

## Factsheet #4

# One government for Délıne

In 1995, when Délıne decided to negotiate self-government, the Délıne Elders had a vision of self-government. They believed that three governing organizations in the community were too many: a First Nation created by Canada's *Indian Act*, the Land Corporation created under the Sahtu Land Claim, and a Charter Community created by the GNWT.

Each of these organizations has its own mandate, and each is created by different laws. For example, the **First Nation** is created by the *Indian Act*. That Act is a federal law, which Canada can change when it wants. Canada also decides how *Indian Act* First Nations get funding, how much funding they get and what activities the funding can be used for. These decisions are made based on government policies, not on the First Nation's needs. The Délıne First Nation looks after the political rights of Status Indians who are members, and delivers some programs and services to its members.

The **Charter Community** is created under GNWT laws. The GNWT can change its municipal laws when it wants. The GNWT decides on Charter community budgets according to its own rules. The Charter Community delivers local programs and services to everyone in the community like water and sewage. It also makes by-laws about how the community operates.

The **Délıne Land Corporation** is created through the Sahtu Land Claim. It is responsible for the land claim rights and assets (lands, buildings, businesses) of beneficiaries.

As a result, Délıne has three different elected councils for three organizations which provide programs and services to almost the

same group of people. In addition there are many other committees and organizations which also make decisions about programs and services in the community and each has its own plans and rules.

Having so many organizations and councils and committees can sometimes be confusing and does not make it easy for organizations to work together. Often the frustration is increased because the final decisions about some programs and services are made in Yellowknife or Ottawa.

A major benefit of self-government is that all of these different responsibilities, programs and services can be done by one government. There will be one election and one council will make decisions. All the different programs and services will be able to work together better because they will all be part of the same organization. Another benefit will be that the funding for the one government will be for five years. It will be stable. This will allow for planning over five-year periods, instead of year to year. It will mean staff can be hired permanently, instead of for one-year periods. It also means that after Déljñę First Nation members and land claim beneficiaries leave the community to get an education, there will be good jobs available for them when they come back. All of these changes will help the government to operate better.

The Elders believe that the community can be governed better, and that people will work together better, if there is one government. They want to make sure that the Déljñę Got'jñę Government (DGG) will have more control over decision making in the community. This vision has been supported by the community, and discussed at the various councils and in community meetings and workshops over the years.

Having one government will also make it easier to consult people, get their input and explain how decisions are made. The new government will be set up to make sure it is open and accountable. There will be an Elders' Council, a Justice Council and a Beneficiaries Board. There will also be a yearly gathering where the DGG reports to and seeks direction from the community and beneficiaries.