



PRESS RELEASE



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22 M Supportive Housing Opens in Downtown Eastside

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, October 13, 2009 — People dealing with addictions, mental health and at risk of homelessness will have access to 92 units of supportive housing now open at the Lux in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, thanks to funding from federal, provincial and community partners.

"The Government of Canada is committed to making affordable housing available in British Columbia and across Canada for those who need it most," said Andrew Saxton, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Member of Parliament for North Vancouver, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). "These new units provide more options for individuals in need of suitable, supportive housing, and are important to the economic and social well-being of the Vancouver Community."

The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provided a \$4.75 million grant and the project as a whole also received financing in the form of a \$2.86 million CMHC insured mortgage. The Province provided \$12.88 million towards the capital costs through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative and will provide an ongoing operational subsidy.

"Over 90 people who don't have homes and want to make positive changes in their lives will now have greater access to supportive housing, helping them forge a path towards long-term health and independence," said Rich Coleman, Minister of Housing and Social Development. "The opening of the Lux is part of our Government's commitment to provide more supportive housing options to Downtown Eastside residents."

The City of Vancouver provided the land, with a value of \$885,000, as a no-charge 60-year lease and \$1.05 million for the commercial units.

"The Lux demonstrates the positive outcomes from all levels of government uniting with community partners to help those most in need," said Vancouver mayor Gregor Robertson. "This is another step towards revitalizing the community in the Downtown Eastside and helping our city break the cycle of homelessness."

Vancouver Coastal Health will provide annual operational funding to administer programs and support services to tenants, including life skills education and local health service guidance.

"Offering housing with a range of integrated supports gives people the resources they need to embark on a stable path, regaining control of their health and establishing greater self-reliance," said Allyson Muir, Manager, Mental Health and Addictions Housing in Vancouver Community at Vancouver Coastal Health. "Partnerships between government and community are the cornerstones that help people most in need transition into a more independent living situation."

RainCity Housing and Support Society manages and operates the Lux and provides innovative, outcome-oriented programs and services for people living with mental illness, addictions and other challenges.

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“We believe in a home for every person and building upon the strengths of our community and each individual,” said RainCity Housing and Support Society representative. “Thanks to our great partnerships with all levels of government, we are able to further promote our mission and facilitate hope, opportunity and change for the most vulnerable people.”

The Province has committed to creating more than 4,000 new housing units under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. For the 2009/10 fiscal year, the Province’s budget for shelters and affordable housing is over \$469 million — more than four times what it was in 2001.

‘Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness’ is a website providing a comprehensive and detailed look at provincial programs and services to address homelessness. Visit: www.bchousing.org/breakingthecycle for more information.

CMHC has been Canada's national housing agency for more than 60 years. CMHC is committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, affordable homes, while making vibrant, healthy communities and cities a reality across the country. The Government of Canada, through CMHC, will contribute more than \$130 million towards affordable housing in B.C.

In 2008, the Government of Canada committed more than \$1.9 billion over five years to improve and build new affordable housing and to help the homeless. Canada's Economic Action Plan builds on this with an additional one-time investment of more than \$2 billion over two years in new and existing social housing plus up to \$2 billion in loans to municipalities for housing-related infrastructure.

More information on this and other measures in Canada’s Economic Action Plan, the federal government’s plan to stimulate the economy and protect those hit hardest by the global recession, can be found at: www.actionplan.gc.ca.

To find out more about how the Government of Canada and CMHC are working to build stronger homes and communities for all Canadians, call CMHC at 1-800-668-2642 or visit: www.cmhc.ca/housingactionplan.

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