



6 October 2026

Hon Nick Champion  
Minister for Housing and Urban Development  
GPO Box 11032  
Adelaide SA 5001

Via email: [MinisterChampion@sa.gov.au](mailto:MinisterChampion@sa.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Australian Institute of Architects South Australia Chapter, we welcome the recent announcement by the Australian and South Australian Governments to progress housing at Hampstead Barracks and Keswick Barracks.

The Institute strongly supports increasing housing supply in well-located areas close to jobs, public transport, services and community infrastructure. These sites provide an important opportunity to deliver more homes while creating connected, sustainable and enduring neighbourhoods.

The Institute has previously advocated that the transition of surplus Defence land should be approached as more than a property disposal exercise. As outlined in our [submission to the Senate inquiry into the management of Defence estate assets](#), these decisions shape housing opportunities, heritage, environmental performance and public value. We therefore welcome the Government's commitment to detailed planning, heritage investigations and community engagement.

The Institute encourages a design-led approach to both sites, supported by early master planning, strong design governance and independent design review. Decisions about housing mix, street networks, open space, transport connections, tree canopy and building performance will affect infrastructure demand, household costs, climate resilience and public health. Addressing these matters early can maximise the return on public investment and reduce costs that would otherwise be borne by households and governments.

Future development should also respond to South Australia's changing housing needs. A diverse mix should include market, affordable and social housing, as well as accessible and adaptable homes that support smaller households and ageing in place. The Australian Government's 2026 Intergenerational Report projects that the number of Australians aged 85 and over will more than triple by 2065–66. We welcome the commitment that at least 15 per cent of dwellings at Keswick will be reserved for affordable housing. The Institute encourages Government to consider housing diversity and affordability outcomes across both sites, ensuring development responds to current housing pressures, future demographic change and the needs of a growing and ageing population.

The Institute strongly advocates that housing supply and housing performance must be pursued together. Evidence presented in our [submission on the Productivity Commission's Housing Supply Regulation Interim Report](#) shows that poor-performing housing can transfer costs to households,



governments and future owners through higher energy use, maintenance, climate vulnerability and premature retrofit. The evidence also demonstrates that decisions made during planning and design can avoid substantial future costs, with many performance measures far more cost-effective to incorporate upfront than to retrofit later.

This evidence supports a whole-of-life approach to the two sites. More homes are essential, but so are homes that are affordable to operate and neighbourhoods that support health, access and participation. At precinct scale, urban greening, walkability, public transport and community infrastructure can improve liveability while supporting more efficient infrastructure use and reducing pressure on public services.

The Institute believes these projects provide an opportunity for South Australia to build on its strong planning and design leadership. The early concept for Hampstead Barracks, with a mix of apartments and townhouses centred around a large public park, provides a promising foundation. These projects can demonstrate how housing growth and quality place outcomes can be delivered together.

The Institute would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government and other stakeholders as planning progresses. Architects bring expertise in housing, master planning, heritage, adaptive reuse, sustainability and urban design. They also have experience engaging with communities and translating local needs and aspirations into practical design responses. Early access to this expertise can help government test options, identify risks and establish clear design and performance expectations before key decisions are made.

We would be pleased to contribute practitioner expertise and advise on design frameworks that support timely housing delivery, community confidence and lasting value for South Australians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirstie Coultas'.

Kirstie Coultas  
**SA Chapter President**  
Australian Institute of Architects – South Australian Chapter

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Bolton'.

Sally Bolton  
**Executive Leader**  
Australian Institute of Architects – South Australian Chapter