



**WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD**  
**Northwest Territories**

**CORPORATE PLAN 1999 - 2001**



MISSION STATEMENT

*To serve workers and employers in an effective and efficient manner by promoting accident prevention in the workplace and by providing quality rehabilitation services and fair compensation to injured workers.*

PRINCIPLES

The Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories must:

1. be representative of and sensitive to the needs of clients;
2. maintain a compensation system which is fair and equitable;
3. be effective, efficient and committed to providing excellent services;
4. be committed to communicating effectively and efficiently with its stakeholders;
5. be committed to maintaining benefits in a cost effective manner; and
6. be committed to accident prevention.

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Each year, the Board of Directors produces a strategic plan for the future of the compensation system in the Northwest Territories. This plan identifies the Board's strategies for the next three years - an especially important period of time for the WCB in view of the division of the Northwest Territories in April 1999.

The WCB actively monitors changes in the external environment, including social, demographic, economic and industry trends and issues in order to identify emerging areas of opportunity or need. This allows for an effective integration of the WCB's strategic objectives with the environment in which it operates.

- Many of the strategic directions identified in the Corporate Plan for 1998-2000 are reaffirmed in this plan. Nonetheless, the WCB finds itself in a changing planning environment. Although the WCB remains fully funded and some improvements in client satisfaction have been reported, the challenge now is to ensure that program and service delivery are further improved without compromising the principles which guide WCB operations.
- Improving workplace safety remains an important objective for the WCB. Efforts will focus on targeting resources to those industries and sectors with high incidences of accidents and on promoting partnerships between the WCB, workers, employers and other public and private agencies working in the occupational health and safety fields.
- An effective Board governance structure remains crucial to ensuring that the financial, legislative and program challenges facing the Board are dealt with in a responsible manner.
- Finally, in planning for the future, the Board must protect the interests of all WCB stakeholders during the division process and post-division. These interests can best be served through a smooth transition and the implementation of a service delivery plan which provides efficient and cost-effective service in both jurisdictions.

Overall, this plan reflects the directions the Board of Directors adopted in 1997 to guide the operations of the WCB over the next several years. The Board of Directors views its planning process and its written plans as dynamic - changing in response to internal and external developments.

## THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Both the Canadian and Northwest Territories economies continued to experience real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in 1997. Nationally, GDP growth increased from 1.2 percent in 1996 to 3.8 percent in 1997. This growth was stimulated in large part by lower interest rates (which fueled increased private and public investment), low inflation, prudent fiscal management and a renewed confidence in the economy.

Growth remained stable in the Northwest Territories in 1997, with an increase in GDP of 2.5 percent. This growth was fueled by an increase in fixed capital investment, particularly in the non-residential construction sector:

While Statistics Canada anticipated that economic growth would remain stable in both Canada and the Northwest Territories in 1998, recent developments in Asia and the falling Canadian dollar add uncertainty to the economic outlook. The impact of the Asian crisis will be felt primarily in the export sector because of low growth (hence, reduced demand) in that region. Although Canada exports only about 3 percent of GDP to Asia, the impact could be more significant if U.S. growth were negatively affected. Nonetheless, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates the impact on Canadian economic growth to be limited - in the order of one-quarter of 1 percentage point of GDP.

The declining value of the Canadian dollar may also impact the Canadian and Northwest Territories economies. Decreases in commodity prices (due to weaker foreign demand for Canadian goods) and a general movement of international funds into 'safe' U.S. dollar-denominated instruments, common in times of global financial market turbulence, have weakened the value of the Canadian dollar relative to other currencies. This reduces the value of Canadian assets in the international markets as well as the general purchasing power of the dollar. If interest rates were increased to prevent further declines in the value of the dollar, this increase in investment costs may further impact economic growth.

The Canadian and Northwest Territories economies continue to generate economic opportunities in the form of increased employment. Nationally, over 372,000 full-time jobs were created in the private sector. By December 1997, strong employment growth brought the unemployment rate down to 8.6 percent, its lowest level this decade.

