

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRIPARTITE SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS DAY SHELTER

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Department of Health and Social Services, the City of Yellowknife, and BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc. are very proud to announce their partnership to support a new day shelter for homeless men and women in the Yellowknife area. The three partners have committed over \$550,000 in support of the project.

The day shelter will be operated as a pilot project for three years to allow for adequate data to be collected and evaluated on the facility's usage and future capability. Plans are underway to identify a facility and service provider to operate the day shelter, which is intended to be open and ready for use by the fall.

The GNWT is committed to fostering a healthy, educated population as envisioned by the 16th Assembly. The Department of Health and Social Services' contribution totalling \$375,000 over the next three years demonstrates the GNWT's commitment to the serious issue of homelessness.

"I am pleased to partner with BHP Billiton and the City of Yellowknife to help address the homelessness issue in the NWT. The day shelter will provide the homeless with a safe place to go during the day and much needed public washroom facilities in downtown Yellowknife", said Minister Lee.

The City of Yellowknife has been working with local businesses to address the needs of the homeless and recognizes that the importance of providing safe and accommodating shelter during the day will help to alleviate the resulting issues that homeless people encounter when day services are not available.

Said Mayor Gordon Van Tighem, "The City is pleased to participate in this next step to provide both support and opportunity to residents and visitors who find themselves in challenging circumstances. As host to the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition, we have partnered on several successful shelter initiatives and see this as a further opportunity to fill a support gap and provide a safe option or choice."

BHP Billiton has been researching the issues of homelessness for over a year and commissioned a study to recommend solutions that will provide homeless people with a safe place to go where they may access day programs and services that meet their needs. As a result of that work, BHP Billiton is providing a total of \$150,000 over the three year pilot to support the day shelter.

"We are excited about this new partnership with Minister Lee's Department and the City of Yellowknife and envision that if the first year is successful, we may be able to garner more support to further address this group of people in need," said Richard Morland, Interim President and Chief Operating Officer of BHP Billiton's EKATI Diamond Mine. "After all, community pride is demonstrated by how we care for others. We are all responsible for the development and wellness of people in our community, and this is one of the ways BHP Billiton can contribute to those in need."

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