

The Liversidge e-Letter

An Executive Briefing on Emerging Workplace Safety and Insurance Issues

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An *Electronic Letter* for the Clients of L.A. Liversidge, LL.B.

1 page

Where is the Long-Awaited Funding Review Report? *No reason for any continuing delay*

Delay is the antithesis of the openness & speed enjoyed during the Funding Review process itself

As readers of **The Liversidge e-Letter** know, almost a full two years before the September 2010 WSIB announcement of a **Funding Review** Chaired by Dr. Harry Arthurs, in these pages, I called for an urgent **Funding Summit** (see the November 21, 2008 issue of **The Liversidge e-Letter**, “**WSIB Funding Crisis, Everything Old is New Again**”). I suggested then (now 3 ½ years ago) that there was a sense of urgency and urged the Board to:

By no later than mid-January, 2009 . . . facilitate an urgent funding summit . . . to develop a new long-term funding strategy - a newly conceived 20 or 30 year plan. The Board should make this announcement right away . . .

I kept harping on about the need for a **Funding Summit** in a six part series of **The Liversidge e-Letter** first setting out the “**Case for a Large Scale Review of the Ontario WSIB**” (November 2, 5 and 9, 2009) followed by “**A Plan for Change, Reform of the Ontario WSIB**” (November 16, December 1 and 7, 2009). On April 19, 2010 (“**The WSIB 2014 Funding Plan – Why it Failed**”), I fleshed out some suggested details for the **Funding Summit**, proposing it should be a year-long process, with many aims:

Objective one: To trigger and cultivate a renewed partnership with Ontario’s employers generating a revitalized spirit of cooperation and support, sharing ownership of the both the problem and the solution.

Objective two: To mutually define new objectives with clear deliverables based on new fundamentals, all of which is to be built on a common knowledge base, all the while respecting prescribed legislative expectations.

Objective three: To translate the objectives into a workable business model that will endure regime change and respect inter-generational equity.

Objective four: To structure a meaningful review methodology that allows for a structured mechanism to assess progress and adjust the plan if warranted.

I believed then and now that the process was as important as the content. An engaged conversation was critical to the success of any review. The Board finally relented and by early summer 2010 began plans for a **Funding Review**. With the appointment of Dr. Harry Arthurs in September, 2010 the **Funding Review** was assured to be a process of the highest integrity. I was impressed from the get go with Dr. Arthurs’ approach, overall methodology and frankly the speed in which he embarked on this massive project. All with a bare bones staff and infrastructure. Frankly, he compressed into a few months what easily could have taken a larger team a few years. From preliminary meetings with all major stakeholders in the Fall, 2010, to the critical (and unprecedented) “technical sessions” in January, 2011, to the open hearings throughout the province, to the return to open stakeholder discussions (“*What I’ve Heard*”), to the November, 2011 “*What I’m Thinking*” meetings, along the way the **Funding Review** moved with comparative lightning speed. And, all the while this process was fuelled with a solid commitment to openness and disclosure. Every submission was put on the **Funding Review** website. All of the Board’s material was publicly released triggering a high level *public* discussion and critique. *What is truly remarkable is why any of this was remarkable at all.* Certainly, an open and public discourse should be second nature to a public institution such as the WSIB. That this *was* so remarkable is its own story.

The Board undertook to release the report mid-February. Then, the end of March. Then April. Then no later than April 30th. All these dates passed. Three months of valuable time has been lost, needlessly stalling the discussion. Out of respect for the **Funding Review** I have refrained from any substantive comment in these pages and will not make any such comment until the report is in the public domain. But, there is lot to address – many ideas to consider. *To the WSIB: Please release the report. Let’s get on with it.*