

Monday 22 March 2021

Insurance catastrophe declared for parts of NSW

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has declared a Catastrophe for large parts of NSW following the devastating storms and flooding of the last few days.

The ICA's Catastrophe Declaration serves to escalate and prioritise the insurance industry's response for affected policyholders.

Under the Catastrophe declaration:

- Claims from affected policyholders will be given priority by insurers
- Claims will be triaged to direct urgent assistance to the worst-affected property owners
- The ICA's disaster hotline has been activated – **1800 734 621** – to assist policyholders if they are uncertain of their insurance details or have general inquiries about the claims process. (Please note: this is not a claims lodgement service.)
- ICA representatives will be mobilised to work with local agencies and services and affected policyholders as soon as emergency services say it is safe to do so
- Insurers will mobilise disaster response specialists to assist affected customers with claims and assessments as soon as emergency services say it is safe to do so
- An industry taskforce has been established to identify and address issues arising from this catastrophe

Insurers will continue to monitor the situation in south-east Queensland to determine if a Catastrophe Declaration is required for that area.

Quote attributable to Andrew Hall, CEO, Insurance Council of Australia:

It's too early to understand the extent of the damage to property in affected areas and to estimate the insurance damage bill, however insurers have received over 5,000 claims in the past few days.

The insurance industry has made this Catastrophe Declaration to activate services and support for affected homeowners and businesses and reassure them that their insurer is there to help.

As many areas are currently inaccessible due to floodwater, insurers are expecting further claims in coming days as emergency services allow residents to return to their properties to examine the extent of their damage and losses.

Monday 22 March 2021

Insurance and flood damage – what to do when you return to your property:

- Safety is the priority - don't do anything that puts anyone at risk
- Only return to your property when emergency services give the go ahead
- If water has entered the property, don't turn on your electricity until it has been inspected by an electrician
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to lodge a claim and seek guidance on the claims process
- You can start cleaning up but first take pictures or videos of damage to the property and possessions as evidence for your claim
- Keep samples of materials and fabrics to show your insurance assessor
- Remove water or mud-damaged goods from your property that might pose a health risk, such as saturated carpets and soft furnishings
- Make a list of each item damaged and include a detailed description, such as brand, model and serial number if possible
- Store damaged or destroyed items somewhere safe
- 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
- Do not throw away goods that could be salvaged or repaired