

Woodsworth, King question housing commitment

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Gloria Macarenko: Some long-awaited social housing opened in Vancouver today, homes for 110 people in the downtown east side.

The project was actually announced six years ago and critics call today's spending announcement nothing but smoke and mirrors. Tim Weekes has the story.

Reporter: With a snip of scissors the building officially opened, the Sorella, a 108-unit supportive housing development for women on the downtown east side.

Tara, resident: Being here is sort has given me a little bit after change, you know, but not having many people taking advantage of me. I have a nice roof over my head.

Reporter: One woman says it's given her the stability to take training and cultural courses.

Debbie Lincoln, resident: If it wasn't for the home -- the shelter that I was in and coming here I wouldn't have completed this.

Reporter: The cost of the project was about \$27m.

Kathy Butler, Atira: The need for this project was apparent and the outcome, as you can see, is outstanding.

Reporter: The federal government says the project is an example of what's to come thanks to a partnership signed today with the province worth \$180m.

James Moore: Under this agreement the Government of Canada will invest more than \$90m in British Columbia to improve access to housing that is sound, suitable and sustainable.

Rich Coleman: This federal government has always recognized that to make a partnership with us in British Columbia means trust us, we'll deliver.

Reporter: Critics say the Sorella is new and important. But the new partnership announcement isn't new. It's just the third year after five-year deal between the province and Ottawa.

Ellen Woodsworth: I have no idea why the federal government thinks they can get away with making re-announcements and pretending they are new.

Reporter: Advocates say it's good to see the federal government get more involved in housing but say today's partnership falls well short of a national housing strategy.

Douglas King, Pivot: Whether or not it's going to have an effect on really addressing the housing crisis in Canada, I don't feel that's the case.

Reporter: As well as the Sorella, six more social housing projects planned to open this year.