

**From:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, February 8, 2016 2:30 PM  
**To:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Fwd: Courthouse Campers Materials  
**Attachments:** MA-Feb5\_Final.pdf; ATT00001.htm;  
NR\_VictoriaAdditionalShelter\_Draft7\_BCH update2.docx;  
ATT00002.htm; QA\_Victoria Courthouse Campers\_4 Feb 16  
V6.docx; ATT00003.htm; KM\_Victoria Courthouse Campers\_5  
Feb 16.docx; ATT00004.htm;  
QA\_BCH\_Victoria\_Additional\_Shelter\_Draft 6.docx;  
ATT00005.htm

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX" <[Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Date:** February 4, 2016 at 8:33:25 PM PST  
**To:** "Facey, Nick MTIC:EX" <[Nick.Facey@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Nick.Facey@gov.bc.ca)>, "Reddy, Brandon MTIC:EX" <[Brandon.Reddy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Brandon.Reddy@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Courthouse Campers Materials

Hi guys,  
Here are the materials. Please note our QA is still in signoff.  
Media Advisory (issued at 9:30am and media avail at 11:30am)  
News Release (10:45am)  
QA – MTICS  
KM  
QA - Housing

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**Tasha Schollen** | Communications Director  
Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Phone: 250-387-3134 | Cell: 250-889-1121

Feb. 5, 2016

MEDIA ADVISORY – Ministry of Natural Gas Development and Responsible for Housing

VICTORIA – Minister Responsible for Housing Rich Coleman will hold a conference call to discuss new transitional housing options in Victoria and next steps for campers at the courthouse.

Event Date: Friday, Feb. 5, 2016

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Dial-In Information:

Toll-free number to join the call: 1 877 353-9184

Participant pass code: 28549#

Contact:

Sandra Steilo

Media Relations

250 952-0617

## **KEY MESSAGES**

### **Confidential**

**Victoria Courthouse Campers**

**Feb. 5, 2016**

- **The Province is providing an additional 88 units of transitional housing and shelter, as well as 40 rent supplements for campers currently residing at the Victoria courthouse lawns.**
- **A total of 38 transitional housing units will be offered at the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home and an additional 50 shelter units will be available at the Victoria Youth Custody Centre building in View Royal.**
- **The Province has given Victoria Courthouse campers notice that they will be required to vacate the property and remove all personal property, no later than Feb. 25, 2016.**
- **After that date, any remaining personal property, including semi-permanent structures may be removed by the Province.**
- **Public health and safety are of our utmost priority, and an increasing number of safety risks to the campers and the general public require us to dismantle the campsite.**
- **To help with the transition, Our Place and the Victoria Cool Aid societies are available to connect the campers to shelter and support services such as health care and counselling.**
- **If campers do not vacate the site by Feb. 25, 2016, they could be subject to enforcement under applicable law. (Section 10 of the Trespass Act.)**
- **It is our hope that campers will leave on their own volition and access the shelter services that are available to them.**

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
[release number]  
Feb. 5, 2015

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 Mt. Edwards Court Care Home at 1002 Vancouver Street, 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 near the end of February 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 Victoria Youth Custody Centre building at 94 Talcott Road in View Royal and operated by Our Place Society. Campers will be provided with three meals per day and have the option of setting up tents outside in the courtyard, which can accommodate at least 20 tents. The View Royal shelter will be open for approximately six months.

Both 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 facilities are in addition to the 40 spaces at the former Boys and Girls Club that were made available this past December.

Both facilities are expected to be open by Feb. 23.

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 alternative housing options now available to them.

### **Quotes:**

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

“These additional units of indoor and outdoor shelter spaces and transitional housing will serve as an important step towards addressing homelessness in Victoria. We know that once people

no longer need to worry about a warm and safe place to stay, they can move towards finding more permanent, stable housing.”

**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:**

- 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 across 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)

**Media Contact:**

Sandra Steilo  
Media Relations  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development and Ministry Responsible for Housing  
250 952-0617

Jenny Lee-Leugner  
BC Housing  
604 439-4195

## **Questions and Answers for**

**Honourable Rich Coleman**

**Minister of Natural Gas Development,**

**Minister Responsible for Housing and Deputy Premier**

**Victoria additional shelter spaces**

**Feb. 5, 2016**

**1. Why is BC Housing purchasing the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home building and utilizing the Youth Custody Centre?**

We recognize that there's an increased need for safe and secure shelter spaces in Victoria. By directly purchasing the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home and opening shelter spaces in View Royal, we can help transition the campers at the Victoria courthouse into supportive housing.

In addition, BC Housing has allocated 40 rent supplements, which will help people make the transition into longer-term housing.

**2. Where will the new shelters be located?**

One shelter will occupy part of the Youth Custody Centre building at 94 Talcott Road in View Royal for approximately six months. It will be a 24/7 shelter, offering daily meals and a gateway into housing and support services

The other building is Mt. Edwards Court Care Home, located at 1002 Vancouver Street. It will provide transitional housing for approximately for 12 months and individuals will pay \$375 monthly rent.

**3. How much is the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home being purchased for?**

The Mt. Edwards Court Care Home was purchased for \$3.65M.

**4. How much funding will the Province provide to operate the new shelters?**

The operating budget for Mt. Edwards is an estimated \$1.29M for 12 months.

The operating budget for Youth Custody Centre is currently being finalized.

The operating funding will allow each provider to hire the necessary staff, equipment, furniture and supports needed.

**5. When will the shelters open?**

We expect both shelters to be operational by Feb. 23.

**6. How many spaces will be available?**

There will be 38 units of transitional housing at Mt. Edwards Court Care Home.

The View Royal shelter will provide a total of 50 shelter spaces, which includes approximately 20 outdoor camping spaces for those who choose to remain outside.



**7. Who is eligible to stay at the View Royal shelter?**

The shelter will serve people at the camp and others who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Shelters like the one at View Royal have low barriers to entry. The reason we do this is to better serve the most vulnerable and those who do not have access to other services.

**8. What is the plan regarding the housing of vulnerable youth in care sharing the same shelter with homeless people?**

A tent city and a homeless shelter are not suitable permanent housing options for youth.

Ministry of Children and Family Development social workers are committed to working with youth in care that may move to the new homeless shelter to facilitate their return to safe and appropriate accommodations where the youth can receive necessary support services.

These efforts to return children and youth to safe environments usually require ongoing attempts and engagement on the part of social workers.

It is important to remember that while MCFD is committed to providing the most appropriate level of services, the ministry has no legal authority to confine a child or youth in a foster care placement, nor can the ministry restrain or forcibly remove any youth from a location, even if that location is in a shelter, or tent city.

**9. Is it really in the best interest of the youth in custody who use the unit to frequent a location/property shared with a homeless shelter?**

The temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the Centre's admissions and discharge unit) is fully self-contained with its own entrance and exit and will not be affected by the addition of new tenants on the site.

There are no security concerns with the addition of the new tenants on the site as that portion of the facility is also separate and fully secure.

It is important to note that the temporary overnight holding unit was only utilized approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015, and is empty and closed the majority of the time.

When a youth does require the use of the temporary overnight holding unit, they are accompanied and supervised by a ministry staff member and/or member of BC Sheriff's Services, and most stays are for a duration of 24 hours or less.

