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## NEWS RELEASE COMMUNIQUÉ

For Immediate Release  
2015MNGD0012-000248  
February 27, 2015

Ministry of Natural Gas Development  
and Responsible for Housing  
Government of Canada

### **Historic Gastown Hotel officially re-opens in Vancouver**

VANCOUVER – After 17 months of renovation, the governments of Canada and B.C., along with community partners, announced the official re-opening of the Gastown Hotel today.

This heritage-designated building is the first to be completed under a public-private partnership to restore 13 provincially owned Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside for those who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Located at 110 Water St., the newly restored Gastown Hotel provides 95 SRO units, including four units that have full-kitchen and bathroom facilities designed for couples. Following the completion of the project in fall 2014, all former tenants have either returned to the building, have progressed to other supportive housing sites or moved to independent housing.

The building, managed by Atira Property Management Inc., also features a common kitchen, dining area, lounge, laundry room, administrative offices for support staff, a nurse's room and a bed bug sauna to treat residents' belongings when required.

#### **Quick facts:**

- The Province is investing \$143.3 million into the SRO Renewal Initiative to renovate 13 SROs under a public-private partnership. This includes \$29.1 million from the Government of Canada through the P3 Canada Fund. Building-lifecycle and facilities-maintenance services will be provided for these 13 SROs for 15 years.
- The 13 provincially owned SROs are over 100 years old with structural, plumbing and electrical infrastructure concerns.
- The Gastown Hotel is the first building in the SRO Renewal Initiative to be completed. To date, four SROs have been completed and all 13 buildings are expected to be completed by February 2016.
- In addition to upgrades, the hotels will have their facades restored, preserving their iconic features and historical appearance.
- Since 2007, the Province has purchased 24 SRO hotels in Vancouver, 23 of which are in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and surrounding area – protecting close to 1,500 affordable housing units in Vancouver, and close to 1,400 in the DTES neighbourhood.
- Vacancies in SRO hotels are filled by the street-and-sheltered homeless who can begin the process of getting connected to community services that will help them establish successful tenancies.
- Since 2001, the B.C. government has invested \$4 billion to provide affordable housing for nearly 100,000 low-income individuals, seniors and families in communities throughout the province.

## Quotes:

### **Wai Young, Member of Parliament for Vancouver South —**

“This project is an excellent example of where government can leverage private-sector expertise to provide innovative solutions to construction and operation challenges presented by these historic buildings. Today, on behalf of our Conservative Government, I am honoured to participate in the official re-opening of the Gastown Hotel, the first of 13 hotels to be restored as social housing units as part of the Downtown Eastside Housing Renewal Project in Vancouver. It has become a place to call home for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Vancouver, as well as delivering a lasting benefit to the community.”

### **Andrew Wilkinson, MLA for Vancouver-Quilchena, Minister of Advanced Education —**

“The revitalized Gastown Hotel is bright, clean, functional, and most importantly it’s a safe home for those who were at-risk. Our vision for this project is to revitalize these historic buildings so that they can provide supportive housing for years to come. The re-opening of the Gastown Hotel today is the first step towards the completion of our vision.”

### **Rupesh Amin, managing partner, Infrastructure Development, Forum Equity Partners Inc. –**

“We are very proud of our partnership with the B.C. government, the Ministry Responsible for Housing, and BC Housing to make this project a monumental success. The opening of the Gastown Hotel, the first of the 13 buildings, is a strong testament to the innovation and collaboration created through this public-private partnership that is achieving on time and on budget delivery of safe, healthy and dignified living conditions for residents of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.”

### **Janice Abbott, executive director and CEO, Atira Women’s Resource Society —**

“The renovations at the Gastown Hotel are nothing short of miraculous. The rejuvenated hotel not only provides our tenants with safe, affordable housing, it also has a common kitchen, laundry facilities, brand new washrooms and other amenity space that aids the health and development of an already robust community. In addition, there is a separate office and a clinic room, which allows us to provide some additional supports when tenants need it most.”

## Learn more:

To find out more about the Single Room Occupancy Renewal Initiative (SRI), visit:

[www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Renovating/SRO](http://www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Renovating/SRO)

Incorporated in 2002, Atira Property Management Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Atira Women’s Resource Society, a not-for-profit organization committed to the work of ending violence against women. The society manages 14 different housing developments, and a number of related support programs including counselling, legal advocacy, a self-employment initiative, a community kitchen and a variety of projects and workshops. Learn more at: [www.atira.bc.ca](http://www.atira.bc.ca)

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