

The De Beers/Yellowknife Women's Society Partnership

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about a new partnership between the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the De Beers Group - a partnership that will help house some of our most vulnerable citizens.

De Beers Group has invested heavily in the Northwest Territories over the years through the development of its two mines. These investments have provided numerous gains for the residents of the Northwest Territories in terms of jobs and procurement. In addition to the economic benefits, De Beers Group has indicated that they want to support lasting social improvements to communities.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the De Beers Group have discussed potential legacy housing projects, consistent with the De Beers Group's commitment to supporting Northwest Territories communities involved in diamond mining. The De Beers Group is especially interested in projects that address the long-term needs of vulnerable people in their operating region.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the De Beers Group, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the Yellowknife Women's Society have agreed to improve shelter housing for women who are homeless.

The Yellowknife Women's Society shelter on Franklin Avenue will be reconfigured to provide 16 single-room suites for homeless women. The De Beers Group is making a generous contribution of \$250,000 to the project. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will provide project management expertise and a \$350,000 contribution under the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's Community Housing Support Initiative.

The Yellowknife Women's Society will administer a smaller emergency shelter section of the building. They will continue to provide supportive services to residents in the new suites.

These new spaces will provide better privacy, safety and security for women. The shared living arrangement offers the safety of living with others, as opposed to being isolated in a rental unit on the private market. Residents will have a safe, stable home where they can start to address some of the other challenges in their lives, without having to worry about housing.

This initiative supports the mandate commitment of the 18th Legislative Assembly on increasing the availability of safe, affordable housing and creating solutions for addressing homelessness. It is also consistent with long-term planning to address homelessness in Yellowknife. This project is one-step towards what our communities, this government and all of our partners want; healthy, sustainable communities with safe, adequate and affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's partnership with the De Beers Group and the Yellowknife Women's Society is an exciting opportunity. It is a great example of how a corporate citizen can work with governments and other partners to create tangible outcomes and make our communities better places for all our residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.