**10. Who is eligible to stay at Mt. Edwards Court Care Home?**

Similar to the shelter, the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home will serve people at the camp and others who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are vulnerable and in need of access to support services.

**11. Will there be low-barrier housing at Mt. Edwards?**

No. The Mt Edwards housing will **not** be low-barrier. It will be transitional supportive housing.

**12. Neighbours have expressed concern about the Mt. Edwards housing being located next to a school. How can you be certain there is no risk to children at the school?**

The Operator will have support staff on site 24/7. Additional security staff will also supervise the area between the school and the Mt. Edwards building. There will also be security cameras indoors and outdoors along Rockland Avenue, across from the school.

Neighbours near the shelter at the former Boys and Girls Club initially raised similar concerns but, to date, there have been no recorded security issues in the community.

In fact, the school's principal has said that "Day to day, the kids don't see any real evidence of the fact that there's a shelter in the building aside from a security guard outside."

**13. What sort of consultation will you be doing with neighbours and the school?**

The Non-Profit Housing Providers and BC Housing will be holding information sessions in both communities to answer questions and address their concerns. Dates and locations for those sessions are still being determined.

**14. Are you likely to make any changes to address their concerns, or is this a *fait accompli*?**

We will listen to their concerns and address them as best we can. A neighbourhood agreement will be developed by Cool Aid. This will include weekly meetings with community representatives, including the school and Victoria Police Department. Any neighbourhood concerns can be addressed through this process.

**15. What type of support services will be available at the View Royal shelter?**

The shelter will provide essential services to meet clients' immediate needs. This includes accommodation, nutritious meals, security and basic hygiene. It will also provide gateway services to help break the cycle of homelessness by connecting clients to community and health services, as well as more stable housing.

**16. Who will operate the different facilities?**

The View Royal shelter will be operated by Our Place Society, and the Mt. Edwards shelter will be operated by Victoria Cool Aid Society.

The Portland Hotel Society may provide assistance as needed, because they have expertise with homeless populations, specifically the hardest to house.

Pacifica Housing will oversee all rent supplements.

**17. How long will the facilities be open for?**

Both shelters are temporary: the View Royal shelter will be open for approximately six months, and the Mt. Edwards shelter will be open for at least one year.

**18. What do you expect will happen to the people in these facilities when they close?**

Individuals at these sites will be offered more permanent housing situations. The idea of these two facilities is to achieve that. And if you look at the shelter at the former Boys and Girls Club in Victoria, we've already had three people move from that shelter into long-term housing.

**19. It's been reported that the Victoria Cool Aid Society was to purchase Mt. Edwards. Is that still an option?**

BC Housing received permission from the Victoria Cool Aid Society to take over their purchase of sale agreement from Mt. Edwards. The Society will operate the temporary shelter and may have an option to purchase the facility in the future.

**20. Will the Mt. Edwards building need to be re-zoned for this purpose?**

This temporary use of the building for transitional housing will not be subject to rezoning. For future longer-term use, discussions with the City, neighbours, Cool Aid and other stakeholders may be required, but that will depend on the ultimate use of the building, and the Province will fully comply with that zoning process. The Victoria Mayor and Council are fully supportive of this action.

**21. How much has BC Housing invested in Victoria this winter on temporary shelters?**

This winter, the Province has provided \$425,000 for a 40-bed temporary winter shelter at the Boys and Girls Club on Yates Street, as well as \$184,000 for a 40-bed temporary winter shelter at the First Metropolitan United Church.

These shelters are in addition to 147 year-round homeless shelters spaces and 125 extreme weather shelter spaces available in Victoria.

**22. Why is the city receiving so much funding compared to other municipalities in need?**

We always try to work closely with individual municipalities to identify their specific needs, and funding will vary. In this case, we understand the concerns raised by the people at the Victoria courthouse campsite, and recognize the need for immediate housing solutions in the region.

**23. What happens to the current youth that are housed at the Youth Custody Centre?**

The Custody Centre is only minimally functional at this time. There will be no impact on the youth, as the campers will be housed in the gym and court yard.

**24. Were there no other options other than to purchase the Youth Custody Centre?**

The priority right now is to house the homeless campers as soon as possible. That's what we have been working towards, and these are the best options we have currently.

We are also looking at longer-term options for stable housing solutions for vulnerable individuals.

**25. Can you be more specific about the longer-term options for stable housing solutions for vulnerable individuals?**

We will also be providing funding for 40 rent supplements that can be used towards long-term opening in the private market. Rent supplements provide individuals with the ability to choose where they want to live that best meet their needs. Additionally, the Province is working closely with our non-profit housing providers to find other longer-term housing solutions in the Victoria area.

### **Flyer and next steps for campers**

#### **26. When will campers be notified to vacate the property?**

The Province has issued a flyer to Victoria Courthouse campers, giving them notice that they will be required to vacate the property and remove all personal property, no later than Feb. 25, 2016.

After that date, any remaining personal property, including semi-permanent structures may be removed by the Province.

Public health and safety are of our utmost priority, and an increasing number of safety risks to the campers and the general public require us to dismantle the campsite.

#### **27. What happens to the campers if they refuse to leave and who will ensure they do leave?**

Campers will have 21 days to pack up their belongings and find alternate shelter. To help with the transition, Our Place and the Victoria Cool Aid societies are available to connect the campers to shelter and support services such as health care and counselling.

Staff from Cool Aid and Our Place will be available on site to provide access to housing options and other supports.

If campers do not vacate the site by Feb. 25, 2016, they could be subject to enforcement under section 10 of the Trespass Act.

It is our hope that campers will leave on their own volition and access the shelter services that are available to them.

#### **28. Safety, health and neighbour concerns were raised months ago, so why has it taken the Province so long to finally evict the campers?**

The Province wanted to ensure that there was enough shelter space available to campers before requiring them to leave.

Last month, we announced the opening of a temporary shelter on Yates St. and today we are announcing that two additional shelters will be opening up to accommodate the remaining campers.

We understand that concerns have been expressed by some neighbours in the area and we appreciate their patience over the past few months as we sought out alternate housing arrangements for people.

**29. What kind of health and safety risks have you been seeing there?**

While the ministry appreciates the complex issues facing campers at the site, an increasing number of health and safety issues have been present at the site and it is in no way suitable for camping.

Police have responded to some very serious criminal incidents that include drug overdoses, and stabbing incidents. There have also been fire concerns and general health concerns that include an absence of food preparation and storage facilities as well as bathrooms.

**30. Has the Province filed for an injunction, and if so, what are the timelines around that?**

The Province will look at all options, but for now, our main concern is getting these people into safe and secure facilities.

The process of securing an injunction is to obtain a court order that requires people, by law, leave the Courthouse property.

A court would decide whether to hear the injunction application and the Province would ask that it be heard expeditiously.

**31. What is the Province going to do if these campers go to St. Ann's to sleep, then what?**

St. Ann's Academy is private property that is owned by the Province.

Signage at the site prohibits 24 hour camping.

Should campers violate this rule, security will ask them to leave.

If they refuse to leave, campers could be subject to enforcement under section 10 of the Trespass Act.

**32. Could the campers tent at the Legislature grounds and if not, why?**

Camping is not permitted at the Legislature grounds. The Legislature is critical to the operation of government, for which there is a higher level of security.

