
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 21st, 2003

Vancouver Agreement Launches New Economic, Social and Health Programs to Revitalize Downtown Eastside

Vancouver, B.C. — Vancouver Agreement partners today announced more than \$2.8 million in new programs aimed at revitalizing the Downtown Eastside economically and socially.

Stephen Owen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), George Abbott, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, and Mayor of Vancouver Larry Campbell joined community and business leaders in announcing a comprehensive group of business and social development and Aboriginal health programs in the heart of the DTES today.

"The Vancouver Agreement is a powerful tool for combining the resources of three levels of government to address longstanding issues in this historic neighbourhood. I am proud of the work undertaken through this partnership in building a sustainable community by enhancing the business environment, supporting entrepreneurship and helping individuals gain the skills they need for healthier lives," said Stephen Owen.

"The provincial government is acting on our New Era commitment to measurably improve the lives of aboriginal people: a total of \$800,000 will support aboriginal healing, with special emphasis on health issues for aboriginal women, children and families," said Abbott. "The Vancouver Agreement partners are committed to ensuring that, as part of our bid for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, we create a strong foundation for sustainable socio-economic development in Vancouver's inner-city neighbourhoods."

"The partnership among governments and with community groups provides a direct benefit to the people of this neighbourhood. By taking a comprehensive approach, we build a stronger economic and social foundation for businesses and individuals to succeed," said Campbell.

The announcement includes:

- programs supporting aboriginal health and well-being, including a program to provide support to aboriginal women involved in street activities, with a focus on safety, addiction, trauma and abuse – \$800,000
- economic revitalization projects – \$1,709,500 and
- a dental clinic funded in part under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement serving low-income families at Strathcona Elementary School - \$342,500.

- 2 -

"It's timely that the Aboriginal economic issues in the DTES are being addressed," said Bernice Doucet-Ryan, Coordinator of the Red Cross HIV/AIDS Network. "The socio-economic status of Aboriginal people in the DTES makes them more vulnerable to HIV. This is a good step towards improving the health of Aboriginal people in the Downtown Eastside."

The Vancouver Agreement is a five-year collaboration involving the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Signed in March 2000, the Agreement focuses on three main areas: community health and safety; economic and social development; and community capacity building.

- 30 -

Media contacts:

Vancouver Agreement: Trish Webb – 604-209-8901

Western Economic Diversification Canada: Dave Morgan – 604-666-7543

Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services: Marisa Adair – 250-953-3677

City of Vancouver: Catherine Clement – 604-873-7270

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED BACKGROUNDERS

- Economic Revitalization Initiative
- Aboriginal health Programs
- LifeSkills Centre
- Strathcona Dental Clinic
- Inclusive Intent and Commitment Statements – 2010 Olympic Bid
- Neighbours First