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## Bundaberg insurance forum gives policyholders opportunity to discuss recovery

A community insurance forum organised by the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) to help policyholders affected by recent extreme weather last night attracted more than 180 policyholders.

The forum, held at The Waves club in Bundaberg, was set up to help insured property owners in the Wide Bay-Burnett region who have been affected by the severe weather and flooding caused by ex-tropical cyclone Oswald.

It attracted policyholders from across the region, including Bundaberg, Bargara, Gin Gin, Gayndah, Bungadoo and Maryborough.

More than 30 representatives of insurance companies handled customer inquiries ranging from claims lodgement, handling and assessment timeframes to rebuilding scopes of work and cash settlements. The forum was also attended by representatives from the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) and Queensland Legal Aid, who discussed dispute resolution and provided advice about insurance and banking matters.

Insurance Council CEO Rob Whelan said the forum had helped answer many of the key concerns that policyholders had, and provided access to other expert services.

“This is an incredibly stressful time for everyone affected by the recent severe weather. Giving policyholders the opportunity to meet insurers face to face helps speed up the recovery process and provide some peace of mind,” he said.

“The meeting was very well attended. The ICA explained the various steps of the recovery process, and policyholders raised a range of issues including concerns they had with their own recovery.

“The ICA was also asked about whether local trades could be involved in rebuilding and repairing damaged homes and businesses. Most insurers will use local tradespeople and builders if quotes are competitive, and tradespeople should register with the Building Services Authority to allow policyholders to contact them directly.”

The general insurance industry has received about 59,010 claims to an insured value of about \$661.3 million as a result of ex-tropical cyclone Oswald.

Any policyholders who have general inquiries about the claims and recovery process should contact the ICA’s disaster hotline on **1800 734 621**.