**Questions and Answers**  
**Victoria Courthouse Campers**  
**Feb. 2, 2016**

**1. What is being announced today?**

- The Province has issued a flyer to Victoria Courthouse campers, giving them notice that they will be required to vacate the property and remove all personal property, no later than Feb. 25, 2016.
- After that date, any remaining personal property, including semi-permanent structures may be removed by the Province.
- Public health and safety are of our utmost priority, and an increasing number of safety risks to the campers and the general public require us to dismantle the campsite.

**2. What happens to the campers if they refuse to leave and who will ensure they do leave?**

- Campers will have 21 days to pack up their belongings and find alternate shelter.
- To help with the transition, Our Place and the Victoria Cool Aid societies are available to connect the campers to shelter and support services such as health care and counselling.
- If campers do not vacate the site by Feb. 25, 2016, they could be subject to enforcement under applicable law. (section 10 of the Trespass Act.)
- It is our hope that campers will leave on their own volition and access the shelter services that are available to them.

**3. When will the two shelters be operational?**

- We expect the Mt. Edward Court and Victoria Youth Justice Centre shelters to be up and running by Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Our Place and the Victoria Cool Aid societies are available to work with campers to connect them with shelter and support services such as health care and counselling.
- BC Housing outreach workers have been at the courthouse site on a regular basis, working with the campers to provide information about shelters and other services available in the Victoria area.

**4. Safety, health and neighbour concerns were raised months ago, so why has it taken the Province so long to finally evict the campers?**

- The Province wanted to ensure that there was enough shelter space available to campers before asking them to leave.

- Last month, we announced the opening of a temporary shelter on Yates St. and today we are announcing that two additional shelters will be opening up to accommodate the remaining campers.
- We understand that concerns have been expressed by some neighbours in the area and we appreciate their patience over the past few months as we sought out alternate housing arrangements for people.

**5. What kind of health and safety risks have you been seeing there?**

- While the Ministry appreciates the complex issues facing campers at the site, an increasing number of health and safety issues have been present at the site and it is in no way suitable for camping.
- Police have responded to some very serious criminal incidents that include drug overdoses, and stabbing incidents.
- There have also been fire concerns and general health concerns that include an absence of food preparation and storage facilities as well as bathrooms.

**6. How long until the lawn is fixed?**

- We expect we will need 4-6 weeks to repair the courthouse lawn and tidy up the site so that it is in a safe condition for public use.

**7. Has the Province filed for an injunction, and if so, what are the timelines around that?**

- The Province will look at all options, but for now, our main concern is getting these people into safe and secure facilities.
- The process of securing an injunction is to obtain a court order that requires people, by law, to leave the Courthouse property.
- A court would decide whether to hear the injunction application and the Province would ask that it be heard expeditiously.

**8. What is the Province going to do if these campers go to St. Ann's to sleep, then what?**

- St. Ann's Academy is private property that is owned by the Province.
- Signage at the site prohibits 24 hour camping.
- Should campers violate this rule, security will ask them to leave.
- If they refuse to leave, campers could be subject to enforcement under section 10 of the Trespass Act.



**9. Who will enforce bylaws at St. Anne's?**

- Twenty-four-hour camping is prohibited at St. Anne's Academy.
- Should campers violate this rule, security will ask them to leave.
- If they refuse to leave, campers could be subject to enforcement under applicable law. (section 10 of the Trespass Act.)

**10. Could the campers tent at the Legislature grounds and if not, why?**

- Camping is not permitted at the Legislature grounds.
- The Legislature is critical to the operation of government, for which there is a higher level of security.

**11. Can people camp on any provincial land?**

- Camping on all provincial land is not permitted without permission or authority under statute or regulations.
- The Victoria courthouse lands are owned by the Province and administered by the Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services under the Public Agency Accommodation Act.
- Under that Act, the Minister has broad powers to determine the use of lands under his administration, including the courthouse lands.
- Other provincial lands are under the administration of other ministries and subject to other legislation, such as the Transportation Act, the Land Act, or Park Act.
- These acts give the applicable minister authority to make lands available for various purposes. For example: under the Park Act, certain park land can be established as a recreation area for public recreational use.

**If asked about the City of Victoria bylaw that permits overnight camping:**

- This bylaw only applies to city parks and does not apply to government lands.

**Victoria Youth Custody Centre**

**12. How will youth live with adult homeless people – that seems like a bad mix, don't you agree?**

- MCFD has negotiated the ability to continue to use the admissions and discharge unit at the site for the purposes of temporary housing of youth awaiting transport to its custody facilities.
- The temporary overnight holding unit is fully self-contained with its own entrance and exit and will not be affected by the addition of new tenants on the site.

- There are no security concerns with the addition of the new tenants on the site as that portion of the facility is also separate and fully secure.

**13. Did Government consult with the community before deciding to house homeless people at the Youth Custody Centre?**

- The Ministry of Technology, Innovation, Citizens' Services has been working with potential tenants to review options for the future of the site since 2014.
- The Ministry has leased portions of the Youth Custody Centre to BC Housing for the purpose of housing the homeless.
- BC Housing is leasing a portion of the facility to MCFD for temporary youth custody purposes.
- BC Housing will undertake a consultation process around the repurposing of the building.
- Preliminary discussions have begun; letters have gone to local First Nations asking for feedback on the project, with a deadline of mid-February.

**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Friday, February 5, 2016 10:53 AM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Fraser, John Paul GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Vasey, Jeff OHCS:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Final package - Victoria  
**Attachments:** 2016MNGD0003-000168.pdf; Flyer - Feb 5 final.docx  
  
**Importance:** High

Finals here.

Chris Ash  
Communications Manager | Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
ph: 250-952-0623 cell: 250-812-3616  
email to: [christine.ash@gov.bc.ca](mailto:christine.ash@gov.bc.ca)

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2016MNGD0003-000168  
Feb. 5, 2016

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 Mt. 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 across 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)

**Media Contacts:**

Sandra Steilo	Jenny Lee-Leugner
Media Relations	BC Housing
Ministry of Natural Gas Development and Responsible for Housing	604 439-4195
250 952-0617	

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Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)



Ministry of  
Technology, Innovation  
and Citizens' Services

February 5, 2016

TO: Campers on Victoria Courthouse Lands  
FROM: The Province of British Columbia  
SUBJECT: Notice to Leave Courthouse Lands

This notice is issued under section 4 of the Trespass Act with respect to the Victoria Courthouse lands located behind the Courthouse between Blanshard, Courtenay and Quadra Streets and Burdett Avenue. All camping at this location must cease and all tents and other personal property must be removed by no later than February 25, 2016.

While the Province appreciates the complex issues you face, an increasing number of serious incidents have arisen in connection with the current encampment on the Courthouse lands that pose an ongoing unacceptable risk to public safety. The risks are to campers, as well as to the general public.

Campers on the Courthouse lands will need to make alternate arrangements for shelter as soon as possible. To help with the transition, Our Place Society and Cool Aid Society, working with BC Housing, is available to work with you to connect you with shelter and other government support services such as health care and counselling.

Staff from Cool Aid and Our Place will be available on site to provide access to housing options and other supports.

