

27 April 2020

The Hon. Richard Wynne  
Minister for Planning

By email: [Richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:Richard.wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**COVID-19 – Help VCAT to keep \$3.5 billion in project value moving**

The Urban Development Industry of Australia, Victoria Division (UDIA Victoria) is a non-profit advocacy, research and educational organisation supported by a membership of land use and property development organisations, across the private sector and Victoria's public service. We are committed to working with both industry and Government to deliver housing, infrastructure and liveable communities for all Victorians.

UDIA Victoria welcomes the opportunity to work with the Andrews Government to support the residential development industry during this time. Further to our previous correspondence regarding our COVID-19 Action Plan and shovel ready projects, we are seeking your support to enable industry to continue to deliver development projects during these unprecedented circumstances.

The *COVID-19 Omnibus Bill 2020* passed by the Victorian Parliament last week will enable Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) to be able to pivot more quickly to an online format. We commend this action by Government and PPV and we encourage Panels to continue to hear matters and progress their reports.

Now, we are seeking your urgent assistance to keep planning and development applications moving through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Building, construction and development activity is classified as 'essential' and it is imperative that all components of the planning and development approval system continue to operate, so the industry can continue to operate.

**VCAT has halted hearings**

A pipeline of between \$3 and \$3.5 billion in project value is locked in the VCAT process in Victoria. VCAT has advised that until at least 15 May 2020, it has effectively closed its doors and is not hearing any matters.

VCAT cannot process its workload with the current COVID-19 measures in place and a large project log-jam has emerged. Some minor matters have been heard on the papers; however, our member projects generally require more complex hearings, and these are not proceeding. New listings have stalled, and timeframes are continuing to blow out. This is impacting project viability and investor confidence as project risks are increasing. Further, when VCAT can resume its normal functions, it will need a resource injection to move through the project log jam quickly.

**In response to these risks, we seek your urgent support to get VCAT moving again and to boost funding to move quickly through the planning and development project pipeline worth up to \$3.5 billion to the Victorian economy.**

The state of Victoria is facing uncharted territory and we recognise the situation is changing daily. We believe it is critical for industry to work closely with State and Local Governments to ensure the development sector is well placed to contribute to the Victorian economy when the situation normalises and work ramps up again.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the building, construction and development industry during this important time.

Please contact me directly at [danni@udiavic.com.au](mailto:danni@udiavic.com.au) to arrange a suitable time to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Danni Hunter'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping underline.

**Danni Hunter**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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