

# Homelessness

## The Crisis of Homelessness

The face of homelessness in BC has changed dramatically. There are more women, more seniors, more teenagers, and more children than ever before living in tents or temporary shelters.

More than 10,000 women, men and children are without homes. In every community, we see and feel the hurt caused by Gordon Campbell's cancellation of BC's affordable housing program in 2002. Campbell's decisions make no sense. Homelessness not only damages the health and lives of the individuals and families who don't have a place to live – it harms our communities and local businesses.

It costs more to respond to homelessness than to provide people with homes.

### **Gordon Campbell: Too out-of-touch to see the emergency Too arrogant to admit his policies are wrong**

Gordon Campbell promised to tackle homelessness. "We have an obligation to give people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness the opportunity to live in safe, clean and affordable housing," said Campbell, October 13, 2007.

In fact, he has created a homelessness emergency that affects every community in BC.

- Gordon Campbell eliminated BC's affordable housing program in 2002.
- Since then homelessness has doubled. Between 10,000 and 15,000 British Columbians don't have a place to live.
- The number of people living on the streets or couch surfing has increased by 364 per cent in Metro Vancouver since 2002.
- As of March 31, 2008, there were over 12,000 people on the waiting list for subsidized housing, including 3,100 seniors.
- Between April 2007 and January 2008 – the most recent numbers available – Metro Vancouver shelters turned away homeless people on 40,000 occasions.
- Aboriginal people are especially impacted by homelessness; half of all homeless women are aboriginal.

**because everyone matters**

## Carole James and the New Democrats:

# A Commitment to Respect, Opportunity and Self-determination

Carole James understands that fighting homelessness is a top priority. Her plan sets a goal of ending the homelessness crisis in five years.

In 2008 New Democrats conducted a province-wide consultation on homelessness. Based on the findings, Carole James has put forward a cost-effective plan of action:

- Restore BC's affordable housing program. Convert the \$250 million BC Housing Endowment Fund into an immediate investment in housing to build 2,400 housing units immediately and 1,200 more units each year

- Expand social housing on existing sites.
- Increase mental health and addiction services.
- Inventory all vacant and closed public buildings to identify those that can be converted to social housing immediately.
- Legislate an independent officer to review and report annually on the progress of the government's homelessness plan.

*"Part of the reason we have this homeless problem is because the provincial Liberals cut programs to build non-market housing. At the same time they implemented aggressive cuts to welfare and tightened the regulations to qualify for welfare. The net effect was to put people on the street."*

– Allan Garr  
Vancouver Courier, April 11, 2008



## Carole James



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