The Province will be providing an additional 88 units of transitional housing and shelter, as well as 40 rent supplements for campers currently residing at the Victoria courthouse lawns. This will include 38 transitional housing units at the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home at 1002 Vancouver Street (operated by the Victoria Cool Aid Society) and 50 shelter units in the Victoria Youth Custody Centre building at 94 Talcott Road in View Royal (operated by Our Place Society).

Campers who prefer to remain outdoors have the option of setting up tents in the courtyard at the View Royal shelter, which can accommodate at least 20 tents.

Semi-permanent structures at the courthouse site need to be dismantled and the land needs to be restored.

If campers do not vacate the site by February 25, 2016 they could be subject to enforcement under applicable law.





**Thorkelson, Meaghan GCPE:EX**

---

**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 4, 2016 4:30 PM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Fraser, John Paul GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX; Larabee, Shawn G GCPE:EX; Anderson, Maryann GCPE:EX; Plank, Sarah GCPE:EX; Thistle-Walker, Carlene GCPE:EX; Heinze, Laura R GCPE:EX; Belanger, Matthew GCPE:EX; Fillion, Corinna GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Announcement for Friday, Feb 5th  
**Attachments:** Flyer - revised Feb 4 Draft 5 JV.docx; MA-Feb5\_Final.pdf; NR\_VictoriaAdditionalShelter\_Draft7\_BCH update2.docx; QA\_BCH\_Victoria\_Additional\_Shelter\_Draft 6.docx  
  
**Importance:** High

Attached are materials for tomorrow, pending last minute changes from MO/MRC.

- Media Advisory (word doc and .PDF version) (out at 9:30 a.m.)
- NR (out at 10:45'ish)
- Flyer final (delivered to campers at 10:45'ish)
- Q/As for MRC (with some from MCFD, MTICS included)

Chris Ash  
Communications Manager | Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
ph: 250-952-0623 cell: 250-812-3616  
email to: [christine.ash@gov.bc.ca](mailto:christine.ash@gov.bc.ca)



Ministry of  
Technology, Innovation  
and Citizens' Services

DRAFT Feb 4, 2016 version 53

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February 5, 2016

TO: Campers on Victoria Courthouse Lands  
FROM: The Province of British Columbia  
SUBJECT: Notice to Leave Courthouse Lands

This notice is issued under section 4 of the Trespass Act with respect to the Victoria Courthouse lands located behind the Courthouse between Blanshard, Courtenay and Quadra Streets and Burdett Avenue. All camping at this location must cease and all tents and other personal property must be removed by no later than February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

While the Province appreciates the complex issues you face, an increasing number of serious incidents have arisen in connection with the current encampment on the Courthouse lands that pose an ongoing unacceptable risk to public safety. The risks are to campers, as well as to the general public.

Campers on the Courthouse lands will need to make alternate arrangements for shelter as soon as possible. To help with the transition, Don Evans and the staff of the Executive Director of Our Place, and the Cool Aid Society, working with BC Housing the Province, are available to work with you to connect you with shelter and other government support services such as health care and counselling.

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Campers on the Courthouse lands will need to make alternate arrangements for shelter as soon as possible. To help with the transition, Our Place Society and Cool Aid Society, working with BC Housing, is available to work with you to connect you with shelter and other government support services such as health care and counselling.

Staff from Cool Aid and Our Place will be available on site to provide access to housing options and other supports.

The Province will be providing an additional 88 units of transitional housing and shelter, as well as 40 rent supplements for campers currently residing at the Victoria courthouse lawns. This will include 38 transitional housing units at the Mt. Edwards Court Care Home at 1002 Vancouver Street (operated by the Victoria Cool Aid Society) and 50 shelter units in the Victoria Youth Custody Centre building at 94 Talcott Road in View Royal (operated by Our Place Society).

Campers who prefer to remain outdoors have the option of setting up tents in the courtyard at the View Royal shelter, which can accommodate at least 20 tents.

~~The portable toilets and garbage bins on site will be removed in the near future. The Province may also remove and dispose of any personal property remaining on the lands.~~

~~While the Province appreciates the complex issues you face, an increasing number of serious incidents have arisen in connection with the current encampment on the Courthouse lands that pose an ongoing unacceptable risk to public safety. The risks are to campers, as well as to the general public.~~

Semi-permanent structures at the courthouse site need to be dismantled and the land needs to be restored. Once we have restored the land, and throughout that process, the Province will consider available options for persons who continue to be without shelter.

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~~The portable toilets and garbage bins on site will be removed in the near future. The Province may also remove and dispose of any personal property remaining on the lands.~~

~~Campers on the Courthouse lands will need to make alternate arrangements for shelter as soon as possible. To help with the transition, Don Evans the Executive Director of Our Place, working with the Province, is available to work with you to connect you with shelter and other government support services such as health care and counselling.~~

If campers do not vacate the site by February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 they could be subject to enforcement under Section 10 of the Trespass Act. If campers do not vacate the site by February 11, 2016 as requested, police are authorized to enforce and arrest in accordance with section 10 of the Trespass Act.

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After: 10 pt

**From:** Facey, Nick MTIC:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2016 1:02 PM  
**To:** Burbee, Jon MTIC:EX; Fellows, Brian MTIC:EX; Ahmed, Sarf MTIC:EX  
**Cc:** Reddy, Brandon MTIC:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Blonde, Sarah MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** Re: Victoria shelter announcement

Once we have draft material we'll need to setup a briefing for MAV.

Nick Facey,  
Chief of Staff  
for the Hon. Amrik Virk  
Minister of Technology, Innovation & Citizens' Services  
Government of BC

On Jan 26, 2016, at 11:01 AM, Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <[Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca)> wrote:

FYI

**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2016 10:58 AM  
**To:** Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Anderson, Bill GCPE:EX; Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Plank, Sarah GCPE:EX; Heinze, Laura R GCPE:EX; Thistle-Walker, Carlene GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Steilo, Sandra GCPE:EX; Gordon, Matt GCPE:EX; Kerr, Carleen GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Victoria shelter announcement

Greetings all, I believe you know some of the details already but BC Housing is looking at setting up two new 40-bed shelters in Victoria to provide additional housing for people in need at the courthouse camp – 40 beds at the youth custody centre and 40 beds at the Mt. Edward building (a former seniors care home).

BC Housing is still finalizing details regarding funding, operators, etc.

We hope to have draft materials to share by the end of the week – and we're targeting early next week for an announcement (I've shared the calendar entry with you).

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks

**Darren Harbord**  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development and  
Responsible for Housing  
250 952-0152 / 250 882-8518 (cell)

**From:** Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 18, 2016 2:46 PM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Thanks you two! Will do.

HZ

**From:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 18, 2016 2:45 PM  
**To:** Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Re: Victoria Youth Custody Centre

This is a housing lead - but we'd like to be looped in Heidi, if you could keep us apprised of the messaging and who is responding?

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 18, 2016, at 2:43 PM, Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX <[Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca)> wrote:

Thanks – to confirm – this is NOT public yet. Still in discussions internally. Very preliminary stages. I am here until 4pm. 250-356-2028

**From:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 18, 2016 2:33 PM  
**To:** Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Re: Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Hi Heidi: I do not believe this has been discussed publicly yet - we need to loop in min resp for Housing. I am at a summit in van but will call you asap this afternoon.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 18, 2016, at 2:30 PM, Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX <[Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca)> wrote:

Hi Joanne,

I've been asked to touch base with MTICS regarding the VYCC ☺

Apparently there is a possibility that we might use the closed VYCC facility has a homeless shelter of some sort – for those currently staying at the tent city downtown. Discussions are happening. Have you heard this?

