



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Federal Government Funds Repairs to Leaky Seniors Housing**

**WEST VANCOUVER, British Columbia, September 8, 2004** — Don Bell, M.P. for North Vancouver, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, and the Kiwanis Seniors' Housing Society of West Vancouver today celebrated the completion of renovations to Kiwanis Court, a seniors' residence in West Vancouver. CMHC provided funding of \$718,195 through its Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) to repair 79 units of affordable rental accommodation.

"Affordable rental units are key for seniors to live safe and productive lives," said Mr. Bell. "I'm happy that the Government of Canada was able to contribute funds to ensure the continued operation of the Kiwanis Court."

The Kiwanis Seniors' Housing Society of West Vancouver provided \$278,548, the remainder of the funds needed to complete the necessary repairs. Established in 1953, the society's aim is to supply low-income seniors with affordable housing. Kiwanis Court is ideally located near shopping, recreation facilities and transportation.

"CMHC's RRAP program was exactly what was needed to solve the financial dilemma our society faced," explained Harry Martin, President of the Kiwanis Seniors Housing Society of West Vancouver. "As a result of this assistance, the rents we charge our low-income residents were not impacted by the repair costs."

The Government of Canada, through CMHC, spends approximately \$226 million in British Columbia annually to assist some 75,300 low and moderate-income households, including ongoing financial support for the many non-profit and cooperative housing projects.

As part of Canada's national housing strategy, the Federal Government recently extended funding for CMHC's RRAP and other renovation programs geared towards low-income Canadians for another three years. A total of \$384 million will be available through CMHC for these popular programs nationally. For 2004/05 the allocation for British Columbia for RRAP and related programs is approximately \$16.2 million. Rental RRAP offers assistance to landlords of affordable housing to pay for mandatory repairs to self contained units occupied by low-income tenants.

For more information on CMHC's Assisted Housing programs, call 1-800-668-2642.

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## **Fact Sheet — Renovation Programs**

Improvements to the federal renovation programs including the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Emergency Repair Program (ERP), Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence (HASI) and the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) were implemented recently to ensure the program is more effective in serving those most in need, including low income Canadians living in substandard housing, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and victims of family violence.

The changes to RRAP were made following consultations and an extensive evaluation of the renovation programs. The consultation revealed strong support for continued targeting to those in core need, who occupy housing below a minimum level of health and safety standards. The evaluation indicated the program is well-targeted and effective in preserving the existing housing stock. However, it also indicated that levels of assistance were inadequate for some applicants and had not kept up with the rate of inflation.

The changes include the elimination of the repayable loan and an increased maximum limit for forgivable loans. In addition, the sliding scale of forgiveness, based on household income, has been eliminated.

RRAP offers financial assistance to low-income households to enable them to repair their dwellings to a minimum level of health and safety, and enables modifications for persons with disabilities. SEP assists in the repair, rehabilitation, purchase or construction of shelters for victims of family violence. ERP offers assistance to low-income households to undertake emergency repairs required for the continued safe occupancy of their home. The HASI program assists low-income seniors to make minor home adaptations to extend the time they live in their own homes independently.

In addition, the Shelter Enhancement Program will now be available to repair, rehabilitate or improve existing shelters for men who are victims of family violence.

Improvements to RRAP for Persons with Disabilities include a change in the calculation of total household income in recognition of the additional costs faced by persons with disabilities.

RRAP has been in existence for 30 years and is a cornerstone of Canada's national housing policy. The extension of funding for three more years is part of the Government of Canada's national housing strategy, which includes a \$1 billion investment in affordable housing by 2007 – 08.

In B.C. and Yukon, over \$17.3 million is available for the suite of renovation programs in 2004 – 2005.