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Insurers working with Tasmanian Government on bushfire clean up

Insurance companies have been working hand in hand with the Tasmanian Government this week to help bushfire victims start rebuilding their lives.

As of today, insurers have received 1783 claims, with insurance losses estimated at \$86.7 million. About 85 per cent of claims by volume are for residential, commercial and rural property, with domestic vehicles accounting for 7 per cent. The balance consists of smaller claims such as commercial vehicles, light property damage, marine and business interruption.

The CEO of the Insurance Council of Australia, Mr Rob Whelan, said insurance companies were focusing on assisting policyholders affected by the bushfires through prioritising their claims, directing logistical resources to damaged communities, and marshalling specialists to help speed up the recovery process.

“Insurance assessors have already visited most properties where claims have been lodged, and building surveyors are also moving through these areas to evaluate what can be rebuilt and preparing scopes of work,” he said.

“The Tasmanian Government has accepted the commercial arrangements for cleaning up these sites, which enables insurers to put every possible dollar of the claim into the recovery process. This is a positive initiative by the government and will lead to a better outcome for policyholders. If you are uncertain about the clean up arrangements, speak to your insurer.”

Mr Whelan said many policyholders would soon be faced with the difficult decision of whether to rebuild their properties or accept a cash settlement from their insurer.

“My advice is to take your time, discuss your options with friends, family and trusted advisers before making a final decision,” he said.

“Insurers will endeavour to use local builders and tradespeople where they are available, competitive and qualified, but the scale of the rebuilding task will undoubtedly necessitate interstate builders being brought in by some insurers. Building works undertaken by insurers with selected tradespeople are often guaranteed.”

The ICA disaster hotline is operating to help policyholders affected by the bushfires who have general inquiries about the claims process. The hotline number is 1800 734 621.