Apparently still in the planning stages, but I've been asked to compile all media and correspondence that has provided suggestions for the use of the VYCC, and whether a homeless shelter was ever one of those suggestions. I'm compiling this now. So far it looks like it was a suggestion in the past.

Just wanted to touch base with you (MTICS GCPE) to make sure we stay looped in on this one as we will need to work together when preparing appropriate messaging, etc.....if things do go this route.

Cheers,  
heidi

*Heidi Zilkie*

Public Affairs Officer  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development  
Office: 250-356-2028  
Cell: 250-213-7049  
Email: [Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca)

**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 4:10 PM  
**To:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: question - Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Yes, sounds good.

**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 4:09 PM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: question - Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Sure... probably that would be best. D?

Chris Ash  
Communications Manager | Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
ph: 250-952-0623  
cell: 250-812-3616  
email to: [christine.ash@gov.bc.ca](mailto:christine.ash@gov.bc.ca)

**From:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 4:08 PM  
**To:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: question - Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Perhaps we should just suggest that reporter check back in the new year?

**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 4:07 PM  
**To:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: question - Victoria Youth Custody Centre  
**Importance:** High

Hi guys. At this point, there are no time lines for BC Housing on this but Darren, do you have anything more you could send to Joanne?

Chris Ash  
Communications Manager | Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
ph: 250-952-0623  
cell: 250-812-3616  
email to: [christine.ash@gov.bc.ca](mailto:christine.ash@gov.bc.ca)

**From:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 4:03 PM  
**To:** Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX

cc: Schonen, Jasna GORE.EA

**Subject:** question - Victoria Youth Custody Centre

Hi Paul/Chris – Frank Stanford from CFAA has been calling to see if he can get an update on what's happening with the Victoria Youth Custody Centre. Appreciate that BC Housing will, at some point, be taking this over, do you have any feedback in terms of when Frank should check in? He wants to know if the project is still on the radar – would like to be able to give him some sense of when he should follow up.

Thx much! Jo

Joanne Whittier

Communications Manager

Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services

office: 250-387-0172 / cell: 250-893-5650



## Thorkelson, Meaghan GCPE:EX

---

**From:** Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 4, 2016 1:17 PM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Latest MCFD QAs re: former VYCC  
**Attachments:** QA\_homeless\_shelter\_new\_tenant\_of\_former\_VYCC-Feb. 2016-draft4.docx

Sorry folks – slight revision now with further details from our ADM about the de-designation of the site, and what that actually means ☺

HZ

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**From:** Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 4, 2016 12:39 PM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Latest MCFD QAs re: former VYCC

☺ for your information. Approved by MCFD.

HZ

---

**From:** Zilkie, Heidi GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 4, 2016 12:39 PM  
**To:** Sandur, Parveen MCF:EX; Lalari, Terry MCF:EX  
**Cc:** Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Larabee, Shawn G GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Latest MCFD QAs re: former VYCC

Parveen/Terry,

Attached is the latest MCFD specific QAs related to tomorrow's announcement regarding using the former VYCC facility as a temporary homeless shelter.

This announcement will be take place tomorrow morning at 9:45am. Coleman will also be the lead on a media avail call happening after the announcement.

Any questions please don't hesitate to ask.

FYI –just waiting for additional final materials from Housing. Will pass those along once I receive them.

*Heidi Zilkie*

Public Affairs Officer  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development  
Office: 250-356-2028  
Cell: 250-213-7049  
Email: [Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Heidi.Zilkie@gov.bc.ca)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Homeless shelter new tenant at former Victoria Youth Custody Centre

#### *Ministry of Children and Family Development*

February 2016

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If asked about youth in care and homeless adults/youth being housed together at the new shelter:

**Q1. It isn't a surprise we've needed more beds and resources to support Victoria's homeless population. With the VYCC sitting vacant for over a year now, why did it take so long for the Province to make an arrangement to use the facility as a resource that's been needed in Victoria for a long time now?**

- Since the official closure of the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (VYCC) in 2014 the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services has been working with potential tenants to review options for the future of the site.
- MCFD has negotiated the ability to continue to use the admissions and discharge unit at the site for the purposes of temporary housing of youth awaiting transport to its custody facilities.

**Q2. Moving forward, what is the plan regarding the housing of vulnerable youth in care sharing the same shelter with homeless adults?**

- We agree that a tent city and a homeless shelter are not suitable permanent housing options for youth.
- Ministry social workers are committed to working with youth in care that may move to the new homeless shelter to facilitate their return to safe and appropriate accommodations where the youth can receive necessary support services.
- These efforts to return children and youth to safe environments often requires ongoing attempts and engagement on the part of social workers.
- This remains a fluid situation which our dedicated and professional staff are working around the clock to monitor and address the situation.
- It is important to remember that while MCFD is committed to providing the most appropriate level of services available, the ministry has no legal authority to confine a child or youth in a foster care placement, nor can the ministry restrain or forcibly remove any youth from a location, even if that location is in a shelter, or tent city.

If asked about youth in custody and the temporary overnight holding unit, also currently located at the facility:

**Q3. With the new tenant(s) and use of the former VYCC, what is happening to the ministry's temporary overnight holding unit currently located at the site for youth traveling between court and custody?**

- The ministry has made an agreement with the new tenants of the facility which will allow the temporary overnight holding unit to remain at its current location on the property.
- We see using this space for the foreseeable future.

**Q4. Is it really in the best interest of the vulnerable youth in custody that do use the unit to frequent a location/property shared with a homeless shelter?**

- The temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the Centre's admissions and discharge unit) is fully self-contained with its own entrance and exit and will not be affected by the addition of new tenants on the site.
- There are no security concerns with the addition of the new tenants on the site as that portion of the facility is also separate and fully secure.
- It is important to note that the temporary overnight holding unit was only utilized approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015, and is empty and closed the majority of the time.
- Also, when a youth does require the use of the temporary overnight holding unit they are always accompanied and supervised by a ministry staff member and/or member of BC Sheriff's Services, and most stays are for a duration of 24 hours or less.

**Q5. We have heard that last month – January 2016 – there was a significant increase in the use of the temporary holding unit, compared to previous months. Isn't that a sign that you closed down the VYCC pre-maturely and there is a need and demand for a youth custody facility on the island?**

- No.
- To be clear, there is not a new need or demand to reopen the VYCC.
- The reality is we've seen a dramatic decline in the number of youth in custody of approximately 65 per cent over the last decade in B.C.
- To date in fiscal 2015/16, the average daily count of youth in custody across the province is 65 (of 108 currently available beds), which is 60 per cent of the total capacity available.
- It would not be feasible to continue operating a facility or fund a resource that does not utilize tax payers dollars in the most efficient and effective way. We need to balance resources with demands and maintain high quality programs for B.C.'s vulnerable children, youth and families.