In the Northwest Territories, employment rose by approximately 360 full-time positions in 1997, an increase of 1.5 percent. This increase was primarily due to an increase in employment in the construction and trade industries, including the creation of 900 new jobs associated with the Ekati Diamond Mine.<sup>1</sup> These employment gains were partially offset by continued declines in public sector employment.

The fiscal outlook in the Northwest Territories is positive. The Government of the Northwest Territories achieved a \$26 million reduction in the accumulated deficit for the fiscal year 1997-98. For the fiscal year 1998-99, the government brought in its second consecutive balanced budget, with spending estimated at \$1.161 billion and revenues forecast at \$1.163 billion. This allowed the government to meet the requirements of its *Deficit Elimination Act*, which stipulated that in 1997-98,

<sup>1</sup> While 900 new jobs were expected to be created with the construction and operation of the Ekati Diamond Mine, only approximately 300 of these jobs will continue once the mine begins operating at full capacity in 2002.

government expenditures could not exceed revenues by more than 2 percent of revenues, and required a balanced budget in 1998-99.

The total value of minerals, oil and gas shipments in the Northwest Territories increased slightly by 1 percent over 1996, to a level of \$788 million in 1997. Of this total, zinc, oil and gas, and gold accounted for 39%, 30% and 25%, respectively.

Mainly because of external market forces, the NWT's mining sector has been undergoing a period of major change and upheaval, particularly in the gold mining industry. The past few years have been difficult ones, with the Treminco, Ulu, Colomac and Lupin mines all ceasing operations. In addition, a significant number of people employed in the two gold mines in Yellowknife have been laid off. In 1997, the value of gold shipments fell by 16 percent, primarily due to decreases in the price of gold. In contrast, the value of zinc shipments increased by 26 percent, reflecting a substantial increase in price.

The Ekati Diamond Mine has begun production, and is expected to operate at full capacity by 2002. At full capacity, production is projected to reach \$500 million per year.

Exploration expenditures in the Northwest Territories for 1997 amounted to \$179 million - significantly higher than in any other Canadian jurisdiction. This represented a slight decrease of 2.4 percent from the previous year, primarily because it became more difficult for exploration companies to raise capital in 1997 (perhaps due to fallout after the Bre-X mineral scandal and decreases in the world price of gold).

Given the success of the Ekati Diamond Mine, over 70 percent of exploration activity in 1997 was focused on diamonds. There are currently a number of other promising diamond projects in an advanced stage of exploration. In addition, gas exploration and drilling continue in the Fort Liard region and in the established fields around Norman Wells. There is potential for strong growth in oil and gas production in the Fort Liard region, given close proximity to existing pipelines in northern British Columbia.

### **The Economic Environment: Implications for the NWT**

The WCB is primarily affected by the economy in two ways: economic growth and the investment climate. First, the Northwest Territories will likely continue to experience stable economic growth over the next several years, particularly because of the growth in the diamond mining sector and the increased ability of the Government of the Northwest Territories to stimulate investment and employment (given the strengthening of its financial position). This suggests that the WCB's assessment revenue base will be fairly stable in the short term.

Volatility in the financial and currency markets, along with low interest rates, may pose a threat to the positive investment experience the Board has enjoyed over the past few years. Any negative impacts could likely be avoided, however, with proper management of the WCB's investment portfolio.

Although the Northwest Territories experienced an overall net increase in employment in 1997, claims costs decreased. This is because a significant portion of job loss in the Northwest Territories is associated with the mining industry - an industry with traditionally high accident rates. There may also be a rebound in public sector employment over the next few years associated with Nunavut, and with increases in municipal government and local authority employment.

Changes in the composition of the Northwest Territories economy also has implications for the WCB's assessment base. The decline of the gold industry, the expansion of the diamond mining and exploration industries and employment shifts in the public sector all suggest that the WCB should revisit how it provides services to these sectors.

For example, downsizing in the mining industry makes it more difficult for injured mine workers to get employment once rehabilitated or to obtain on-the-job training for other positions in the mining sector.

