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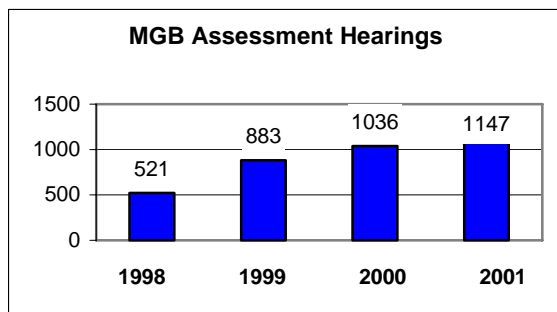
Weekly administrative hearings have been introduced. For those assessment matters which cannot be scheduled within the normal process, the MGB has introduced regular weekly scheduling hearings. Those parties who have been unable to agree to a reasonable hearing date arranged by either Board Secretariat or scheduling staff will be given the mandatory 14 days notice to attend a scheduling hearing. The purpose of this alternative method of scheduling is to ensure the MGB can achieve the timely processing of assessment appeals.

In addition to the scheduling of hearings, other outstanding administrative matters such as disclosure, exchange of evidence, and any other related matter can be addressed. Where there is consent to waive the 14 day notice parties may ask for a hearing to deal with a variety of administrative matters on a weekly basis. These administrative hearings are held every Wednesday afternoon.

If you wish to access a time slot on the Wednesday agenda please contact one of the Board Secretariat at 427 – 4864.

Number Of Assessment Hearings Increasing

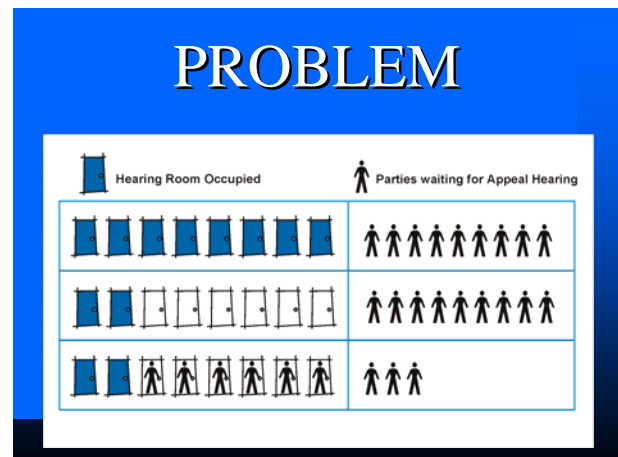
Over the past few years the number of hearings before the MGB have been increasing.



This demand for hearing time requires the MGB to have an effective and efficient means to schedule assessment matters, and to deal with any preliminary matters which may delay the hearing of issues in dispute.

Many Parties Waiting For Hearing Time

When hearing time is dedicated to specific parties and a last minute withdrawal or recommendation occurs, there is insufficient time for the MGB to reassign the hearing time to another party who is waiting for their assessment appeal to be heard.



Out of respect for other parties waiting for a hearing, those parties who no longer need their hearing time are asked to notify the MGB as far ahead of their hearing slot as possible in order that the MGB can reassign the hearing slot to another group of parties.

Remember, the MGB needs a minimum of 21 days notice to schedule another group of parties. This is a minimum requirement, additional time would be preferable.

In addition to the administrative matters heard at the regular weekly Wednesday hearings, the MGB will accept recommendations and withdrawals that are well in advance of a

scheduled hearing. It may be possible to facilitate these matters without the in-person attendance of the parties if the withdrawal and recommendation are done well in advance of the scheduled hearing.

Substitute Case

If parties to an appeal find at the last moment they do not need the scheduled hearing time and wish to avoid appearing before the Board and/or face cost consequences, the parties may substitute another case.

Scheduling of Assessment Cases

The chart shown below outlines the normal practice for scheduling an assessment appeal case.

The following scheduling process is based on a co-operative exercise with the parties to ensure the fixed hearing date is not postponed on the date of the hearing. For the majority of assessment appeal cases this process works very effectively and produces timely results.

Board Targets Timely Processing

In order to achieve the legislated timeline of 150 days to hear and decide assessment appeals, the MGB makes every attempt to ensure that the majority of appeals are scheduled into a firm date within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.

In addition to various scheduling initiatives and the introduction of weekly administrative hearings, the MGB is undertaking steps to improve the timely delivery of decisions.

The Board is attempting to achieve all its written decisions within 90 days of the hearing date. In the past the Board was able to process only 30% of its decisions within the 90-day target. In the last six months it increased this proportion to 50% and in the last monitoring period the proportion achieved was 70%. The Board wishes to achieve a target of 90% of its written decisions within 90 days of the hearing.

This priority attention to timely delivery of decisions was prompted by feedback in the stakeholder surveys from parties who appear before the Board.

Weekly Administrative Hearings

For those cases where the normal scheduling process has not worked and the efforts of the Secretariat have not produced a committed hearing date, the parties will be scheduled before a one-member panel to provide input and receive instructions.

Attendance at these administrative hearings can be in-person or by telephone conference call. Results of these administrative hearings will be issued in the form of a written board order.

Thank you

The MGB wishes to thank all parties for their co-operation and constructive input.

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*M G B H E A R I N G
S C H E D U L I N G*