- In regards to the temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the admissions and discharge unit), it has only been used approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015 to hold youth traveling between court and custody.
- In January 2016, the temporary holding unit was used a total of 13 out of 31 days. This is a significant increase compared to the average number of days the unit has been used in the previous six months. The rise in January was due to an increased need for overnight holds to accommodate Greater Victoria court appearances. This one month total is not part of an ongoing trend or expected to be the beginning of a trend as the past six month average attests to.

**If asked about change of designation of the former VYCC facility:**

**Q6. I hear that the site needs to be “de-designated”? What does that mean?**

- It is important to note that de-designation is not legally required to allow for different uses on this site.
- As the site previously housed a youth custody centre that provided secure housing for youth in custody, it was required to be designated as such.
- Now that the custody centre is closed, and the new tenants do not require or provide secure custody housing, this special designation is no longer required.

**Q7. Has the de-designation taken place?**

- MCFD is currently in the process of expediting the process.
- The official change in designation will in no way impact or delay the timing of the new tenants moving in or use of the facility as a homeless shelter moving forward.

**If asked about why the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (VYCC) was closed in the first place:**

**Q8. Can you advise why MCFD shut down the VYCC in the first place?**

- The reality is we’ve seen a dramatic decline in the number of youth in custody of approximately 65 per cent over the last decade in B.C., and in 2014 year, B.C.’s three youth custody centres were only operating at an average capacity of 56 per cent.
- In the case of the 60-bed Victoria youth custody centre, on any given night in 2014, there was only an average of 15 youth in custody.
- To date in fiscal 2015/16, the average daily count of youth in custody across the province is 65 (of 108 currently available beds), which is 60 per cent of the total capacity available.

- The temporary overnight holding unit in Victoria – for youth traveling between court and custody on the island – has been used an average of about 3 days per month since July 2015.
- Given this provincial trend, it's clear we need to balance resources with demands for service so that we can maintain high quality programs and reduce costs.
- Both the Burnaby and Prince George custody centres maintain their current operating capacity (84 and 24, respectively). There is enough room at these centres to accommodate further growth in demand (up to 171 beds), if needed.

**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 3, 2016 12:31 PM  
**To:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** Re: Youth Custody Centre

lots of spec out there!

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the TELUS network.

**From:** Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 3, 2016 12:27 PM  
**To:** Ahmed, Sarf MTIC:EX; Vasey, Jeff OHCS:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Steilo, Sandra GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Youth Custody Centre

Thx Sarf, Looping in my GCPE colleagues.

**From:** Ahmed, Sarf MTIC:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 3, 2016 12:27 PM  
**To:** Vasey, Jeff OHCS:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** FW: Youth Custody Centre

**From:** Greer, David MTIC:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 3, 2016 12:18 PM  
**To:** Ahmed, Sarf MTIC:EX; Fellows, Brian MTIC:EX; Burbee, Jon MTIC:EX  
**Subject:** Fwd: Youth Custody Centre

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Miller, Michael" <[Michael.Miller@colliers.com](mailto:Michael.Miller@colliers.com)>  
**Date:** February 3, 2016 at 12:11:47 PM PST  
**To:** "Greer, David CITZ:EX ([David.Greer@gov.bc.ca](mailto:David.Greer@gov.bc.ca))" <[David.Greer@gov.bc.ca](mailto:David.Greer@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** Youth Custody Centre

Hi David.

I got a call from Carla Wilson from the TC asking me if I'd heard anything about the Province converting the Youth Custody Centre to house the occupants of the tent city. Interesting rumour. See you tomorrow.

Yours truly,

**Michael Miller**

Senior Vice President

**Direct +1 250 414 8399** | [View my profile](#)

[Michael.Miller@colliers.com](mailto:Michael.Miller@colliers.com)

**Colliers International**

1175 Douglas Street, Suite 1110 | Victoria, BC V8W 2E1 | Canada

Main +1 250 388 6454 | Fax +1 250 382 3564





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**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 25, 2016 12:34 PM  
**To:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX; Steilo, Sandra GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Youth jail . .

Also, pls let me know what Brian says. We'll check in with BC Housing too!

Chris Ash  
Communications Manager | Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
ph: 250-952-0623 cell: 250-812-3616  
email to: [christine.ash@gov.bc.ca](mailto:christine.ash@gov.bc.ca)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 25, 2016 12:31 PM  
**To:** Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Youth jail . .

Thx Karen - yes, Brian is working with BC Housing. We will reach out to him but the Victoria Youth Custody Centre would be a BC Housing lead (just fyi)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 25, 2016 12:30 PM  
**To:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Youth jail . .

Folks -- suggest you check in with Brian Fellows (MTICS) for the latest - kj

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 25, 2016 12:29 PM  
**To:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: Youth jail . .

Thx Chris - are you going to be getting back the reporter (Lindsay)? Can you share your response points?

Thx in advance - Jo

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, January 25, 2016 12:28 PM  
**To:** Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX



Subject: RE: Youth jail ...

I believe no decision has been made on that facility - as far as we know.

Chris Ash  
Communications Manager | Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
ph: 250-952-0623 cell: 250-812-3616  
email to: [christine.ash@gov.bc.ca](mailto:christine.ash@gov.bc.ca)

-----Original Message-----

From: Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX  
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2016 12:27 PM  
To: Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
Cc: Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
Subject: RE: Youth jail ...

I've only heard a rumour too Nick. We are merely a tenant of a small portion of the facility.

-----Original Message-----

From: Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX  
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2016 12:25 PM  
To: Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
Cc: Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
Subject: RE: Youth jail ...

Could someone let me know if this is actually the case?

-----Original Message-----

From: Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX  
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2016 12:22 PM  
To: Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX; Woolley, Paul GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
Cc: Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
Subject: RE: Youth jail ...

Chris - over to you...

-----Original Message-----

From: Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX  
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2016 12:21 PM  
To: Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX; Whittier, Joanne GCPE:EX  
Cc: Koolsbergen, Nick GCPE:EX  
Subject: FW: Youth jail ...

Over to ya'll. Will tell Lindsay to call you if that's ok

-----Original Message-----

From: Kines, Lindsay (Times-Colonist) [<mailto:LKines@timescolonist.com>]  
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2016 11:45 AM  
To: Johnston, Karen GCPE:EX  
Subject: Youth jail ...

Hi Karen:

Hearing that the former youth jail in Victoria may be used to house homeless people from the tent city near the courthouse. Can you confirm?

## Yuan, Dallas S MTIC:EX

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**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, February 29, 2016 1:15 PM  
**To:** Rajvir Rao  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Thanks

---

**From:** Rajvir Rao [mailto:rrao@bchousing.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 29, 2016 1:14 PM  
**To:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

As requested,  
Mt Edwards:

- All units filled
- Resident Meeting Friday
- Tonight at 5pm is the 1<sup>st</sup> Neighbourhood meeting with Don/Cool Aid and Stuart Hall, Cathedral School – co-chairing the meeting. I will attend and report back.

YCC/CHOICES:

- 21 people were staying in tents at Choices, however, 1 person has been discharged for aggressive behavior
- 20 is total currently at site
- More intake on Wednesday as staff are stabilizing those who are on site now.
- Contractors worked over weekend to complete work required to use building for shelter. We will know by the end of the day when this building can be used.

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**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX [mailto:Darren.Harbord@gov.bc.ca]  
**Sent:** February-29-16 12:51 PM  
**To:** Rajvir Rao  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update  
**Importance:** High

Hey Rajvir, just checking in on this request – thanks.

