

**MEDIA RELEASE**

---

October 14, 2016  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MR16-052

## **NIC Asks Comox Valley Residents to Open Their Homes**

### *Students caught in tight rental market*

NIC's Office of Global Engagement is calling for Comox Valley residents to open their homes to students.

"If you have space to share, please let us know," said Thevi Pather, NIC's Executive Director of Global Engagement. "Some of our students come a long way to study and live in our community. We want them to be successful and experience the best the Comox Valley has to offer."

About one third of NIC's 267 international students attending class this September live in NIC-coordinated family homestay and peerstay accommodations, which match international students with safe, supportive host families in the community. However, many students prefer to be more independent – and are looking for affordable rentals close to NIC.

"We know people have space available that never makes it to an official listing," said Pather. "They get rented by word of mouth and generally go to friends, acquaintances or family members. If you bring your listing to us, we will post it for free and ensure students can see it."

NIC President John Bowman said domestic and international students make excellent tenants.

"Many of our students are young adults keen on learning and developing new expertise in the community," he said. "They tend to be focused on their studies, energetic and responsible."

The lack of affordable student housing at NIC is not new. From 2012 to 2014, the Best Western Plus Westerly Hotel opened up a dozen one and two-bedroom suites giving international students access to long-term housing.

The recently released Vital Signs Report shows the Comox Valley with a 0.5 per cent rental vacancy rate – one of the lowest vacancy rates on Vancouver Island. In 2015, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) calculated the Valley's rental vacancy rate at .6 per cent – lower than Victoria.

The Valley's hot real estate market this fall has only made finding rentals more difficult.

Students are encouraged to connect on social media, search campus bulletin boards and look for apartments in local newspapers and on websites.

If you have a room or apartment to rent, email your listing to [accommodations@nic.bc.ca](mailto:accommodations@nic.bc.ca).

#### **Media Contact**

Christiana Wiens  
Media Liaison, North Island College  
O. 250-334-5280 | M. 250-218-4097  
[christiana.wiens@nic.bc.ca](mailto:christiana.wiens@nic.bc.ca)