



## Aboriginal Housing Management Association

October 5, 2020

**For Immediate Release**

### **AHMA's Response to the 2020 Throne Speech - The distinction-based approach fails the 79.7% of Indigenous people who are not living on-reserve in Canada.**

**Squamish Nation Territory/West Vancouver** - While tones of optimism around an Indigenous housing strategy were threaded throughout the Throne Speech, in reality it was another failure from the Government of Canada to acknowledge the critically dire need for an Urban Indigenous housing strategy. The distinction-based approach fails the 79.7% of Indigenous people who are not living on-reserve in Canada. The current National Housing Strategy lacks the specific means and measures needed to address the housing rights violations experienced by Indigenous people residing in rural, urban, and northern communities.

The Canadian Government has committed to implementing the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the end of 2020. In order to truly be aligned with UNDRIP, the Truth and Reconciliation Act and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Canada must ensure that Indigenous peoples have accessibility and the power to exercise their rights to adequate housing. This can only be done through an inclusive and culturally appropriate National Indigenous Urban Housing Strategy created for Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous peoples

AHMA is deeply concerned that the mechanisms of the Throne Speech will continue the current uninclusive Canadian narrative. The narrative that refuses to address the egregious housing conditions and quality of life for the majority of Canada's Indigenous population. After the 2019 Federal Election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau mandated Minister Hussein to create a For Indigenous by Indigenous Urban Indigenous Housing Strategy, a year later our government hasn't provided any progress on this mandate nor have they reached out for any urban Indigenous consultations. The Rapid Housing Initiative is merely a temporary solution and does not adequately address the major gap in the National Housing Strategy. An Urban Indigenous National Housing Strategy, created on a need-based approach, covering all measures needed to prevent homelessness, address discrimination and all other inequities that our urban Indigenous communities face on a daily basis is the only effective solution.

The lives of so many of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls would have been drastically different had they had access to safe, adequate and affordable housing. The opioid crisis is yet another devastating pandemic that is silently taking our country under siege, without efficient or acceptable support. These ongoing crises are directly related to the Canadian Government's refusal to create an Urban Indigenous Housing Strategy. We ask you, the Canadian Government to take accountability for the Right to Housing for all urban and rural Indigenous peoples in Canada without the prerequisite of receiving status of any kind. In short, is that precondition not a desolating echo of the Indian act?



## **Aboriginal Housing Management Association**

Our goal isn't to divide the support from the Distinction based strategies, instead we are asking you to increase it in order to adequately respond to the devastating need of all Indigenous communities. First Nations, Metis and Inuit Housing and Service providers must be at the table to address First Nations, Metis and Inuit Housing issues. In that same respect the Urban Indigenous voices that represent nearly 80% of the Indigenous peoples living in urban, rural and northern regions must also be at the table.

We ask that the Canadian Government take concrete steps to adopt strategies to ensure access to adequate, affordable housing for all Indigenous peoples, not only the ones who fit into colonized categories of what it is to be Indigenous. Only through meaningful engagement with AHMA and Indigenous housing and service partners across Canada can the social, economic, and Indigenous rights of urban and rural Indigenous peoples in Canada be claimed and protected in relation to housing adequacy and Indigenous self-determination rights per the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

AHMA and our members remain diligently committed to support the right to adequate housing and we urge the Canadian Government to consider reassessing the commitment to ensure that Canada fulfils the obligation of delivering basic human rights to all Indigenous communities.

We have created a petition with change.org in the sincere hope that urban Indigenous housing conditions and homelessness will be prioritized and that the federal government will implement an Urban Indigenous National Housing Strategy, as a matter of human rights and consistent with the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We ask our community members, partners and stakeholders to join us in signing and sharing our petition in the link below.

**AHMAs Petition for an Urban Indigenous National Housing Strategy:**

<http://chng.it/BMWYRvjfnL>