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**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, February 29, 2016 11:55 AM  
**To:** Rajvir Rao  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update  
**Importance:** High

Hey Rajvir, can we get a quick update on numbers for Mt. Edwards and the custody centre – I believe all 38 spaces at Mt. Edwards are now full?

Thanks

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**From:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 3:28 PM  
**To:** 'Roger Butcher'  
**Cc:** Rajvir Rao; Heidi Hartman; Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Great – thanks, Roger

Robin Platts  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
250-387-1373

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**From:** Roger Butcher [<mailto:rbutcher@bchousing.org>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 3:21 PM  
**To:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Rajvir Rao; Heidi Hartman; Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Hi Robin: I do not have a firm date, the work that needs to be done is underway, I have also authorised the contractor(s) to work overtime in order to get the work completed as soon as possible. View royal has required that the sleeping rooms have door closures on them. They are very heavy doors (prison doors) and we could only find 12 in stock in Victoria so the other 18 are on order. The electrical contractor is working on installing smoke detectors & emergency lighting as required by View royal. I hope to have a better time line sometime Friday  
Roger

---

**From:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX [<mailto:Robin.Platts@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** February-25-16 2:51 PM  
**To:** Roger Butcher  
**Cc:** Rajvir Rao; Heidi Hartman; Darren Harbord  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Hi

Can you give an update on when we think Choices might be ready?

Robin Platts  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
250-387-1373

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**From:** Roger Butcher [<mailto:rbutcher@bchousing.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 1:41 PM  
**To:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Rajvir Rao; Heidi Hartman  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

I will have a better idea tomorrow after the meeting on site with the consultant, building inspector from View Royal & my staff person along with staff from WSI  
Thanks  
Roger

---

**From:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX [<mailto:Robin.Platts@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** February-24-16 1:23 PM  
**To:** Roger Butcher  
**Cc:** Rajvir Rao; Heidi Hartman  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Thanks, Roger – do we have a guess as to how long it might take?

Robin Platts  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
250-387-1373

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**From:** Roger Butcher [<mailto:rbutcher@bchousing.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 1:19 PM  
**To:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Rajvir Rao; Heidi Hartman  
**Subject:** FW: courthouse/shelter update

Hi Robin: I have given you a high level overview what needs to be done  
Thanks  
Roger

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**From:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX [<mailto:Robin.Platts@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** February-24-16 1:10 PM  
**To:** Roger Butcher  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Roger – I am updating our Q&A – can we expand the answer below a little. E.g. are we doing some minor renovation work?

## **1. When will the Choices facility be open?**

We are working with the town of View Royal to change the occupancy designation from detention to residential. We are trying to make sure that work gets done as quickly as possible so that people can begin to move in to the indoor areas at Choices. The work will consist of enhancing the emergency lighting inside the building and changing out the electronic locks on the rooms to normal residential passage sets and upgrading the smoke detectors, The exit doors will also be brought up to code.

Robin Platts  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
250-387-1373

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**From:** Roger Butcher [<mailto:rbutcher@bchousing.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 10:15 AM  
**To:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX; Rajvir Rao

Cc: Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Kelly, Avery OHCS:EX; Jenny Lee-Leugner; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

For Choices, the town of View royal asked us to complete a code review as we are changing the occupancy from detention to residential. I received the report last night from our consultant and we are arranging for a meeting on site with the Building inspector from view royal, the consultant and my Maintenance Manager Mark Rands to go over the required changes mostly to the health & safety systems. Mark Rands is trying to arrange this meeting for today, so we can get contractor(s) in to do the work asap, as View royal will not allow us to move people in doors until the work has been completed. I hope to have a time line sometime this afternoon.

Roger

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**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX [<mailto:Darren.Harbord@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** February-24-16 9:45 AM  
**To:** Rajvir Rao  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Kelly, Avery OHCS:EX; Jenny Lee-Leugner; Christine Ash; Roger Butcher  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

Thanks – is Mt. Edwards still expected to be full by Friday?

And when is the indoor portion of the Choices expected to be ready?

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**From:** Rajvir Rao [<mailto:rrao@bchousing.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 9:23 AM  
**To:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Kelly, Avery OHCS:EX; Jenny Lee-Leugner; Ash, Christine GCPE:EX; Roger Butcher  
**Subject:** RE: courthouse/shelter update

As of end of day yesterday:

5 moved into the outside camp ground at the Custody Centre and 15 people will move in once the indoor gym is open.

15 people moved in at Mt. Edwards and Cool Aid expects another 15 today.

Rajvir

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**From:** Harbord, Darren GCPE:EX [<mailto:Darren.Harbord@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** February-24-16 8:38 AM  
**To:** Rajvir Rao  
**Cc:** Platts, Robin GCPE:EX; Kelly, Avery OHCS:EX; Jenny Lee-Leugner; Christine Ash  
**Subject:** courthouse/shelter update

Hey Rajvir, can we an update this morning on how many people are moving into Mt. Edwards and Choices.

FYI, this is from Monday:

At Mt. Edwards, we expect there to be approximately 10-20 people moving in tomorrow, 10-20 the next day and hopefully be full by Friday.

At the Choices facility in View Royal, at the moment, there are approximately 23 individuals who have expressed interest in moving to the facility over the next few days.



**Darren Harbord**

Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Natural Gas Development and  
Responsible for Housing  
250 952-0152 / 250 882-8518 (cell)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Homeless shelter new tenant at former Victoria Youth Custody Centre *Ministry of Children and Family Development*

February 2016

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If asked about youth in care and homeless adults/youth being housed together at the new shelter:

**Q1. It isn't a surprise we've needed more beds and resources to support Victoria's homeless population. With the VYCC sitting vacant for over a year now, why did it take so long for the Province to make an arrangement to use the facility as a resource that's been needed in Victoria for a long time now?**

- Since the official closure of the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (VYCC) in 2014 the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services has been working with potential tenants to review options for the future of the site.
- MCFD has negotiated the ability to continue to use the admissions and discharge unit at the site for the purposes of temporary housing of youth awaiting transport to its custody facilities.

**Q2. Moving forward, what is the plan regarding the housing of vulnerable youth in care sharing the same shelter with homeless adults?**

- We agree that a tent city and a homeless shelter are not suitable permanent housing options for youth.
- Ministry social workers are committed to working with youth in care that may move to the new homeless shelter to facilitate their return to safe and appropriate accommodations where the youth can receive necessary support services.
- These efforts to return children and youth to safe environments often requires ongoing attempts and engagement on the part of social workers.
- This remains a fluid situation which our dedicated and professional staff are working around the clock to monitor and address the situation.
- It is important to remember that while MCFD is committed to providing the most appropriate level of services available, the ministry has no legal authority to confine a child or youth in a foster care placement, nor can the ministry restrain or forcibly remove any youth from a location, even if that location is in a shelter, or tent city.

If asked about youth in custody and the temporary overnight holding unit, also currently located at the facility:

**Q3. With the new tenant(s) and use of the former VYCC, what is happening to the ministry's temporary overnight holding unit currently located at the site for youth traveling between court and custody?**

- The ministry has made an agreement with the new tenants of the facility which will allow the temporary overnight holding unit to remain at its current location on the property.
- We see using this space for the foreseeable future.

