

5 September 2023

Mr Paul Arnold,
Chief Executive Officer
Urban Utilities
GPO Box 2765
Brisbane QLD 4001

By email: Customerservice@urbanutilities.com.au

Dear Mr Arnold,

Reducing the cost of utility infrastructure

Queensland is in the grips of a well-publicised housing crisis, fuelled by a fall in the number of new homes being delivered and a significant population boom as more families choose to live in the 'Sunshine State'.

Nowhere is this crisis more apparent than Brisbane, as highlighted by Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner during his annual Property Council address last week. The extent of the housing shortage in Brisbane is alarming, with the Lord Mayor reporting that just 724 apartments and townhouses were completed in Brisbane last year compared to an average of nearly 4000 over the last eight years. This rapid fall in new housing stock comes at a time when Brisbane is seeing significant interstate migration, with an extra 35,000 people moving here over the last three years.

Housing affordability continues to be a major impediment to delivering the new homes needed, with unprecedented construction and financial challenges making it more expensive and difficult than ever to deliver projects. In response, Brisbane City Council has announced a new *Housing Supply Action Plan*, including reduced infrastructure charges for eligible homes in designated inner-city and high-density zones. By incentivising development in inner-city and high-density areas already serviced by infrastructure, Council's plan will drive delivery of new homes, while reducing the need for new infrastructure.

Available to both private and community housing providers, the infrastructure incentives are designed to alleviate the ongoing affordability challenges to get more homes on the ground sooner, a move that has been welcomed by the property industry.

As you know, Council infrastructure is only one component of the costs of delivering new homes, with the expense of utility infrastructure also having a bearing on affordability. As such, I invite Urban Utilities to support the delivery of much-needed homes by adopting a similar infrastructure incentives scheme as announced by Council. Waiving or reducing infrastructure charges in high-density areas with existing infrastructure, will encourage private investment in housing, ultimately delivering an ongoing financial and community benefit.

As the housing crisis continues, it has never been more important for government and industry to work together. Urban Utilities has a reputation for innovation and supporting projects that drive real community outcomes and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss how you can work with our members to reduce the cost of infrastructure and deliver safe and affordable housing for our growing region. Please don't hesitate to contact me on 0448 432 936 or jwilliams@propertycouncil.com.au to discuss.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jen W'.

Jen Williams

Queensland Executive Director