The government is being dishonest and unaccountable, saying one thing in public then acting a different way behind closed doors. That just isn’t right.”

Under Binding Arbitration, both sides face some risk. But in this situation, given the length of time bargaining has dragged on, and given the stresses it has placed on our workers and communities, the UNW is willing to accept the risk and compromise on the a long standing principal of preserving their members’ right to strike.

“This door is still open. We can take the risk and the reward together and end this right now,” Parsons concluded. “This is a sacrifice for our members but it’s worth it if we can end this dispute, avoid a strike, and ensure a fair deal.”

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Editors Notes: For more information contact Jennifer Wright, Communication Officer, UNW at 867-873-5668, ext. 225.