



MEDIA RELEASE

New President for industry in recovery

New Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) Queensland President Warren Harris pledged to make industry jobs the number one priority for his term of leadership after his appointment last night (Thursday, April 23).

Following the Institute's Annual General Meeting, Mr Harris, who is the Queensland State Manager of Amex Corporation, said he would commit his energy to representing the development industry in one of the most difficult operating environments in memory.

"The present period is perhaps one of the most difficult for the development industry in this state," Mr Harris said.

"During normal times, the industry is responsible for delivering 40,000 to 45,000 dwellings per year – that's 800 homes for Queenslanders every week.

"The dwelling approvals rate is currently down to around half the long term average for the industry and is lower than ever recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

"As a result of the significant economic downturn, unemployment in our industry has doubled in recent months and building work reduced by more than \$121 million in the December quarter.

"My task will be to ensure that the state government and local authorities recognise the significance of the development industry to Queensland's wellbeing to ensure that Queensland is well positioned to move into the recovery phase as soon as the current circumstances improve," he said.

"The development industry employs both directly and indirectly over 300,000 Queenslanders.

"This amounts to 15 per cent of the Queensland workplace, which in direct employment terms is four times larger than the mining sector.

"Each year the development industry contributes \$2 billion in taxes and charges including GST to the Queensland Government.

"The development and property construction industry, when combined with those working in property services and civil construction, is by far the largest industry in the state today."

He said he would work with the Queensland Government and local authorities to ensure that government initiatives to improve the efficiency of the development sector were effectively implemented; that appropriate levels of land supply were provided and that infrastructure taxes did not drive Queensland further into recession.

Mr Harris takes over from former President Brett Gillan whose appointment as State Manager Victoria for the Sunland Group means he will take up duties there in June. Mirvac CEO, Matt Wallace was appointed to the position of Vice President.

A keen tri-athlete, Mr Harris is married with two children and has worked extensively in South East Queensland. He has worked in the development industry for 20 years having been involved in development activities with AV Jennings, Devine homes, Multiplex and in the coming years will be heavily involved in the delivery of the Ripley Valley with the Amex Corporation.

He was also the inaugural branch president of the UDIA Ipswich Branch.

Ends.

Media:

For more information or photographs of Warren Harris, please contact Susan McCosker on 0422 567 667.