



Noteworthy

Government responds to Working Group for Supports to Victims of Violence

Gerald Smith, Minister of Human Resources and Employment, and Sandra Kelly, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, responded to recommendations on how government's income support program can more effectively meet the needs of persons who are victims of violence.

The recommendations were presented by the Working Group for Supports to Victims of Violence in a report entitled *Moving Forward: Responding to the Needs of Victims of Violence; Social Policy Development through Collaboration and Partnerships*. The working group was set up by the Department of Human Resources and Employment to review the current income support program and its responsiveness to victims of violence. The working group included a diverse representation of community advocacy and support groups, including representatives from transition houses across the province, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Women's Policy Office. In addition to Human Resources and Employment, the working group also included representatives from other government departments, including Health and Community Services and Justice.

"Since 1998, the Department of Human Resources and Employment has been redesigning its income support program to better meet the needs and concerns of clients," said Minister Smith.

Recommendations include improving the timely response of the income support program to persons applying for social assistance for reasons related to being a victim of violence, improved response to requests for transportation to a shelter, other emergency accommodations, support groups, or for the purpose of moving household furniture. Clarification of policies related to the receipt of social assistance while temporarily residing in a shelter, provision of funding to assist in setting up a new household after leaving a violent situation, staff training and improving the referral procedures to Health and Community Services were also some of the recommendations. ☞

Government continues improvements to Bell Island wharf

Works, Services and Transportation Minister Percy Barrett and Conception Bay East-Bell Island MHA Jim Walsh announced the awarding of a contract for improvements to the docking facilities at Bell Island.

The contract, valued at \$791,464.50, was awarded to Mariner Engineering and Construction Ltd. The work will include modifying a section of the existing wharf by adding steel piles and timber cribs, which will strengthen the structure. The work will start immediately and be completed by early summer 2002.

"These improvements are part of our ongoing effort to upgrade the docking facilities at Bell Island," said Barrett. "In the past two years, we have invested over \$2 million in upgrades to the Bell Island wharves, thereby improving the overall service."

"All of the work being done on these wharves by government will mean two vessels will be able to dock more efficiently," said Walsh. "As the MHA for the area, I am very pleased with the efforts put forth by government to enhance the ferry service for users." ☞

Successful 2001 enforcement program

The Department of Forest Resources and Agrifoods has released legislation and compliance statistics for 2001. A total of 1,651 violations consisting of 608 written warnings and 1,043 charges were recorded throughout the province in 2001.

A regional breakdown reveals 839 violations in the Eastern region, while the Western region and Labrador recorded 651 and 161 violations respectively. Of the 1,651 violations recorded, 836 consisted of offences under the Forestry Act and 643 were wildlife offences. Other offences included 111 ATV violations, 23 federal fisheries offences, and 27 violations under the Migratory Bird Act.

Minister Rick Woodford said the department's highly-trained enforcement staff and integrated enforcement efforts were key factors in a successful 2001 enforcement program.

"Our conservation officers receive ongoing training in integrated resource management and officer safety, which provides them with the knowledge they require to carry out their duties in an effective and professional manner," said Woodford. "This provides for an unprecedented level of forest and wildlife resource protection in Newfoundland and Labrador." ☞

