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NSW bushfires update: Insurers set up at recovery centre

Today the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) sent a team of disaster specialists to the Springwood recovery centre to help bushfire policyholders with questions about their insurance claims.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said insurance assessors were also starting to review claims, and would continue to assess the damage once emergency services allowed them access to affected areas.

As of noon today, 855 claims had been lodged with insurers, with losses of more than \$93 million. The ICA expects more claims will be lodged this week.

Mr Whelan said the situation in the Blue Mountains remained uncertain, with fires still raging and more properties potentially vulnerable.

“The ICA and insurance companies are focusing on helping policyholders affected by this catastrophe,” Mr Whelan said.

“All insurers are prioritising bushfire claims, and I urge anyone who knows they have been affected to contact their insurer as soon as they can to lodge a claim, even if they are not yet sure of the extent of the damage.

“The ICA’s team at the Springwood recovery centre is there to answer questions about the claims process, and help policyholders make contact with their insurer.

“The ICA is also liaising closely with local and state government agencies, emergency services and community groups to help identify issues and resolve them as swiftly as possible.”

The recovery centre is operating from the Springwood Sports Centre, 85 Macquarie Rd.

The ICA offers the following general advice to affected policyholders:

- Contact your insurance company as soon as you can, and seek advice about the claim process under your policy, as well as what you’re covered for. Many insurers have 24-hour call centres
- Don’t be concerned if insurance documents are not readily at hand. Insurance companies keep records electronically and require only the policyholders’ name and address to find a policy
- Take pictures of damage to the property and possessions as evidence for your claim assessor

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- Speak to your insurer before authorising repairs. Emergency repairs should only be undertaken in the first instance to make the property safe
- Remove and discard fire-damaged goods that pose a health risk
- If possible, keep samples of materials and fabrics to show the assessor
- Store damaged or destroyed items somewhere safe
- Make an inventory of damaged possessions. This will help insurers process your claim

The ICA's disaster hotline – **1800 734 621** – can help affected residents who are not sure which insurer they are with, or who have general inquiries about the claims process.