



## **Emira raises occupancy and outlook**

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### **Business Day**

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### **Property Reporter**

PROPERTY unit trust Emira Property Fund, which listed on the JSE Securities Exchange SA in November last year, has managed to significantly reduce vacancies in its property portfolio, having let about 20552m<sup>2</sup> of space in the past seven months.

This means the fund should boost revenue in the next six months.

Reporting interim results for the seven months to June 30 2004, Emira, which is managed by RMB Properties, said its overall vacancies had improved to 6,1% in June, from 10,1% in December last year.

CEO James Templeton said as far as the industrial property market was concerned, the company had seen an increasing demand for space because there was a shortage of quality industrial property on the market.

In December 2003, Emira's industrial portfolio had 25303m<sup>2</sup>, or 13,6%, of its industrial space vacant . But in June this year the amount of vacant space had been reduced to 14015m<sup>2</sup>, representing a vacancy level of 7,6%.

The vacancy levels in Emira's office portfolio also improved, from 11% to 7%.

Templeton said Emira had seen a slight take-up of space in its office properties, but said this was not as significant as the take-up of space in the industrial and retail property markets.

The reduction in Emira's office vacancies was due to the fund having gone out and aggressively reduced its vacancies, said Templeton.

Emira's distributions to unit-holders for the seven months to end June 2004 were 4,3% higher than its pre-listing forecast. It achieved distributions of 34,01c, while forecast distributions were 32,60c.

Mariette Warner, fund manager of Stanlib Property Income Fund, said the results were ahead of her forecasts.

"The forecast was conservative, which is the right way to present a new listing to the market, rather than have disappointing maiden results," she said.

Angelique De Rauville, MD of listed property portfolio management company Provest, said the announcement was in line with their forecast.

De Rauville said she expected Emira to achieve its prospectus forecast of 58c for its first year. She said it was encouraging that the fund had increased its liquidity levels recently.

De Rauville said this was mainly due to Momentum having reduced its holding in Emira to 55% from 70%.

A large portion of Emira's portfolio had been acquired from Momentum, which held units in the fund rather than properties, she said.