



**SAMANTHA RATNAM MLC**

State Member of Parliament for Northern Metropolitan Region

**Leader of the Victorian Greens**

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2 October 2023

The Hon. Jacinta Allan  
Premier  
1 Treasury Place  
Melbourne, Victoria 3002  
via email: [jacinta.allan@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:jacinta.allan@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Premier,

Congratulations on being appointed Premier of Victoria, and we look forward to working with your team in the best interests of the Victorian Community.

We were pleased to see in your first press conference that you acknowledged housing as the biggest issue facing Victorians right now. However, we write to raise a number of concerns about the government's recent housing statement.

As representatives including for a number of local areas in which your government intends to demolish 44 existing public housing towers, we are concerned that this strategy also seems to outline a plan for the privatisation and outsourcing of all of these public housing sites across Victoria.

It appears Labor is planning to demolish public housing towers and sell off valuable public housing land, with no guarantee any public housing will be rebuilt on these sites.

In the middle of a housing crisis with the public housing waiting list at over 125,000 people, instead of using prime public housing land to build more public housing, most of the public land will be sold off to private developers.

This looks like the biggest privatisation agenda since Jeff Kennett.



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If public housing towers are demolished and no new public housing built on existing public land, it will mean the end of public housing in Victoria. It makes no sense to privatise prime public housing land so close to the CBD instead of building more public housing on it.

We regularly deal with the consequences of Labor's failure to build more public housing. With over 125,000 Victorians now on the waiting list for public housing, it is a matter of urgency that at least 100,000 public homes are built within the next 10 years. However, the government's plans for 19,000 additional residents on these estates will result in 95% of the additional dwellings allocated to private for-profit housing, and no guarantee the remaining 5% will be in public hands.

There is now a once in a generation chance to embark on a big build of public housing to help cut waiting lists, but Labor seems to be going in the opposite direction.

We write to seek your assurance that 100% of all new homes on each site will remain publicly-owned and publicly-managed housing. We also seek your assurance that existing public land will be used to build more public housing, not sold off to private developers.

If Labor does in fact intend to privatise public housing and public housing land, then we seek your advice as to whether the number of public housing dwellings and rooms will be higher or lower at the end of this sell-off, and if so, by how much.

Experience shows that the model being proposed by the government does not benefit public housing. The previous use of the Ground Lease Model to privatise-by-stealth a number of existing public housing estates over the last 5 years is resulting in no public housing being rebuilt at each site. Furthermore, this model results in the majority of the public housing land being handed over to private developers for expensive private housing.

We would also like to remind you that public housing is publicly owned, managed and maintained. Community housing is housing where the management of the housing is outsourced to non-government providers.

Public housing residents in our electorates are already contacting our offices distressed about the announcement that their homes will be demolished and are concerned about their future.



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Many residents are understandably concerned that their right to return to their home estates in public housing will not be upheld, given many residents on other public housing renewal sites have not been able to return to their homes due to delays in building or new homes being inadequate for their families.

### **We therefore ask that the government provide urgent clarity on the following questions:**

- 1. Will all housing reconstructed and constructed at each public housing site remain 100% public housing? If not, what percentage will be public housing?**
- 2. Will housing on these sites retain the same number of family homes with multiple bedrooms, or will there be a reduction in larger apartments in favour of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments?**
- 3. Will every tenant have a right to return to a public housing dwelling of equivalent size and rooms in their current location?**
- 4. How many public homes will Victoria have at the end of this renewal, and how many public tenants will Victoria be able to house?**
- 5. What percentage of housing across all redeveloped sites will be private housing?**
- 6. Will any green canopy, open space and playgrounds be reconstructed on each site?**

We also note that at a Victorian level, some of the government's housing agenda requires legislation, in which the Victorian Greens may be in balance of power.

Yours sincerely,

**Samantha Ratnam**  
Leader of the Victorian  
Greens

**Ellen Sandell**  
Member for Melbourne

**Sam Hibbins**  
Member for Prahran



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Handwritten signature of Tim Read in black ink.

**Dr Tim Read**  
Member for Brunswick

Handwritten signature of Gabrielle De Vietri in blue ink.

**Gabrielle De Vietri**  
Member for Richmond

Handwritten signature of Dr Sarah Mansfield in black ink.

**Dr Sarah Mansfield**  
MLC for Western Victoria

Handwritten signature of Katherine Copsey in black ink.

**Katherine Copsey**  
MLC for Southern  
Metropolitan Region

Handwritten signature of Aiv Puglielli in black ink.

**Aiv Puglielli**  
MLC for North Eastern  
Metropolitan Region