

Tuesday February 26, 2018

Shorten speaks to policyholders at Townsville insurance forum

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten was a surprise guest at last night's insurance forum in Townsville.

Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) spokesperson Campbell Fuller said Mr Shorten briefly talked to the audience about his experiences in disaster zones before speaking in private to locals.

"Visitors to the forum were surprised to hear from Mr Shorten, who was in the area to inspect the clean-up efforts and was positive about Townsville's capacity to recover," Mr Fuller said.

He said the three-hour forum – the first of two announced in response to the devastating monsoonal deluge – enabled householders and small business operators to talk to their insurers about their claims.

More than 150 policyholders met representatives from Suncorp, RACQ Insurance, IAG, QBE, Allianz, CommInsure, Youi and Westpac Insurance.

Other politicians who attended included local MP Cathy O'Toole, Senators Anthony Chisholm and Jenny McAlister, and Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill.

Mr Fuller said policyholders appreciated the opportunity to sit down with their insurers to discuss their personal circumstances and their claims.

"Though the claims process is well advanced for many policyholders, and hundreds of claims have already been finalised, the ICA recognised some claimants had unresolved questions or concerns," he said.

"The forum allowed householders and small businesses to ask their insurer about the progress of their claim, including assessments and the repair and rebuilding process."

Insurers have so far received more than 21,500 claims, with insurance losses estimated at \$886 million.

"Insurers recognise these catastrophes cause emotional and financial trauma for many in the community, and are doing all they can to help policyholders to get back into their homes and businesses quickly," Mr Fuller said.

A second forum will be held on Monday March 25. To register visit www.disasters.org.au or phone 1800 734 621.