

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Housing

Affordable homes open near Central Saanich for Indigenous people

SAANICH – An affordable housing development with 28 homes for Indigenous people is now open on the Tsawout First Nation near Central Saanich.

“Tsawout First Nation is elated about the new affordable rental housing for working individuals and families built on Nation land,” said Chief Abraham Pelkey. “We would like to raise our hands in thanks to the Underwood Family Trust, BC Housing, Salish Sea Housing Society, Victoria Native Friendship Centre and many others for this amazing achievement. So many families are grateful they have a safe place to call home. We here in Tsawout look forward to many more amazing opportunities like this in the future. HÍSWŪKE SIÁM.”

Located at 7611 Central Saanich Rd., the five-storey building has a mix of two- and three-bedroom homes with dishwashers, laundry machines in each unit, storage lockers, bike storage, covered parking and internet access. Reflecting the desire to create community among residents, there is a playground and a communal space for barbecuing and gathering.

"These are 28 much-needed affordable homes for Indigenous people during a housing crisis, where people from the Tsawout Nation will live closer to family, community and culture," said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing. "We are proud of the work the Salish Sea Housing Society and Victoria Native Friendship Centre have done, and we remain committed to working with First Nations partners to ensure more Indigenous people have access to housing that meets their needs in communities throughout B.C."

The building is owned by the Salish Sea Housing Society on land leased to the society by the Underwood Trust. Victoria Native Friendship Centre will serve as property manager.

This project is part of a \$19-billion housing investment by the B.C. government. Since 2017, the Province has nearly 77,000 new homes that have been delivered or are underway, including 120 homes in Central Saanich.

Quotes:

Lana Popham, MLA, Saanich South –

“Finding affordable housing is an issue here on the south island as it is across the province, and our government is proud to be supporting the Salish Sea House as an attainable home for members for the Tsawout First Nation. This project is an example of how we are working with Indigenous organizations to ensure that supportive, affordable and culturally inclusive homes are made available as a step toward reconciliation and affordability.”

Jack Basey, board chair, Salish Sea Housing Society –

“On behalf of the board of directors, we’re pleased to announce the opening of this innovative, green, rental-housing development. Located on certificate-of-possession lands within the Tsawout First Nation, it provides affordable rental housing for working individuals and families

that strives to be culturally safe. The board is pleased that by working together with our many partners over the past decade, our vision has been realized.”

Quick Facts:

- The Underwood Trust provided the land for this project through a lease to Salish Sea Housing Society.
- The Province, through BC Housing, provided \$6.1 million through the Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund (IHF) for the project and is providing annual operating funding of approximately \$536,000.
- Budget 2023 added \$1.3 billion to the IHF for a total of \$1.8 billion to build 3,500 units of social housing for Indigenous Peoples, on and off reserve.
- With this commitment, B.C. became the first province in Canada to invest provincial housing funds into on-reserve housing, which is a federal responsibility.
- B.C. has also opened all its provincial housing programs to First Nations.

Learn More:

To learn about government’s new Homes for People action plan, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023HOUS0019-000436>

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for British Columbians, visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/>

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