

Thursday October 10, 2019

## Insurance Council declares Catastrophe for Rappville bushfires

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has declared its second bushfire Catastrophe in five weeks for properties damaged or destroyed in northern New South Wales.

Today's Catastrophe declaration is for the area around the northern NSW community of Rappville and fires in the Busby Flat and Drake areas.

ICA CEO Rob Whelan encouraged affected property owners to contact their insurers as quickly as possible. He said the Catastrophe declaration meant claims from the affected areas would be given priority by insurers. He said the industry hoped to reduce some of the emotional and financial stress experienced by residents and businesses.

"Insurers are standing by to help customers in this region, with assessors mobilising to examine properties once it's safe to do so," Mr Whelan said.

"The NSW Rural Fire Service is still determining the extent of property damage, and it may take several weeks before insurers are able to quantify the extent of insured losses.

"The ICA is aware police are investigating whether the Rappville fire was the result of arson, and reassure property owners that this will not have an impact on their insurance claims.

"Primary producers are reminded that they may euthanise critically injured animals without having been visited by an assessor. They should ensure they have appropriate records for any insurance claim."

Under the Catastrophe declaration the ICA has:

- Activated its disaster hotline – 1800 734 621 to assist policyholders if they are uncertain of their insurance details, or have general inquiries about the claims process
- Mobilised Insurance Council disaster recovery specialists to support affected property owners and local community groups
- Established an industry taskforce to identify and address issues that arise

Community members can also make inquiries via [www.disasters.org.au](http://www.disasters.org.au).

This is the third bushfire catastrophe declared this year, and the fourth overall.

Insurers have received 300 claims from last month's fires in northern NSW and south-east Queensland, with \$20 million in insured losses.

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In March, the ICA declared a Catastrophe for the Bunyip bushfires in eastern Victoria. Insurers have received 432 claims, with losses estimated at \$31.9 million.

The first Catastrophe for the year was declared in February for damage to Townsville and surrounding regions following a monsoonal downpour. Insurers received more than 30,000 claims with losses of \$1.26 billion.

For bushfire recovery tips visit: <http://understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-disasters/bushfires>

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