

January 14, 2014

WA bushfire update: Assessors enter bushfire zones

Insurance assessors have started reviewing claims in bushfire-affected communities in the Perth Hills following bushfires that have destroyed or damaged many homes, businesses and vehicles.

Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) CEO Rob Whelan said assessors were entering fire-damaged areas once it was safe to do so, and insurers had geared up to handle inquiries and claims.

He said reviewing the extent of damage would take some time, and he encouraged affected residents to contact their insurer as soon as possible to lodge a claim.

As of 9am (WA time) today almost 300 claims had been lodged, with estimated insurance losses of just over \$13 million. The ICA expects more claims will be lodged this week.

“Yesterday, the ICA declared a Catastrophe for this bushfire. Affected policyholders can be reassured the insurance industry is prioritising their claims to help them recover from this disaster as swiftly as possible,” Mr Whelan said.

Mr Whelan said the ICA had sent a disaster recovery specialist to the area to work with local authorities and help bushfire policyholders with questions about insurance claims.

He said the situation in the Perth Hills remained uncertain, with emergency authorities warning strong winds could cause a flare-up, with more properties potentially vulnerable.

Mr Whelan said the insurance industry was also monitoring the heatwave affecting south-eastern Australia, with grass fires and bushfires burning in several states. Fire services are concerned the heatwave could create severe to extreme bushfire conditions in many regions by the end of the week.

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

For information and tips about recovering from a bushfire visit Understand Insurance:
<http://understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-disasters/bushfires#tab-2>

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