## THE CHANGING WORKPLACE<sup>2</sup>

Small businesses represent a large and growing proportion of the business community in the Northwest Territories. Most of the employment growth in the last five years has come from the private sector, particularly the small business sector. Since 1992, an estimated 2,500 jobs have been created in the Northwest Territories by this sector.

The importance of small business as a source of both full- and part-time employment can also be seen in terms of providing displaced workers in the mining industry with opportunities to continue working in the Northwest Territories.

While labour income continues to be the largest contributor to total personal income, self-employment income grew by 6.3 percent in 1997 (9.9 percent in 1996), reaching \$85 million. These figures reflect, in part, the trend towards greater self-employment and home-based employment in the labour market. Temporary or contingent employment (that is, employment on a seasonal, contract or casual basis) is expected to remain a key element of the labour market as employers strive to maintain flexibility in an increasingly competitive environment.

Unemployment, particularly for the young, continues to be a problem in the Northwest Territories. This concern is partially reflected in the trend toward interregional and intercommunity migration, particularly from smaller to larger centres. Many Northwest Territories residents see the strong labour market in communities like Yellowknife and Iqaluit as the answer to reducing unemployment. Unfortunately, the major problem in the Northwest Territories is that many unemployed people have low levels of education and their chance of being employed is not very good in either large or small communities.

<sup>2</sup> Sources: Statistics Canada; NWT Labour Force Development Plan (GNWT, 1997) Corporate Plan 1999-2001

## Implications for the WCB

The various forms of non-standard work pose a challenge to the WCB, which has operated on the basis of conventional employment arrangements. For example, workers unable to return to their pre-accident employment may find it difficult to secure a new job that would offer the same permanent, full-time status they enjoyed prior to the injury. The WCB should therefore explore compensation, assessment and safety initiatives specific to small businesses and non-conventional employment arrangements as well.

The continued movement of employers and workers between communities and regions in the Northwest Territories, as well as the movement of employers and workers across the NWT's borders, provides challenges in terms of meeting the WCB's registration, compensation and workplace safety objectives.

## THE CANADIAN WCB ENVIRONMENT

This section provides a snapshot of some of the major strategic initiatives, by issue, either implemented or under consideration by other Canadian jurisdictions over the past year.

### Workplace Safety

Improving workplace safety continues to be a significant issue for many jurisdictions.

In British Columbia, work is beginning on the *Preventing Accident Repetition* project. This unique three-year study focuses on protecting workers who have experienced a high number of injuries (defined as having 20 or more claims in their working lifetime or five or more claims in five years).

British Columbia has recently formed a partnership with educational institutions across the province to provide safety and health courses, so as to give workers and employers in British Columbia the skills to improve workplace safety and health. Worksafe education course materials on such topics as *Occupational Safety and Health for Small Business* and *Hazard Recognition and Control* are prepared by the WCB and taught by local instructors.

Realizing that lack of experience in recognizing job hazards was a key factor in causing injuries and fatalities among young workers, British Columbia recently launched a young worker safety awareness campaign which encourages employers to provide young workers with formal safety training. The WCB is also encouraging young workers to ask their employers for safety training.

Alberta has recognized the efforts of over 2,000 companies in reducing their workplace injuries and implementing effective disability management programs by refunding \$5.3 million in employer premiums. Affected employers were participants in the WCB's *Voluntary Incentive Plan*, a component of the *Partners in Injury Reduction (PIR)* initiative.



Both Ontario and New Brunswick have formally adopted a position of 'zero tolerance' with respect to workplace injuries. This allows these Boards to provide workers and employers with a clear message that safety is a primary concern in the workers' compensation system.

### **NWT Perspective**

Occupational health and safety in the Northwest Territories continues to be a significant issue for the WCB and its Prevention Services Division, particularly in Nunavut. Emphasis is being placed on increased enforcement of safety legislation, more education programs and more focused inspection activity.

