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**For Immediate Release
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**Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia
announces stringent staff security clearance measures**

***Improvements made to hiring and internal controls enhance
protection of client accounts***

Vancouver – The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia announced today that it has significantly improved its internal controls, policies and processes and implemented stronger security practices.

The improvements were made following a rigorous and extensive examination of the organization's internal systems and controls after the Public Guardian and Trustee and twelve of its clients were defrauded by former temporary employee Bryan Tickell in 2007. Tickell was sentenced today to a 6 year term of imprisonment for employment fraud, forgery and theft.

“We are grateful that the North Vancouver RCMP and Crown Counsel gave this very serious matter considerable attention and worked so diligently to bring some justice for those affected,” said Jay Chalke, QC, Public Guardian and Trustee. “Now that the criminal proceeding has reached this result, we are moving forward and focusing our efforts on serving the British Columbians who have entrusted us with the management of their personal and financial affairs.”

Many systems and controls improvements have been implemented over the past year which better protect the 32,110 clients under the Public Guardian and Trustee's care.

“Although the misappropriated funds have long since been returned to the client accounts they were wrongfully taken from, it was critical for us to make permanent improvements to our systems and controls that would protect our clients, their trust accounts and our organization from any future incidents,” said Chalke. “I am confident that the improvements we have made and that we will continue to make to our security systems and policies will allow us to move forward, serving our clients.”

The organization's recruiting standards have significantly been improved and all candidates must undergo an enhanced security clearance check which includes, but is

not limited to, the following:

- criminal record check
- police record check
- personal bankruptcy check
- Financial Institutions Commission check
- Securities Commission check
- various Justice System databases checks
- educational qualification verification
- employment history verification
- professional accreditation and disciplinary check

The improvements to hiring are in addition to several improvements that were made internally with respect to the systems and controls governing the handling of client assets, wills and disbursements. Further improvements are being implemented over the next year.

“We sought out, obtained and followed expert advice on how we could improve our controls. As with all financial institutions, this work is never done and I am committed to continuing this process as we move forward,” said Chalke. “In the meantime, our enhanced security clearance requirements are among the most stringent of any public body in British Columbia.”

About the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia:

The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia provides services to approximately 32,110 clients and manages more than \$765 million in trust assets. Its mandate is to serve:

- Children and youth under the age of 19 by protecting their legal and financial interests;
- Adults who require assistance in decision-making through the protection of their legal rights, financial interests and personal care interests;
- Heirs and beneficiaries of deceased persons when there is no one willing or able to administer their estates; the estates of missing persons; and the beneficiaries of personal trusts.

For more information see the PGT website at www.trustee.bc.ca

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