

Federal Partnerships

Mr. Speaker, as Housing Minister one of my main goals was to strengthen and develop partnerships and relationships. Now, as we come to the end of this Legislative Assembly, it is evident that partnerships have played a critical role in our success. One of our most important relationships is, of course, with the Government of Canada. We have a number of programs and new projects that would not be possible without this partnership.

Mr. Speaker, in the past four years I have met Federal Ministers Hussen, Minister Responsible for Housing, Diversity and Inclusion and Minister Vandal, Minister Responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency on several occasions, most recently with the new Minister Responsible for Housing, Diversity and Inclusion, Minister Sean Fraser. I have also engaged on several occasions with the Northwest Territories Member of Parliament Michael McLeod and Member of Parliament Mr. Chad Collins who is the Chair of the National Housing Caucus.

Mr. Speaker it is through all of these engagements with federal officials that we have the opportunity to outline and highlight the need for federal support to improve the housing situation. Housing NWT staff have also been very engaged with their colleagues in the federal government and it is through these partnerships that we have been very successful in securing resources for the North.

Mr. Speaker as Minister Responsible for Housing NWT, I am proud to say that through our partnerships and relationships over the life of the 19th Legislative Assembly, over \$600 million in federal funding has been announced to support housing priorities across the NWT.

We recently announced another partnership project with the City of Yellowknife at the Aspen Apartments. Through this partnership with the City and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing NWT has a budget of approximately \$5 million under the Cities Stream of CMHC's Rapid Housing 3 Initiative for safety upgrades and other required renovations. This project allows Housing NWT to acquire and modernize the Aspen Apartments, a 36-unit building, which will further increase our number of owned public housing units in Yellowknife, while freeing up leased units for private market rental needs.

Approximately a year ago, Mr. Speaker, Housing NWT assumed full ownership of the Nordic Arms apartment building in Yellowknife. With assistance from Finance Canada, we were able to complete necessary upgrades and other renovations for the building so that public housing tenants could move in safely.

Housing NWT has worked hard over the life of this government to increase its stock of quality, energy-efficient, and affordable housing for those who need it most. With the acquisitions of the Aspen and Nordic Arms apartment buildings, Housing NWT is delivering on its commitment to innovation and sustainability.

In addition to these projects, we are also supporting low-income households through the Canada-NWT Housing Benefit, a monthly subsidy of up to \$800 to help families cover rental costs. Any household paying more than 30 percent of their gross income on rent can receive this benefit, with eligible residents being able to stay in the program for up to two years.

Mr. Speaker, the Canada-NWT Housing Benefit is entering its third year and I cannot speak highly enough of this program. Housing NWT's mandate is to increase the wellbeing of individuals and communities by providing fair access to quality housing supports for people who need it most. The Canada-NWT Housing Benefit does just this, by providing much-needed financial assistance to house people who would otherwise be unable to afford it. Our staff have heard very positive feedback from community members who have accessed this funding. It is a program that allows residents to breathe a bit easier and save a little more.

Mr. Speaker, the accomplishments outlined today are only some of the most recent announcements of federal investments made over the life of this government. I am encouraged that through both mine and the departments partnerships with our federal colleagues that Canada has prioritized the NWT's housing needs and delivered by approving a wide range of projects under the National Co-investment Program, the Rapid Housing Program, and the Reaching Home Program. Housing NWT acknowledges and celebrates how much the Government of Canada has prioritized our housing needs and we continue to advocate for further supports through our recommendations to enhance and allocate funding through the National Housing Strategy and the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategies that are being led by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, during my conversations with federal Ministers, I made it clear that we would also be in support of funding going directly to Indigenous governments to support Indigenous Housing for the North, and as I outlined previously this session this was indeed a success.

Mr. Speaker this significant federal funding will continue to support a substantial increase in affordable housing units, additional market housing units, and repair opportunities for private homeowners.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.