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Malinauskas Govt's Housing Push Faces Scrutiny

August 8, 2025

– Categories: *Politics & Government*



The South Australian Housing Authority (SAHA) has reported that 1,090 new public homes have been completed under the Malinauskas Labor Government's \$232.7 million Public Housing Improvement Program. The program also included halting the planned sale of 580 Housing Trust properties that had been proposed under the previous Marshall Liberal Government.

According to SAHA, 909 of the new homes are in metropolitan Adelaide, and 184 are in regional areas. This represents the first net increase in public housing stock in South Australia in several decades. The construction milestone at Ingle Farm marked the completion of the program's final housing slabs.

The Public Housing Improvement Program formed part of an election commitment made in 2022 to increase the supply of public housing. The government has stated that the initiative is intended to address the state's housing needs and provide additional housing options for people experiencing housing stress.

In addition to the Public Housing Improvement Program, the state government is working with the federal government through the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund. This national program is intended to deliver 3,500 social and affordable homes in South Australia by 2029.

In regional areas, the Regional Key Worker Housing Scheme has provided accommodation for essential service workers. Four homes have been completed in Port Augusta under this scheme, with additional developments planned in Mount Gambier and Kadina. The program is supported by the Office for Regional Housing, which was established in 2023 to address housing needs outside metropolitan Adelaide.

The government has also implemented planning reforms that have been acknowledged by industry groups as a step toward improving housing supply. In some regional locations, rental vacancy rates remain low, creating challenges for residents seeking affordable housing.

Figures from national housing data show that 67,000 new dwellings were approved across Australia between September 2023 and September 2024. The South Australian government has stated that its housing initiatives are part of a broader strategy to increase supply and improve affordability.

Housing affordability and homelessness remain areas of focus for state and federal programs. The delivery of new public housing, regional worker housing, and ongoing partnerships with the federal government form part of South Australia's current approach to addressing housing pressures. The outcomes of these measures will be assessed over the coming years as projects are completed and occupancy begins.