

One of the main objectives of the Trust is to raise funds for conservation in the Province and match conservation needs with sources of support. Although the Trust had established a fundraising target totalling \$465,000 for 2001 and 2002, it only raised \$5,500 in project funding from outside sources. To the end of 2002, the Trust has spent \$301,435 on administration since being incorporated in September 1999.

In June 2003 the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation wrote the Trust of the Minister's decision to reallocate approximately \$500,000 of the Trust to another environmental organization. The matter is still not fully resolved.

Government has not adequately monitored Trust activities. Government appointed a Board member to represent the Province's interest in the Trust; however, this Board member has attended only six of the seventeen Trust Board meetings. As well, the Trust Agreement requires the submission of annual reports to the Minister. At the time of our review in September 2003, the last annual report submitted to the Minister was for the year ended 31 December 2000. I do note however that on 27 October 2003, the Trust submitted an annual report for 2002. No annual report was provided for 2001.

2.36 Bridge Inspections

The Department of Works, Services and Transportation has a bridge inspection policy; however, it is not documented and there is no documented approval of the policy. The bridge inspection policy is not risk based; instead, the policy is to inspect bridges six metres or longer every two years. A bridge may be inspected more frequently if the Bridge Office is made aware of safety issues; however, this is a reactive inspection and not proactive based on bridges with the highest degree of risk for safety. Contrary to the Department's policy to inspect bridges six metres or longer every two years, 379 of the 715 bridges requiring such inspection have not been inspected within the past two years. Furthermore, 47 of these 379 bridges had an overall rating showing that they were in a poor or unsafe condition and 39 of the 379 bridges did not have an overall rating.

The Department does not have documented guidelines to assist the five regional engineers and six bridge engineers when completing bridge inspections to ensure that inspections are consistent among

staff and across regions. Our review indicated there were inconsistencies in bridge condition ratings resulting from completed inspections.

The bridge inspection database maintained by the Department containing information input from the bridge inspection reports is incomplete and inaccurate. For example:

- At the time of our review in December 2002, the bridge inspection database did not include information on inspections performed after 2001.
- Fourteen bridges were not in the database and twelve bridges included should have been removed.
- Information on the length of 54 bridges is not included in the database. As a result, it is not possible, from our review of the database, to determine whether these bridges were six metres or longer and whether they should be inspected by engineers within the two year inspection requirement.
- 54 bridges in the database did not have an overall rating.
- Not all information relating to the condition of the bridges is entered into the database. For example, the results of load tests to determine the safety of a bridge is not entered.

The Department's process relating to bridge rehabilitation and replacement requires improvement. For example:

- The Department does not have a long-term plan to enable Government to consider future funding requirements in an orderly manner and to estimate how much funding will be required or when the funding would be required to rehabilitate or replace ageing bridges so that all bridges are brought up to a fair or good condition.
- The Department does not use a risk based model to identify bridges for rehabilitation or replacement. Instead, on an annual basis the Bridge Office uses listings prepared by the

five regions along with their own knowledge of bridge conditions and opinions with regard to safety and economics to set its annual work priorities.

- Officials at the Department have indicated that the funding for the bridge maintenance program is not sufficient. If the required maintenance is not performed on bridges, there will be extra costs for rehabilitation work and the work will be required sooner.

2.37 Ferry Operations

The Department of Works, Services and Transportation is responsible for the Province's ferry operations. As at 31 March 2003, the Province's ferry operations included 21 vessels, 20 of which are serving 15 routes around the Province and 1 vessel, Hull 100, which is undergoing a major refit at Clarenville. Of the 21 vessels, 9 are owned by private operators and the remaining 12 are owned by the Province.

Vessel Renewal and Replacement

Departmental officials have informed us that the normal life expectancy of a vessel is approximately 25 years. At 31 March 2003, 7 of the Province's 12 vessels were more than 25 years old, the average age of all 12 vessels was 26.4 years and ranged from 13 years to 40 years.

The Department has developed a four phase plan to replace 5 of the Province's older vessels; however, no cost or time frame has been established.

Hull 100

In May 1999, the Department purchased the Hull 100 (formerly the Ahelaid), for \$930,000. At that time, the Department estimated that the purchase and refit of the Hull 100 would cost \$2.9 million and that the vessel would be available for service in 2001. However, as at September 2003, the vessel is still not in service and actual costs to date for the purchase and refit are approximately \$8.4 million. Furthermore, Departmental officials indicated that the final