

NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL HOUSING EXPERT WEIGHS IN ON THE REGION'S HOMELESSNESS ISSUE

For immediate release
February 11, 2011

VICTORIA—Regional governments and community service providers rely on the support of innovators and researchers to help them make the link to the business of creating housing. [Michael Shapcott](#), one of Canada's leading community-based housing and homelessness experts, will spend three days in Victoria to lead a series of workshops and discussion groups with the CRD's mayors, planners, partners of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and the University of Victoria.

Members of the public are invited to participate in an evening of information sharing that includes a keynote speech by Shapcott, a response panel of local service providers, and a Q&A. On Wednesday, February 16, [Homelessness or Homefulness: Creating a Blueprint for Canada's Future](#) takes place at David Lam Auditorium at the University of Victoria from 7 to 9pm. The event is free.

"We are very fortunate to have someone of Michael Shapcott's calibre take an interest in the work we are doing in the Capital Region," says Mary Ellen Purkis, dean of the [Faculty of Human and Social Development](#) at UVic. "It is very important to link our work to the national level, and for all jurisdictions to work as one. That is the only way our country can solve this growing social issue."

Shapcott will share his experiences working with Canadian cities, communities and First Nations communities, and globally with the UN and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in support of sustainable housing for all Canadians. Local community, business, political, Aboriginal and academic representatives will share their experience and insights in connecting our local work to this national level.

"The rise in mass homelessness and housing insecurity across Canada is a manufactured crisis, caused by a toxic mix of economic, social and political pressures," Shapcott says. "We can end homelessness in Victoria within a decade - end homelessness, not just reduce it, or make the homeless a bit more comfortable - by focusing on practical and pragmatic strategies."

Michael Shapcott is Director, Affordable Housing and Social Innovation at the [Wellesley Institute](#), an independent, non-profit research and policy organization dedicated to advancing urban health. He has worked extensively in Toronto, in many parts of Canada, nationally and internationally on social innovation, the non-profit sector, civic engagement, housing and housing rights, poverty, social exclusion, urban health and health equity. He leads the Wellesley Institute's housing and homelessness practice and co-leads the Wellesley Institute's social innovation practice.

Partners for Shapcott's visit include:

- [Office for Community Based Research](#) and [Faculty of Human and Social Development](#), University of Victoria
- [Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness](#)
- Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Victoria Business Association
- United Way of Greater Victoria
- City of Victoria
- Community Social Planning Council
- Vancity

[Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness](#) is a partnership of local service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, business and the faith community. The Coalition's vision is to end homelessness by 2018.

[Office of Community-Based Research](#) at UVic (OCBR-UVic) is a community–university partnership which supports community engagement and research to create vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities. It officially opened in January 2007 and is supported through the UVic Office of the Vice-President of Research. The OCBR is guided by a Steering Committee and External Advisory Committee.

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