After other Safety and the Young Worker programs within Canada were researched, the Northwest Territories program, which had been in use since 1993, was extensively revised. The program now consists of two manuals and four safety videos, and provides 25 instructional hours. The objectives of the program are to expose students to the basics of safety education and training, encourage them to think about safe work habits and provide them with information on their rights as workers. This program will be delivered in all high schools in the Northwest Territories during the 1998-99 school year.

### **Implications for the WCB**

Several of the jurisdictional initiatives mentioned above are of interest to the WCB, which will monitor the results of British Columbia's *Preventing Accident Repetition* project, investigate the potential for safety partnerships with educational institutions in the Northwest Territories and examine the philosophical position of 'zero tolerance' with respect to workplace injuries. The WCB will also investigate possible ways to support small businesses in meeting their statutory responsibilities towards workplace safety.

### **Client Relations**

A number of jurisdictions have undertaken public consultation in order to identify how they may better provide services and programs to their stakeholders.

In February 1998, Alberta initiated its *Benefit Policies Consultation* project. This project involves obtaining input from injured workers, employers, advocates, labour and employer organizations, and health care providers on the appropriateness of the Board's policies. The consultation process is ambitious: focus groups, province-wide telephone surveys, workshops and stakeholder meetings. In addition, Albertans can register for a 15-minute private meeting with a member of the Board of Directors.

Manitoba is planning to conduct stakeholder educational sessions throughout the province in order to increase positive public perception of the WCB and demonstrate its financial viability, among other things.

Newfoundland recently designed and implemented a client satisfaction survey, which allowed it to help individual case managers identify ways to improve the services provided to clients.

Similarly, the New Brunswick Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission is conducting a survey of registered employers in order to determine their level of satisfaction with the WCB's service delivery, as well as the level of understanding of employers' rights and responsibilities under the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

### **NWT Perspective**

In 1996, the WCB conducted a client service delivery survey in order to determine how well the WCB was meeting its corporate client and claimant service delivery standards. Overall, the results indicated that the WCB's clients continued to be satisfied with the WCB in terms of how it delivered services to employers and workers.

Efforts to improve communication with stakeholders are outlined in the Board's 1997-98 Communications Strategy. As part of this strategy, the Board is conducting quarterly surveys of employers and workers in order to obtain feedback on the delivery of WCB programs and services.

### **Implications for the WCB**

The WCB will revisit its approach to stakeholder surveys to determine the value in focusing on individual (assessor/adjudicator) performance.

The WCB should, particularly in light of Division, carry out more extensive consultation with its stakeholders.

## **Funding**

With the majority of jurisdictions achieving or building on fully-funded status in 1998, attention has been focused on managing their improved financial positions and exploring alternative assessment models.

### ***Managing a Surplus***

Manitoba is developing a long-term financial plan that potentially addresses rate reduction, enrichment of service, reserves and rebates. The plan will likely build on the success of the previous one, which resulted in a significant increase in the accident fund balance, assessment rate reductions of at least 5 percent each year and an expected operating surplus for 1998.

**Assessment Rate Models**

Manitoba is considering the extent to which employers can apply for self-insurance or continue to be self-insured instead of being in subclasses of similar employers. Also, concerns have been raised that the rate model is unfair to the extent that large employers are funding a significantly greater portion of the system than small employers.

Manitoba has extended its quarterly assessment system to over 2,000 firms. This system was first introduced as a pilot in 1997 for all construction firms, which argued that the seasonal nature of their industry required some flexibility in assessment payment options.

New Brunswick is considering allowing the Irving Oil Company to become 100 percent experience rated. If realized, this could set a precedent for other jurisdictions to consider should large employers within their jurisdictions request similar treatment.

In British Columbia, the assessment system is being changed in order to take advantage of newly available computer systems that can use individual claims cost data to calculate each year's total costs and to set rates that more accurately reflect the rate group's current risks.

Alberta is implementing an experience rating plan and a small business discount/surcharge program in order to improve the equity of its assessment system.

