



House of Assembly Service

***2008-2011
Business Plan***

Message from the Speaker

I am pleased to present the House of Assembly Service Business Plan for 2008-2011. It reflects the values, missions and goals for the planning cycle. This plan has been prepared as appropriate for a Category 2 entity pursuant to the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

This Business Plan was prepared by the House of Assembly Service and, in accordance with my obligations under the Act, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained therein.

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Roger Fitzgerald'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Honorable Roger Fitzgerald
Speaker
House of Assembly

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OVERVIEW

The House of Assembly Service was established by statute, *The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, which was proclaimed on June 14, 2007. It consists of operations established to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its committees, the House of Assembly Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

It includes the Speaker, the Clerk and the Office of the Clerk. It also includes the Corporate and Members' Services Division which provides financial, human resources, payroll and administrative services, and the Information Management Division which includes the services of the Legislative Library, Records Management services, Broadcast Services and Hansard. The House of Assembly Service has a total of 42 employees.

The Speaker, the impartial presiding officer of the House, is the guardian of the privileges of the House and of Members.

The Clerk is the principal procedural adviser to the Speaker and Members. The Clerk is responsible for the overall administration of the House of Assembly and interprets the Standing Orders, conventions, precedents and usages of the House in order to advise the Speaker and Members of the House on parliamentary procedure. The Office of the Clerk is also responsible for the support of parliamentary operations. It co-ordinates House of Assembly support services and ensures that all forms of business pass through each of the required procedural steps.

The Clerk is also the chief administrative officer of the House of Assembly responsible to the Speaker and, through the Speaker, to the House of Assembly Management Commission for the management of the operations of the House of Assembly Service and the administration of the Statutory Offices. The Office of the Clerk also provides full administrative support to the House of Assembly Management Commission.

BUDGET

The House of Assembly has a budget of \$17,137,500 for 2008/09.

The details are noted below:

Salaries	\$9,789,800
Employee Benefits	24,900
Transportation and Communications	489,100
Supplies	154,300
Professional Services	1,277,600
Purchased Services	943,700
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	858,300
Allowances and Assistance	3,554,700
Grants and Subsidies	45,100
TOTAL	<u>\$17,137,500</u>

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MANDATE

The House of Assembly Service derives its mandate from the provisions of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. The mandate of the House of Assembly Service is contained in subsection 25 (1) of the Act, which states:

- 25 (1) The House of Assembly Service consists of operations established, whether by law or otherwise, for the purpose of supporting the functioning of the House of Assembly, its committees and members, and includes
- (a) the speaker;
 - (b) the office of the clerk and other officers of the House of Assembly;
 - (c) the law clerk;
 - (d) the financial and administrative services;
 - (e) the legislative library;
 - (f) the office of Hansard;
 - (g) the broadcast centre; and
 - (h) other divisions that may be assigned by law or designated and provided for by the commission.

The House of Assembly Service supports the work of the Speaker, the Clerk, the House of Assembly and its Committees, Members and the House of Assembly Management Commission, by:

- Coordinating and supporting the decision-making process of the House of Assembly Management Commission;
- Providing advice and interpretation on parliamentary procedure and protocol;
- Providing financial, budgetary, human resources, payroll, administrative and information services;
- Providing legal advice on Parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and to the House of Assembly;
- Providing parliamentary library, records and information services to all Members and Officers of the House of Assembly, including reference, research and records organization and control;

- Providing compliance with *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- Providing official transcript of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly and the House of Assembly Management Commission;
- Broadcasting the House of Assembly proceedings and meetings of the House of Assembly Management Communications; and
- Providing strategic communications advice and support to the Speaker, the Clerk, and the House of Assembly Management Commission.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The mandate of the House of Assembly Service is informed by the following legislation:

Legislative Responsibility

- *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*
- *House of Assembly Act*
- *Elections Act, 1991*

Related Legislation That Influences the Work of the Office

- *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Transparency and Accountability Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*
- *Management of Information Act*

LINES OF BUSINESS

In fulfilling its mandate, the House of Assembly Service provides the following lines of business.

1. Support to the House of Assembly and the Committees of the House

The House of Assembly Service provides executive, administrative, and advisory support to the House of Assembly and its Committees. It advises the Speaker and Members on parliamentary procedure, provides procedural advice to Committees, drafts minutes and reports, keeps records, and organizes meetings.

