

For immediate release
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Homeless Community Leaders from Across Canada Call for Inclusion in the Design of National Housing Strategy

TORONTO: As all eyes turn toward the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Housing Ministers' meeting and the Super Intent City court decision in Victoria, BC, a national network of formerly-homeless leaders is calling for the inclusion of poor and homeless people in the design of Canada's National Housing Strategy.

The Lived Experience Advisory Council (LEAC)—a cross-Canada network of people with lived experience of homelessness—is today launching its report, *Nothing About Us Without Us: Seven principles for leadership and inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness*, which underlines the need for leadership and inclusion of people facing homelessness in all efforts to end it.

The report launch is timed to coincide with today's meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers to begin planning a National Housing Strategy. The Lived Experience Advisory Council is calling on Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos and his provincial and territorial counterparts to include people facing homelessness in the upcoming consultations on the NHS.

"We believe it is critical that the NHS consultations include meaningful input and direction from people facing homelessness, because the usual decision makers are not living our realities," said LEAC member Terrie Meehan of Ottawa's Alliance to End Homelessness. "Researchers, politicians, and service providers may be coming from good intentions, but most lack first-hand knowledge of what it is like to have insecure housing." She added that the NHS must incorporate mechanisms for ongoing participation of people facing poverty and homelessness at every level: in service delivery, program planning, policy-making, and monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy.

LEAC's Kym Hines, member of the Committee to End Homelessness Victoria and a supporter of Victoria's Super InTent City, agreed. "In order to be effective, the NHS must be inclusive to and led by those directly affected by poverty and homelessness, including Indigenous people, women, families, single men, survivors of violence, people with disabilities, people who have been criminalized, and illicit drug users," he said.

The LEAC report explains that homelessness and poverty are not just about inadequate housing and incomes; more fundamentally, they are about exclusion. "Members of our communities have been silenced, disregarded, and shut out for too long," said LEAC member Holly Jarrett, creator of the #AmINext campaign on missing and murdered Indigenous women. "It is only by opening the doors to equal participation by all that we can finally put an end to homelessness in Canada."

To view the report: <http://www.homelesshub.ca/NothingAboutUsWithoutUs>

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