

Monday November 14, 2016

Insurance Council warns of ominous disaster season

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has launched a national campaign urging households and businesses to prepare for what may be a severe disaster season.

Between November and April, the risk of cyclones, storms, floods and bushfires soars. When extreme weather strikes it often leaves enormous bills for governments, insurers, householders and business owners.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said the campaign was raising awareness of the steps property owners could take to protect their homes and other assets, physically and financially.

The campaign runs throughout November and early December and includes selected radio, online and print media* advertising in high-risk areas, and broader engagement with mainstream media.

Mr Whelan said: "It's shaping up to be a severe summer of natural disasters, and insurers and emergency services organisations across Australia are concerned many households and businesses are not prepared.

"An above-average cyclone season has been forecast by the weather bureau, while the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre predicts heightened risk across much of southern Australia, especially in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.

"A cyclone-focused campaign is targeting communities in North Queensland, Darwin and the Pilbara, while a separate bushfire campaign will reach southern parts of the country. Summer storms are also covered.

"The ICA is urging households and business owners to visit the financial literacy website www.understandinsurance.com.au to review how well prepared they are for the worst that nature throws at them. The website has practical tips that householders can take to increase their disaster resilience, from clearing gutters and lopping overhanging trees, to reinforcing roofs, doors and windows to withstand cyclonic winds.

"Free, independent insurance calculators help households check that they have enough insurance cover to fully rebuild, repair or replace their assets if disaster strikes.

"Last disaster season brought insured losses of more than \$630 million – and that was considered fairly benign. Australians must not underestimate the damage a severe season could wreak."

For more on disaster preparations visit: <http://understandinsurance.com.au/preparing-for-disasters>.