The House of Assembly Service, through the Law Clerk, provides legal advice on Parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and to the House of Assembly, and provides in-house corporate legal advice. The Law Clerk provides drafting services on amendments in committee where required and for Private Members' Bills.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for preserving order and maintaining security in the galleries, corridors and other areas in the Parliamentary Precinct Assembly and is also responsible for public education and visits to the House of Assembly.

Hansard provides the official and complete transcript of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly, its Committees and the meetings of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

The Broadcast Centre is responsible for televising the House of Assembly proceedings and meetings of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

2. Support to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission:

The House of Assembly Service is the primary support for the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission. This role incorporates the preparation of briefing materials, the coordination and facilitation of Commission meetings, and the maintenance of all Commission records.

Strategic communications advice and support are provided to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission. This role includes developing communications policy and procedures and advising on communications.

3. Support to Members of the House of Assembly

The House of Assembly Service supports the Members of the House of Assembly in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. This includes Member orientation, providing relevant training as necessary, setting up Members' offices, purchasing required supplies and services for Members, processing Members' expense claims, payroll and human resource Services.

The Legislative Library provides parliamentary library and information services to all Members and Officers of the House of Assembly in the execution of their duties, including reference and research services and information access and awareness.

4. Support to Statutory Offices

The House of Assembly Service supports the Statutory Offices in carrying out administrative responsibilities. This includes financial, budgetary, human resources, payroll, and information management services.

VALUES

The following values are fundamental to all interactions and communications between the House of Assembly Service and its clients.

<i>Value</i>	<i>Action Statement</i>
Impartiality	Each employee provides services in a non-partisan manner to all Members and their staff.
Fairness	Each employee performs his or her duties in an unbiased and independent manner.
Respect	Each employee performs his or her duties in a manner that respects the rights of other employees, Members of the House of Assembly and the public.
Confidence	Employees will not abuse their official position for personal gain and will not accept any gift or benefit which may result in an obligation to a third party.
Trust	Each employee exercises due care and control of records created or collected in the exercise of their responsibilities, ensuring that records are organized, secured and managed according to applicable policy and legislation.
Integrity	Each employee performs his or her duties honestly, ethically and free of personal interests and activities which may appear to interfere with their duties.
Quality Service	Each employee builds and sustains relationships by assessing, anticipating, and fulfilling needs of the clients.

PRIMARY CLIENTS

The House of Assembly Service defines its primary clients as those individuals, groups and organizations who are the principal beneficiaries of its lines of business. These clients include the following:

- a) The House of Assembly and its Committees
- b) Members of the House of Assembly
- c) House of Assembly Management Commission
- d) Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly
- e) Executive Branch of Government

VISION

The vision of the House of Assembly Service is a legislature that is fully open and accountable to the people of the province.

MISSION

The Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters was established following the publication of several reports by the Auditor General, in June and July of 2006, alleging irregularities in the administration of the affairs of the House of Assembly.

The report of the Review Commission, commonly referred to as the Green Report, contained a broad range of 275 specific recommendations and provided draft legislation to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations. The new legislation, *The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, received Royal Assent on June 14, 2007 and establishes an administrative framework for the House of Assembly that is transparent and accountable. The legislation includes subordinate legislation known as *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules* which promote accountability in, and transparency with respect to, the expenditure of public funds.

By March 31, 2011 the House of Assembly Service will have supported the implementation of the recommendations of the *Report of the Review Commission* to establish an administrative framework for the House of Assembly that is transparent and accountable.

1) Measure: *Implemented the recommendations from the Report of the Review Commission*

Indicators:

- The House of Assembly is operating according to the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* and the *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules* subordinate to the legislation.
- Appropriate administrative and financial policies and procedures are implemented
- Management certifies that appropriate systems of internal controls are in place and operating effectively
- Increased communication activities to promote awareness of the legislature, including the roles and responsibilities of Members of the House of Assembly

ISSUES

The *Report of the Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters* states “The implementation of an effective system of controls over the spending of public money within the legislative branch is obviously of central importance in providing a system of best practices that will provide a degree of confidence to the public that financial stewardship is being properly practiced in the House Administration”.

