

Monday June 6, 2015

Insurance Council declares a catastrophe for Queensland and NSW storms

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has declared an insurance catastrophe for severe storms that hit the east coast of Queensland and New South Wales over the weekend.

As of 2pm AEST today, insurers had received more than 11,150 claims across both states, with estimated insured losses of \$38 million.

The ICA's Acting CEO Karl Sullivan said the catastrophe declaration enabled insurers to fully harness the industry's disaster response resources.

"The ICA and its members are liaising with state governments, agencies and the emergency services in response to the damage caused by these storms," Mr Sullivan said.

Under the catastrophe declaration the ICA has:

- Established a taskforce of senior insurance industry figures to address and identify any issues that arise
- Activated its disaster hotline – 1800 734 621 – helping policyholders if they are uncertain which insurer they are with, or have general inquiries about the claims process
- Started preparing to send ICA staff to work directly with affected policyholders

"So far most claims concern typical storm damage, such as roof and gutter damage, and damage due to fallen trees. There are also reports of cars being flooded in some locations," Mr Sullivan said.

"The ICA expects the number of claims will keep rising over coming days as evacuated residents return to their homes to assess the damage.

"Insurers are also standing by to assist their policyholders in Victoria and Tasmania as the low pressure system pushes southwards.

"Policyholders who have been affected should contact their insurance company as soon as possible so the claims process can commence. Insurers have electronic records and policyholders who can't find their paperwork need only provide their name and address."

Other tips include:

- Stay away from storm-damaged areas and property until emergency services declare it is safe to return
- Stay away from downed power lines, poles and wires, and fallen trees

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- Speak to your insurer before you attempt or authorise any building work, including emergency repairs, and ask for the insurer's permission in writing. Unauthorised work may not be covered by your policy
- Take photographs or videos of damage to property and possessions, and keep samples of materials from damaged goods, as evidence to support your claim. This will be used by your insurer to process your claim as quickly as possible

For more information, visit: <http://understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-disasters/storms>

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