

Tribunals report their new Shared Registry to be a resounding success

A recent amalgamation of registry functions is providing greater resource flexibility and enhanced operational capacity for the Community Care and Assisted Living Appeal Board (CCALAB), the Hospital Appeal Board (HAB) [both Ministry of Health (MOH) boards], the Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) and the Forest Appeals Commission (FAC).

Building on earlier successes in sharing registries [the two MOH boards had shared one registry, and the other two boards had previously combined their registries], the new combined registry has greater capacity to provide support to the four independent boards and to provide needed human resources flexibility. The combined registry was effected by an agreement between the MOH – with input from the MOH chairs – and Alan Anderson, Chair of the EAB and the FAC. Alan provides the day to day direction for the registry staff, with input from the part-time MOH board chairs, and notes that “Combining registries is in the public interest for a number of reasons. Not only is there is a cost savings, registry staff also have opportunities to enhance their skill levels because of their broader responsibilities, resulting in better overall service.” CCALAB Chair Susan Ross also views improved service as a main factor in the shared registry’s success. “Just as decision-makers within the administrative justice system are expected to develop specialized knowledge,” said Susan, “the new registry’s staff are also highly trained and now have even greater opportunities to develop their knowledge base in order to ensure stakeholders receive the best possible service.” HAB Chair Derek Brindle was equally enthusiastic about the move to a shared registry and points out “The shared registry allows stakeholders to benefit from the registry staff’s broader expertise.

Lauri Balson, who continues in her role of Executive Director and Registrar for the MOH boards, now also works on a larger range of issues and processes involving new EAB/FAC responsibilities. She reports the added diversity enhances the work experience and provides greater learning opportunities. Colleen Smith, Executive Director for the EAB reports that the new registry is a mutually beneficial arrangement and notes that extra staff depth is another added benefit, as senior EAB/FAC staff are available to assist the MOH boards. Efficiencies have also been gained as two full-time administrative support positions were phased out and affected staff moved to other positions with the MOH.

Other resources now shared by the boards include the EAB/FAC’s pre-existing specialized electronic case management system and onsite hearing room. The boards also gain from joint access to their respective legal libraries and foresee sharing technical staff to maintain their Web sites.

The specialized knowledge for each tribunal will continue to be maintained by separate membership.