**Q4. Is it really in the best interest of the vulnerable youth in custody that do use the unit to frequent a location/property shared with a homeless shelter?**

- The temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the Centre's admissions and discharge unit) is fully self-contained with its own entrance and exit and will not be affected by the addition of new tenants on the site.
- There are no security concerns with the addition of the new tenants on the site as that portion of the facility is also separate and fully secure.
- It is important to note that the temporary overnight holding unit was only utilized approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015, and is empty and closed the majority of the time.
- Also, when a youth does require the use of the temporary overnight holding unit they are always accompanied and supervised by a ministry staff member and/or member of BC Sheriff's Services, and most stays are for a duration of 24 hours or less.

**Q5. We have heard that last month – January 2016 – there was a significant increase in the use of the temporary holding unit, compared to previous months. Isn't that a sign that you closed down the VYCC pre-maturely and there is a need and demand for a youth custody facility on the island?**

- No.
- To be clear, there is not a new need or demand to reopen the VYCC.
- The reality is we've seen a dramatic decline in the number of youth in custody of approximately 65 per cent over the last decade in B.C.
- To date in fiscal 2015/16, the average daily count of youth in custody across the province is 65 (of 108 currently available beds), which is 60 per cent of the total capacity available.
- It would not be feasible to continue operating a facility or fund a resource that does not utilize tax payers dollars in the most efficient and effective way. We need to balance resources with demands and maintain high quality programs for B.C.'s vulnerable children, youth and families.



- In regards to the temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the admissions and discharge unit), it has only been used approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015 to hold youth traveling between court and custody.
- In January 2016, the temporary holding unit was used a total of 13 out of 31 days. This is a significant increase compared to the average number of days the unit has been used in the previous six months. The rise in January was due to an increased need for overnight holds to accommodate Greater Victoria court appearances. This one month total is not part of an ongoing trend or expected to be the beginning of a trend as the past six month average attests to.

**If asked about change of designation of the former VYCC facility:**

**Q6. I hear that the site needs to be “de-designated”? What does that mean?**

- It is important to note that de-designation is not legally required to allow for different uses on this site.
- As the site previously housed a youth custody centre that provided secure housing for youth in custody, it was required to be designated as such.
- Now that the custody centre is closed, and the new tenants do not require or provide secure custody housing, this special designation is no longer required.

**Q7. Has the de-designation taken place?**

- MCFD is currently in the process of expediting the process.
- The official change in designation will in no way impact or delay the timing of the new tenants moving in or use of the facility as a homeless shelter moving forward.

**If asked about why the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (VYCC) was closed in the first place:**

**Q8. Can you advise why MCFD shut down the VYCC in the first place?**

- The reality is we’ve seen a dramatic decline in the number of youth in custody of approximately 65 per cent over the last decade in B.C., and in 2014 year, B.C.’s three youth custody centres were only operating at an average capacity of 56 per cent.
- In the case of the 60-bed Victoria youth custody centre, on any given night in 2014, there was only an average of 15 youth in custody.
- To date in fiscal 2015/16, the average daily count of youth in custody across the province is 65 (of 108 currently available beds), which is 60 per cent of the total capacity available.

- The temporary overnight holding unit in Victoria – for youth traveling between court and custody on the island – has been used an average of about 3 days per month since July 2015.
- Given this provincial trend, it's clear we need to balance resources with demands for service so that we can maintain high quality programs and reduce costs.
- Both the Burnaby and Prince George custody centres maintain their current operating capacity (84 and 24, respectively). There is enough room at these centres to accommodate further growth in demand (up to 171 beds), if needed.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**  
**Homeless shelter new tenant at former Victoria Youth Custody Centre**  
***Ministry of Children and Family Development***  
February 2016

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If asked about youth in care and homeless adults/youth being housed together at the new shelter:

**Q1. It isn't a surprise we've needed more beds and resources to support Victoria's homeless population. With the VYCC sitting vacant for over a year now, why did it take so long for the Province to make an arrangement to use the facility as a resource that's been needed in Victoria for a long time now?**

- Since the official closure of the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (VYCC) in 2014 the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services has been working with potential tenants to review options for the future of the site.
- MCFD has negotiated the ability to continue to use the admissions and discharge unit at the site for the purposes of temporary housing of youth awaiting transport to its custody facilities.

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- We agree that a tent city and a homeless shelter are not suitable permanent housing options for youth.
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- These efforts to return children and youth to safe environments often requires ongoing attempts and engagement on the part of social workers.
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- It is important to remember that while MCFD is committed to providing the most appropriate level of services available, the ministry has no legal authority to confine a child or youth in a foster care placement, nor can the ministry restrain or forcibly remove any youth from a location, even if that location is in a shelter, or tent city.

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- The ministry has made an agreement with the new tenants of the facility which will allow the temporary overnight holding unit to remain at its current location on the property.
- We see using this space for the foreseeable future.

**Q4. Is it really in the best interest of the vulnerable youth in custody that do use the unit to frequent a location/property shared with a homeless shelter?**

- The temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the Centre's admissions and discharge unit) is fully self-contained with its own entrance and exit and will not be affected by the addition of new tenants on the site.
- There are no security concerns with the addition of the new tenants on the site as that portion of the facility is also separate and fully secure.
- It is important to note that the temporary overnight holding unit was only utilized approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015, and is empty and closed the majority of the time.
- Also, when a youth does require the use of the temporary overnight holding unit they are always accompanied and supervised by a ministry staff member and/or member of BC Sheriff's Services, and most stays are for a duration of 24 hours or less.

**Q5. We have heard that last month – January 2016 – there was a significant increase in the use of the temporary holding unit, compared to previous months. Isn't that a sign that you closed down the VYCC pre-maturely and there is a need and demand for a youth custody facility on the island?**

- No.
- To be clear, there is not a new need or demand to reopen the VYCC.
- The reality is we've seen a dramatic decline in the number of youth in custody of approximately 65 per cent over the last decade in B.C.
- To date in fiscal 2015/16, the average daily count of youth in custody across the province is 65 (of 108 currently available beds), which is 60 per cent of the total capacity available.
- It would not be feasible to continue operating a facility or fund a resource that does not utilize tax payers dollars in the most efficient and effective way. We need to balance resources with demands and maintain high quality programs for B.C.'s vulnerable children, youth and families.

- In regards to the temporary overnight holding unit (formerly the admissions and discharge unit), it has only been used approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015 to hold youth traveling between court and custody.
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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Homeless shelter new tenant at former Victoria Youth Custody Centre

#### *Ministry of Children and Family Development*

February 2016

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- No.
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## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **Homeless shelter new tenant at former Victoria Youth Custody Centre**

#### ***Ministry of Children and Family Development***

February 2016

---

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- The temporary overnight holding unit is fully self-contained with its own entrance and exit and will not be affected by the addition of new tenants on the site.
- There are no security concerns with the addition of the new tenants on the site as that portion of the facility is also separate and fully secure.
- It is important to note that the temporary overnight holding unit was only utilized approximately 3 times per month during the last six months of 2015 , and is empty and closed the majority of the time.
- Also, when a youth does require the use of the temporary overnight holding unit they are always accompanied and supervised by a ministry staff member and/or member of BC Sheriff's Services, and most stays are for a duration of 24 hours or less.