

Thursday December 17, 2015

Insurance Council declares a catastrophe for Sydney storms

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has declared a catastrophe after storms struck New South Wales, in particular Sydney's eastern and southern suburbs.

Yesterday's storms brought wind in excess of 200kmh, heavy rain and hail, resulting in damage to homes, businesses, cars and infrastructure.

As of 9.30am Sydney time today, insurers had received about 1000 claims with losses estimated at \$8 million. Those numbers are expected to rise slowly over coming days as property owners lodge claims and the clean-up and recovery operation continues.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan said the catastrophe declaration enabled insurers to fully harness the industry's disaster response resources.

"The ICA and its members are liaising with the NSW Government, agencies and the emergency services in response to the damage caused by these storms," Mr Whelan 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

Mr Whelan said households and businesses who suffered losses in the storms should contact their insurer or broker to lodge a claim as soon as they were able.

"Insurers are standing by to handle inquiries and claims, and they will prioritise these cases to help reduce the stress these policyholders are suffering," he said.

The ICA welcomed the NSW Government's announcement that it would waive the waste levy for the clean-up for residents and businesses in the Kurnell area. By waiving the levy, more money from insurance policies will be available for spending on property repairs.

More advice on dealing with the aftermath of severe storms can be found at:

<http://understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-disasters/storms>

Radio newsrooms: For audio grabs please visit: <https://soundcloud.com/insurance-council-australia>

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