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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Natural Gas Development and Responsible for  
Housing  
City of Victoria

### **Additional temporary shelter and housing coming to Greater Victoria**

VICTORIA – The Province will provide an additional 88 units of transitional housing and shelter, as well as 40 rent supplements for campers currently residing at the Victoria courthouse lawns.

Thirty-eight transitional housing units will be offered at the Mount Edwards Court Care Home at 1002 Vancouver St., which will be operated by the Victoria Cool Aid Society. The Province has purchased the building from the Baptist Housing Society for \$3.65 million. The housing units will open in the coming weeks for approximately 12 months, and units will be rented for \$375 per month. Island Health will also provide clinical support services at the site.

An additional 50 shelter units will be available at the former Victoria Youth Custody Centre building at 94 Talcott Rd. in View Royal and operated by Our Place Society. Campers will be provided with three meals per day and have the option of camping in the courtyard, which can accommodate at least 20 tents. The View Royal shelter will be open for approximately six months and the Mount Edwards one for approximately 12 months.

These facilities will also provide a range of support services to provide the campers with access to more stable, long-term housing, including rent supplements that will be administered by Pacifica Housing. These units are in addition to the 40 spaces at the former Boys and Girls Club that were made available in December.

Both facilities are expected to be operational by Feb. 23, 2016.

These 88 units of transitional housing and shelter are in addition to the 147 year-round homeless shelter spaces, 125 extreme weather shelter spaces and 145 temporary shelter spaces available in Victoria.

Both non-profit housing operators will hold public information sessions for each location, where community members will be invited to voice their concerns. Dates and locations are still being determined.

Provincial representatives are delivering a notice to each of the campers this morning to advise them that they must vacate the courthouse property by Feb. 25 due to safety concerns and to advise them of the additional housing options.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Rich Coleman, Minister of Natural Gas Development and Minister Responsible for Housing—**

“We have created these additional living spaces and are providing support services to help homeless individuals take an important step to find permanent, stable housing. I hope that

people take this opportunity to make meaningful changes in their lives.”

**Mayor Lisa Helps, City of Victoria –**

“We're happy to see this much-needed investment in affordable housing in Victoria. We look forward to working with the Province and the neighbourhood to determine the best long-term use for the facility.”

**Mayor David Screech, View Royal –**

“The homeless issue is truly a regional problem, and we believe that all jurisdictions must be part of the solution. With that philosophy, we are prepared to support Victoria and BC Housing’s initiative to use the youth custody centre as a facility for the homeless on a temporary basis. Victoria and BC Housing have shown great leadership in bringing forward these solutions.”

**Don McTavish, senior manager, Victoria Cool Aid Society –**

“Cool Aid is excited to have this opportunity to house and support 40 people who are today homeless. We appreciate the support of the Province and look forward to working with the new residents, Cathedral School and neighbours to ensure this housing program integrates successfully into the neighbourhood.”

**Don Evans, executive director, Our Place Society –**

“We are excited to offer people an opportunity to focus on their health needs. This state-of-the-art facility can deliver secure and stable shelter with access to food, hot showers, laundry and programs. The members of tent city have been asking for a place where they can still camp outdoors, but with access to the necessities they need. This facility delivers that and more.”

**Quick Facts:**

- The Province has invested more than \$176 million over the past five years toward approximately 5,000 units of subsidized housing and rent supplements in Victoria.
- In 2014-15, the B.C. government invested more than \$19 million to provide subsidized housing and rent supplements for more than 5,100 households in Victoria. This includes providing support for more than 2,200 senior households and more than 1,300 family households.
- There are nearly 150 year-round homeless shelter spaces available in Victoria.
- Last winter, more than 145 additional shelter spaces were available across Greater Victoria to increase emergency shelter space when extreme weather conditions threatened the safety and health of individuals.
- The daytime drop-in centre at Our Place operates with \$500,000 in funding from the B.C. government. In addition, the Province provided \$125,000 in one time funding to help Our Place stay open longer.
- Since 2001, the B.C. government has invested \$4.4 billion to provide affordable housing for low income individuals, seniors and families.
- This year, more than 102,500 B.C. households will benefit from provincial social housing programs and services.
- The Province provided approximately \$213 million last year to support more than 13,200

emergency shelter spaces, subsidized housing units and rent supplements for those who were homeless throughout British Columbia.

- Last year, the Province invested over \$19.7 million to provide subsidized housing and rent supplements for more than 5,100 Victoria households, including more than 970 of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

**Learn More:**

To learn more about provincial programs and services to address homelessness in Victoria, please visit: [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org) and [www.housingmattersbc.ca/docs/fs\\_Homeless%20Supports\\_Victoria.pdf](http://www.housingmattersbc.ca/docs/fs_Homeless%20Supports_Victoria.pdf)

To see a map of permanent and temporary shelters in B.C., please visit: [http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency\\_Housing/Map](http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency_Housing/Map)

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