

January 10, 2013

## ICA issues updated advice for farmers and those left homeless by Tasmanian bushfires

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has issued updated advice for farmers and those that have lost their homes in the Tasmanian bushfires.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said ICA staff and insurance representatives remained on the ground at recovery centres in Tasmania.

“The bushfire situation across south-eastern Australia is ongoing. We would advise anyone who needs to lodge a claim to contact their insurer as quickly as possible,” he said.

“There have been inaccurate reports that have circulated in some media outlets on injured livestock.

“Reports that farmers must wait for insurance assessors to arrive before euthanising livestock are simply wrong.

“Farmers who have livestock that have been injured in the fires should do the following:

- Contact their insurer to notify them stock will need to be destroyed as soon as possible
- Take photographs of the condition of livestock
- Collect other information about the livestock that your insurer may request, before destroying
- Carefully record the number of livestock and disposal details so that assessors can verify upon arrival

“Assessors are in contact with emergency services and are entering fire-affected areas as quickly as possible.”

The ICA is advising those left homeless following the bushfires in Tasmania to contact their insurance provider as soon as possible.

“Many insurance policies include provision for emergency accommodation under certain scenarios. If you need emergency accommodation contact your insurance company to discuss your needs and what may be available as part of your policy,” Mr Whelan said.

The ICA is also in touch with the Master Builders Association of Tasmania. Representatives from the association have agreed to develop a list of local builders and act as a registration point for local trades that are available for work to aid the recovery.

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“The ICA has started flagging local builder supply as an issue with government. As with previous disasters the ICA is informing government that insurers will endeavour to use local trades where they are competitive and qualified, but that the scale of the rebuilding task will undoubtedly necessitate interstate builders being bought in by some insurers.”

### **State-by-state guide to current bushfires:**

#### **Tasmania**

- Preliminary data collected by the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) shows more than 510 claims have now been received from policyholders affected by the Tasmanian bushfires, with losses estimated about \$49 million.
- The ICA has announced a community forum will be held at the Dunalley Hotel, on Monday, January 21 from 3pm to 5pm, for property owners affected by the bushfires. The forum will give people the opportunity to speak with insurance experts about their claims. To register please visit: [www.insurancecouncil.com.au](http://www.insurancecouncil.com.au)
- ICA CEO Rob Whelan says it is expected that once people start to return safely to their homes the number of claims will rise.
- “The bushfire situation in Tasmania is ongoing, we would advise anyone who has lost property in the fires to contact their insurer as quickly as possible.
- “ICA and insurance company staff are on the ground at recovery centres in Tasmania assisting policyholders with insurance-related questions.”

#### **New South Wales**

- No significant property loss in the state.
- ICA remains in touch with emergency services across the state and insurers continue to monitor the current bushfires.

#### **Victoria**

- ICA remains in touch with emergency services across the state and insurers continue to monitor the current bushfires.

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The ICA disaster hotline is operating to help people affected by the bushfires who are not sure which insurer they are with, or who have general inquiries about the claims process. The hotline number is: **1800 734 621**

For general advice about preparing for bushfires visit:

<http://www.insurancecouncil.com.au/for-consumers/consumer-tips/bushfire-preparation>