**NWT Perspective**

A third successive year of solid investment performance resulted in investment revenue of approximately \$24 million for the WCB in 1997. Once again, the Board's investment strategy paid dividends for the WCB, with the total Accident Fund experiencing above-average performance when compared with similar institutional investment portfolios. While assessment rates decreased by 11 percent in 1997, this was more than offset by increased economic activity, attributed largely to increased construction relating to the diamond mining industry. The WCB also experienced a slight reduction in 1997 current year claims costs, and improved experience in prior years' claims.

Overall, the WCB is in a healthy financial position, achieving more than fully-funded status for the fifth consecutive year. In fact, due primarily to a positive investment experience, the WCB currently enjoys a significant operating reserve of over \$35 million. This provides the WCB with opportunities to decrease assessment rates, enhance compensation and invest in new technologies, which will provide long-term benefits to the WCB's stakeholders.

**Implications for the WCB**

The WCB should monitor the experience of other jurisdictions with experience rating, as well as explore the possibility of allowing quarterly reporting for some industries in order to provide flexibility in assessment payments.

In managing its surplus, the WCB should continue to develop and evaluate options which will provide long-term financial and other benefits to its stakeholders.

## **Performance Measurement**

Measuring the impact of programs and services provides Boards with greater certainty that their funding dollars are being spent effectively. It also provides them with the information necessary to effectively modify and adjust these programs so as to ensure they are achieving their desired objectives. Given the inherent difficulties in measuring 'soft' program objectives such as 'improved workplace safety', it is perhaps not surprising that many WCBs have only recently begun to consider the implementation of performance measurement systems. Performance measurement has been implemented by many federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments throughout Canada with similar 'soft' objectives.

In 1998, every Canadian WCB has been exploring ways to incorporate performance measurement into its operations. Identification of clear and consistent outcome measures, data requirements and benchmarks are some of the key areas of concern.

To facilitate discussion among Boards, the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC) has standardized the definitions of various performance measures such as frequencies of claims, assessments, costs and benefit payments, and pension and long-term disability statistics.

### **NWT Perspective**

The WCB recognizes performance measurement as an important tool for ensuring that programs and services are continually meeting their desired objectives. Performance measurement could allow the Board to better track its financial progress, the speed and effectiveness of its service delivery, and most importantly, the satisfaction of its stakeholders with the WCB.

### **Implications for the WCB**

In July 1998, a program evaluation/performance measurement pilot project was initiated to look at the claims establishment and entitlement process. Further work in this area will depend on the outcome of the pilot.

The WCB will adopt AWCBC national performance measurements to ensure consistency with other jurisdictions.

## **Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Some jurisdictions, namely Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia, continue to face a significant backlog of Appeal Tribunal cases. This has led to the consideration of dispute resolution processes, such as mediation and conciliation, as alternatives to the existing review and appeal methods of resolving workers' compensation disputes.

**NWT Perspective**

A review of the WCB's dispute resolution process was completed in 1998. Four areas of concern were identified: the management of differences before they become disputes, the timeliness of the dispute resolution process, interpreting the mandate of the Appeals Tribunal, and the management of new and/or conflicting evidence.

**Implications for the WCB**

The WCB will monitor the dispute resolution processes currently employed in Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia, and will continue to modify its current dispute resolution process with a view to improving its effectiveness and timeliness.

**Information Technology*****Year 2000***

Many computer systems throughout Canada will be negatively impacted by the Year 2000 'glitch' unless steps are taken to address the problem. Manitoba is on schedule to minimize the impact on its own computer system and is planning to remind employers of the importance of this issue through WCB publications. In particular, Manitoba is concerned that if businesses are unprepared to deal with this issue, business failures and shutdowns will have a negative impact on WCB revenues.

***On-line Reporting***

A number of jurisdictions are following British Columbia's lead in improving their information technology. For example, Nova Scotia is investing further in technology to facilitate information sharing. It will have in place an electronic data interchange system for stakeholders, particularly employers and the medical community, to communicate directly with the Board and file required forms electronically, including the electronic reporting of accidents.

