



19 March 2020

Louise Dudley
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Utilities
GPO Box 2765
Brisbane QLD 4001

BY POST/EMAIL – customerservice@urbanutilities.com.au

Dear Louise,

RE: Urban Utilities and Protecting Jobs during Coronavirus Outbreak

The Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland (the Institute) writes to Urban Utilities in relation to the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Institute holds significant concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on employment in the property industry noting that one in ten Queenslanders are employed by our industry. In writing, we acknowledge local government is also facing substantial challenges at this time including the responsibility for the delivery of essential services.

As mentioned above, the development industry is the third largest industry of employment within the State, directly employing 10% of the Queensland workforce, and indirectly supporting a further 13%. The development industry employs a variety of trades and professions contributing more than 200,000 direct jobs and more than that number again with 257,962 indirect jobs generated. The industry also contributes more than \$14.2 billion in wages.¹

Further, the property industry plays a significant role in the support of local businesses - 85% of development industry expenditure is spent on local goods and services (i.e. from Queensland).

In light of these circumstances, we seek your assistance in protecting jobs by maintaining stability in the development industry as a crucial part of your COVID 19 strategy.

Given the situation, we recommend Urban Utilities undertake actions and initiatives to ensure services to the industry and be adaptive to facilitate development and infrastructure outcomes. In addition, we strongly encourage Urban Utilities to maintain an open dialogue and engagement with the industry on communication regarding development applications before any action is taken to extend timeframes is critical.

¹ Urbis for the UDIA Queensland, March 2018

These solutions may, in the short term, mitigate the impacts, assist in productivity, and ensures the industry is ready to respond once this situation is resolved. Ideas raised by members that could be considered include:

- putting in place consultants to outsource water and sewer applications to alleviate potential resource deficiencies
- emphasis on bonding approval to ensure project delivery
- expanding the matters that can be included for on and off maintenance bonding to spread the assessment load.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our letter. The Institute offers its support to council in assisting where we can to ensure the property industry continues to operate in the current circumstances. If you have any questions, please contact Manager of Policy, Martin Zaltron (mzaltron@udiaqld.com.au) on (07) 3229 1589.

Yours sincerely,

Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Chessher-Brown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kirsty Chessher-Brown
Chief Executive Officer