

9 April 2020

Kirsty Chessher-Brown
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland
GPO Box 2279
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Via email: mzaltron@udiaqld.com.au

Dear Kirsty,

Thank you for your letter to Redland City Council CEO Andrew Chesterman dated 19 March 2020 outlining concerns that the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) has about the impact that COVID-19 is having on employment in the property industry.

Redland City Council is aware of the profound social and economic impact that COVID-19 is having on residents, community groups, businesses and industry – including property development – and I note your suggestions to help mitigate the short term impact and maintain stability of the industry.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend UDIA Queensland on developing *Project Bounce Back: A COVID-19 Industry Action Plan*.

You may be aware that following a Special Meeting of Council held on 26 March 2020, Council announced a \$2 million assistance package in response to COVID-19. It includes:

- Doubling the amount of time for customer to pay their next rates bill
- \$288,000 in grants for business and community groups experiencing hardship due to COVID-19
- Working directly with businesses, social enterprises and community groups to help them access State and Federal economic stimulus packages
- Reducing red-tape for businesses and community groups
- Providing a one-off contribution towards electricity costs for clubs and associations registered under Council's community electricity scheme
- Strengthening Council's local buy preference and fast-track payments
- Expanding Council's Wi-Fi to assist businesses
- Promoting, reviewing and updating Council's financial hardship policy to ensure eligible ratepayers can access hardship provisions in relation to their statutory rates and charges
- Seeking to fast-track \$60 million in Council infrastructure works within the community by taking advantage of potential State and Federal government grants announced.

Further measures will be considered by the incoming new Council, including those in noted in *Project Bounce Back: A COVID-19 Industry Action Plan*.

From a service perspective, there are currently no resource concerns for development assessment and many Council officers have successfully transitioned to working from home.

Council has recently rolled out pre-lodgement meetings via teleconferencing, and this has been well received by the participants to date. Council is committed to ensuring an effective pre-lodgement service to maintain confidence in the industry and an open dialogue.

Council continues to offer early plan sealing, as well as the opportunity to enter into early build agreements to allow house construction prior to plan sealing.

Council will make reasonable efforts to be flexible and accommodating to individual requests to expand the matters that can be included for on and off maintenance bonding.

In relation to delayed infrastructure charges, Council will consider this request. However, recognising that the timing of these charges are outlined in the *Planning Act 2016* itself, it is suggested that this approach could be made to the State Government for a coordinated response that appropriately considers and manages the risks around the recovery of those charges.

I appreciate your offer of support and assistance to Council and I invite you to contact Mr Chris Vize, Acting Group Manager – City Planning and Assessment on 3829 8813 should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



David Jeanes
Acting General Manager Community and Customer Services
Redland City Council