**NWT Perspective**

Through its Information Technology Plan, the WCB has identified a number of information system priorities. The Year 2000 problem is expected to be fully addressed by early 1999.

**Implications for the WCB**

In order to encourage compliance by its suppliers and the employers with which it does business, the WCB will develop a communications strategy with respect to the Year 2000 concern.

The WCB will continue to evaluate options, such as an intranet system and a Prevention Services information system, that were identified in its Information Technology Plan.

## THE NWT WCB ENVIRONMENT

This section identifies accident and injury trends in the Northwest Territories, and comments on how these trends may affect the WCB. It also discusses issues which uniquely concern the Northwest Territories Workers' Compensation Board.

### Trends

As noted earlier, the WCB witnessed an increase in its assessment revenues and a decrease in its current year claims costs in 1997. This reflects efforts to ensure all employers who have operations in the Northwest Territories are registered with the WCB and pay assessments, as well as improved safety practices and program initiatives of the Client Services Division and Medical Unit. The WCB has also modified its rate-setting model.

In 1997, the number of time loss claims (time loss moderate and time loss major) decreased from 940 in 1996 to 867. Overall, the total number of claims reported decreased from 3,834 in 1996 to 3,626 in 1997.

The majority of time loss claims continue to occur in the construction, public administration, service, transportation and mining sectors. Injuries to muscles and joints, as well as surface wounds and bruises, are the most common types of injuries.

While the goods-producing industries (such as mining, manufacturing and construction) account for only 18 percent of jobs in the Northwest Territories, they represented 44 percent of the time loss claims in 1997. This is comparable to 1996, when these industries accounted for 20 percent of jobs and 50 percent of time loss claims. With the exception of the exploration activity subclass, all subclasses had assessment revenues greater than the cost of their claims.

### Implications for the WCB

The WCB will continue to actively monitor trends in assessment revenues, accidents and injuries by subclass and individual employer. This will allow the WCB to be proactive in addressing areas of concern, including the growing trend towards progressive claims (such as repetitive strain claims) over traumatic claims.

## Board Governance

In an effort to provide effective and efficient leadership to its management and staff, members of the Board of Directors received training in governance.

Guidelines were drafted to protect Board-staff relations, allowing for one single point of contact between Board members and staff and formalizing a mechanism for each to address conflict.

With a view to becoming a more autonomous Board, development began on a new human resource management model.

## Implications for the WCB

Given the uncertainty it represents, Division will make governance more challenging. For example, the Board will find itself in a position where it is accountable for staff operating in two different jurisdictions.

## Division

On June 26, 1998, the Cabinet of the Government of the NWT directed that:

- An inter-governmental transition agreement be in place prior to April 1, 1999, along with the accompanying amendment to the *Workers' Compensation Act*. This would ensure that WCB programs and services could continue uninterrupted in both jurisdictions beyond April 1, 1999.
- The inter-governmental transition agreement indicate the process to be used to divide the assets of the current WCB and start up a Nunavut WCB, and the timeframe within which this was to be accomplished.
- The legislative amendments enable the current WCB to deliver programs and services in both jurisdictions during the transition phase. These amendments should also allow the two future governments to contract for a joint WCB if they so wish. This solution would provide the WCB with more time to prepare for division into two separate Boards, while ensuring there are no interruptions in the provision of WCB safety and compensation services and programs.

## Implications for the WCB

In light of Division, the Board must maintain focus on its base business, identify approaches to continue to deliver programs and services post-Division, and enjoy good stakeholder relations. The Board will also need to increase its presence in Nunavut in such areas as inspections.

## INTRODUCTION

In its Corporate Plan for 1999-2001, the Board of Directors has considered the implications of the following issues on the WCB's ability to meet the needs of its stakeholders:

- Workplace Safety
- Excellence in Service
- Governance
- Managing the Impact of Division

The Board has aligned its goals and strategies accordingly to ensure that these issues could be addressed in an effective and cost-efficient manner.