In consideration of the recommendations of the report, the following have been identified as the key areas of focus of the House of Assembly Service for the 2008-2011 fiscal years.

ISSUE ONE FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCESSES

The Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters made recommendations related to appropriate financial controls and processes. The Commission recommended “the implementation of a management certification process as a definitive and visible means of promoting the appropriate reporting and disclosure of information as well as the effective operation of internal controls. This requires the establishment and maintenance of disclosure controls, internal controls and procedures and providing personal certification regarding the design and evaluation of the operating effectiveness of such controls”.

Goal

By March 31, 2011, the House of Assembly Service will have enhanced financial controls and processes in place.

Measure: Enhanced financial controls and processes in place

Indicators:

- Recommendations of the Green Report related to financial controls and processes are implemented.

By March 31, 2009, the House of Assembly Service will have implemented new processes and systems.

Measure: Implemented new processes and systems

Indicators:

- Management Certification Process implemented
- I-Expenses Oracle module implemented
- Inventory Control System in place
- Forensic Accounting Investigation completed
- Financial Statement and Legislative Compliance Audits Completed for 2000 and 2001
- Budget Process in place

By March 31, 2010, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to assess and maintain effective disclosure and internal control processes.

By March 31, 2011, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to review government policies and legislation to determine applicability to the legislature and to develop appropriate policies that improve controls.

ISSUE TWO IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY

The Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters identified the need for increased openness and accountability by the Legislature to the citizens of the Province. It recommended appropriate documentation and record management processes as well as enhanced access for the public and the media to all proceedings of the House of Assembly, including the House of Assembly Management Commission and Committees of the House. A number of measures have already been implemented including the adoption of a Publication Scheme for the House of Assembly. The House has posted the first Members' Disclosure and Accountability Statements on its website as required by the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*.

Goal

By March 31, 2011, the House of Assembly Service will have improved systems and processes in place to support the accountability of the House of Assembly Service and its practices.

Measure: Will have improved systems and processes in place

Indicators:

- TRIM Records Management system is in place and being used by all employees of HOAS
- Increased access to proceedings of the House of Assembly and its Committees

By March 31, 2009, the House of Assembly Service will have implemented a fully supported and maintained records management program.

Measure: Implemented a fully supported and maintained records management program

Indicators:

- Record management policies, procedures and guidelines are developed and approved.
- All staff of the House of Assembly Service will have adopted use of TRIM.
- House of Assembly records inventory is completed.
- An ATIPPA policy manual, procedures and guidelines are developed.

By March 31, 2010, the House of Assembly Service will have implemented measures to increase access to the proceedings of the House of Assembly, the House of Assembly Management Commission and Committees of the House.

By March 31, 2011, the House of Assembly Service will have enhanced information management and access services available to the Members and to the public.

ISSUE THREE PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The House of Assembly Service recognizes the value of a public which is well-informed in matters relating to the role and operations of the legislature. Education and outreach are important components to increase awareness and understanding of the role of the legislature and help build confidence and trust in elected officials and the legislative processes that exist. During this planning cycle, the House of Assembly Service plans to develop various educational activities and publications to assist in enhancing the knowledge of the public and to encourage students to take an active interest and role in the operations of the House of Assembly.

Goal

By March 31, 2011, the House of Assembly Service will have developed a strategy to increase awareness and understanding of the public on the role and operations of the House of Assembly.

Measure: Will have developed a strategy to increase awareness and understanding of the public of the role and operations of the House of Assembly.

Indicators:

- Educational and promotional materials are developed
- Strategy developed to promote awareness in public school system
- Special events are held to promote understanding of legislature
- Enhanced use of House of Assembly website for educational purposes

By March 31, 2009, the House of Assembly Service will have developed educational and promotional material on the House of Assembly.

Measure: Will have developed educational and promotional material

Indicators:

- Revised visitors' guide to the legislature is developed
- Promotional material is developed and available to tour groups
- Information seminars on the Legislature are offered in the Executive Branch of Government

By March 31, 2010, the House of Assembly Service will have developed a draft strategy to promote awareness and understanding of the legislature in the provincial school system.

By March 31, 2011, the House of Assembly Service will have implemented priority areas of the strategy.