

Administrative Justice Office: An Update

The Administrative Justice Office (AJO) continues to work to support tribunals, their members, staff and users, especially with respect to the effective implementation of the new *Administrative Tribunals Act*. BCCAT members will be interested in the following AJO activities, undertaken since the Spring, 2005 BCCAT newsletter.

The AJO hosted a Workshop for Senior Tribunal Staff in May, 2005, which was attended by approximately 20 senior staff responsible for management of operations to BC's administrative tribunals, boards and commissions. The workshop provided a forum to discuss common operational issues, exchange experiences and creative solutions, and network with others who have similar responsibilities. More information about the workshop and the presentations, discussion and evaluations is available on the AJO's Web site at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/ajo>. The AJO is working with senior staff and BCCAT members on follow-up activities, which include a roundtable for senior staff at BCCAT's fall education conference and a second workshop in November.

The AJO's Web site has been significantly updated to provide easy public access to current information about administrative justice issues. Of particular interest to BCCAT members will be the "What's New" heading, which provides quick and easy access to updates on administrative justice issues, and the "Legislation" heading which includes, under "*About the ATA*", a summary of recent court cases. Links to BCCAT's Web site, course information and fall conference are also prominently displayed.

Dianne Flood participated on a panel at the Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals Annual Conference, and the AJO contributed a paper on the ATA to the conference proceedings, which is also available on the AJO Web site.

A draft of the Model MOU, which is intended to provide a framework for a positive and co-operative working relationship between a tribunal chair and the minister responsible, was distributed in June and a further draft, reflecting comments received to-date and other new information, was distributed and posted to the AJO Web site in August. The AJO anticipates there may be further revisions to the Model MOU in the fall, 2005, after hearing from the Circle of Chairs. The model MOU will continue to be revised from time to time to include new provisions and update terminology and other references as necessary. If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions regarding the Model MOU, please contact Richard Rogers at Richard.rogers@gov.bc.ca or at 250.387.1712.

The AJO has distributed *A Guide for Tribunals: Obtaining Compliance with Tribunal Processes*, which it hopes will be a valuable resource for tribunals. The new *Administrative Tribunals Act* is intended to give tribunals the powers they

need to ensure their processes are effective, fair and timely, and an appropriate use of both the parties' and the public's resources. The purpose of this Guide is to assist tribunals in deciding when and how they may wish to use certain of those new ATA provisions if a party, intervener, or other person fails to comply with the tribunal's orders or processes. The AJO welcomes any comments you or your members or staff may have on the Guide and how we can improve it.

Also just completed is *A Guide for Tribunals: Stated Cases* for those tribunals to which either section 43 or 45 of the ATA applies, respecting the referral of questions of law to the BC Supreme Court in the form of a Stated Case. The Stated Case Guide will also be posted on the AJO Web site, if you are interested in reviewing it.

The AJO will also be posting on its Web site an updated version of a *Guide for Consideration of a Process for Review of Administrative Decision-Making*, which has been prepared to assist public policy makers in considering options for review of administrative decisions, but may be of interest to BCCAT members.

The AJO looks forward to participating in and providing support to the revisions and updating of the BCCAT Foundations course material and to continuing to provide advice, information and other supports to tribunals (for example, Generic Model Rules and *A Guide for Parties on Enforcing Tribunal Orders in Court*).

The AJO welcomes any comments and suggestions from BCCAT members, and looks forward to the up-coming Annual Conference.