## Workplace Safety

### Issue:

The responsibility for regulatory inspections has allowed the WCB to combine information from a variety of sources to obtain a clear picture of workplace safety issues and to take measures to influence the frequency and severity of workplace accidents. The WCB must continue to explore ways to ensure workplaces are safe for all workers.

### Goal:

Safe workplaces.

### Strategy:

To promote safe workplaces by:

- balancing the WCB's mandated responsibilities for education and enforcement;
- promoting partnership and commitment between the WCB, employers, workers and other public and private agencies concerned with occupational health and safety; and
- targeting safety measures to industries and sectors with a high incidence of accidents.

### Objectives:

- review of safety legislation
- safety education (from schools to workplaces)
- timely, accurate and consistent reporting of accidents
- effective communication of stakeholder responsibilities
- employer compliance with legislated safety responsibilities
- initiatives targeted to small business, youth and the changing workplace
- focused approach to inspection activities
- effective performance measurement
- integrated information systems

## Excellence in Service

### Issue:

At a time of significant changes in our environment, the WCB's challenge is to ensure effective, efficient and timely program and service delivery.

### Goal:

To provide a foundation for continuous improvement in program and service delivery.

### Strategy:

To demonstrate continued commitment to excellence by:

- communicating with employers, workers, the medical profession, the public and staff about WCB programs and initiatives;
- evaluating existing programs and services to ensure that stated objectives are being met;
- exploring and implementing alternatives to existing programs and services;
- providing ongoing training and development for staff to support continued high performance;
- ensuring that information systems adequately support service delivery, decision making and accountability; and
- establishing a sound foundation upon which future needs can be met.

### Objectives:

- implementation of communication initiatives within each program
- evaluation of programs and services to ensure they meet standards, stated objectives or expectations
- adoption of national performance measurement initiatives
- consideration of alternative dispute resolution approaches
- examination of return-to-work initiatives
- staff awareness of, and involvement in, operational decisions
- on-line services for stakeholders (subject to demand and cost considerations), including the implementation of information exchange and access pilot projects
- examination of means for Board of Directors/stakeholder interaction

## Governance

### Issue:

The WCB must balance the need for independence from government in fulfilling its legislated mandate with its accountability for actions at the Board and staff levels. The Board's governance structure must continue to provide a strong foundation upon which leadership can build in the future.

### Goal:

A governance structure which promotes independent adjudication, fulfills fiduciary responsibilities, ensures regulatory enforcement, encourages effective management of programs and services, and is adaptable to changing circumstances.

### Strategy:

To work towards a structure which:

- confirms the respective roles, responsibilities and relationships within the WCB;
- clarifies the relationship between the WCB and those to whom the WCB is accountable;
- supports Board members and staff while they carry out their responsibilities; and
- protects the interests of stakeholders in the division process.

### Objectives:

- training for Board members
- a clear relationship between the Board of Directors, staff, Minister(s) and Legislative Assembly(ies)
- accountability to stakeholders
- hosting 1999 AWCBC Congress
- meaningful communication with stakeholders

## Managing the Impact of Division

### Issue:

The *Nunavut Act* (Federal Bill C-132) will come into force April 1, 1999, creating two territories from the current Northwest Territories. Section 29 of the Act duplicates all NWT legislation and will automatically create a new Nunavut WCB.

The NWT WCB must be prepared to support whatever decisions are made at the political level with respect to its structure after Division, and to provide uninterrupted services to all WCB stakeholders throughout the process.

### Goal:

Implementation of whatever post-division organizational model is selected by the two governments.

### Strategy:

To quickly and efficiently implement the new organizational model without interruption in service to WCB stakeholders.

### Objectives:

- Development of appropriate contingency plans until a final decision is made regarding Division;
- Provision of accurate and timely information regarding WCB programs to ensure our stakeholders' needs are taken into account in the decision making process;
- Recruitment and training of Nunavut-based WCB staff;
- Communication of decisions to stakeholders and WCB staff; and
- Implementation of the approved post-Division organizational model and infrastructure.