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Attached & below an op ed for multicultural papers. Based on the core budget messages.

### **A budget that works for you**

By John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia

People in B.C. work hard every day, and they deserve a government that works for them. But for too long, the previous government failed to act while people struggled to find housing they can afford, care for their children, and access to the services they count on.

Budget 2018 puts people first, invests in the services you need, delivers on our commitment to make life in B.C. more affordable, and supports a strong, sustainable economy that works for all British Columbians. That starts with historic investments to make child care more affordable, and B.C.'s first comprehensive housing plan.

B.C.'s housing market has been so distorted by speculation that it doesn't work for people or B.C.'s economy. To fix this, our government has taken bold measures to make housing more affordable for people. That includes a new tax on housing speculators, action to shut down tax loopholes and money laundering in our housing market, and historic investments to increase housing supply.

Budget 2018 invests more than \$1.6 billion over three years to build and maintain affordable rental housing, increase rental assistance for low-income seniors and working families, help finance student housing, and provide supportive housing for at-risk British Columbians. That includes helping to build 114,000 affordable rental, non-profit, co-op and owner-purchase housing units.

We're also investing \$1 Billion in child care and early learning over three years, including a new affordable child-care benefit which will provide as many as 86,000 families across B.C. with up to \$1,250 per month in child-care cost relief.

Our government is taking concrete action to make your life more affordable. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, our government cut Medical Service Plan (MSP) premiums in half. With budget 2018, we announced the complete elimination of MSP premiums effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, saving families up to \$1800 per year, and individuals up to \$900 per year.

Budget 2018 also invests \$105 million in the Fair Pharmacare program to expand prescription drug and medical supply coverage for 240,000 low-income B.C. families, reinstates free bus passes to help over 100,000 people receiving disability assistance and delivers on our commitment to make ferry fares more affordable.

To improve the services you count on, our government is making significant investments in health care, with funding of \$548 million over three years to improve care for seniors and \$150 million to help connect those who do not have a family doctor with team-based primary care.

To support students and meet the need for qualified teachers, our government is hiring more teachers, bringing the total to over 3,700 new hires around the province. We're dedicating \$18 million to services that provide outreach and counselling support for women and children affected by violence, and making a historic investment of \$50 million this fiscal year to support the revitalization and preservation of Indigenous languages in B.C.

And we'll keep investing in a strong, sustainable economy that works for people. That includes supporting communities hit the hardest by the 2017 wildfire season and investing in wildfire preparedness to protect people, communities and wildlife. Budget 2018 also increases funding for B.C.'s agrifood sector to support enhanced Buy BC, Grow BC and Feed BC initiatives, removes fees for Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning, and increases grants to support B.C.'s vibrant communities and creative economy.

Our government will keep working hard to make your life more affordable, improve the services you count on, and make sure B.C.'s economy works for everyone.

Budget 2018 is a budget that works for you.

Go to [budget.gov.bc.ca](http://budget.gov.bc.ca) for more information.

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