



News release

Insurance Council
of Australia

Monday, 28 February 2022

Insurance Catastrophe declaration extended to NSW

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has today extended the Insurance Catastrophe declaration made on Saturday for South-East Queensland to include those areas of New South Wales impacted by this weather event and the weather cell impacting south to the Mid-North Coast.

Since 21 February insurers have received almost 15,000 claims from policyholders related to extreme rainfall in both States, a 33 per cent increase on yesterdays' claims figures.

It is too soon to provide an estimate of claims costs given the event is still unfolding and claims are still being reported.

The ICA's Catastrophe declaration serves to escalate and prioritise the insurance industry's response for affected policyholders.

Under the Catastrophe declaration:

- Claims from affected policyholders are given priority by insurers
- Claims are triaged to direct urgent assistance to the worst-affected property owners
- An industry taskforce has been established to identify and address issues arising from this extreme weather event
- ICA representatives will be mobilised to work with local agencies and services and affected policyholders as soon as emergency services say it is safe to do so
- Insurers will mobilise disaster response specialists to assist affected customers with claims and assessments as soon as emergency services say it is safe to do so

The extended Insurance Catastrophe declaration covers claims related to the ongoing severe weather and flooding events impacting the east coast.

Quote attributable to Andrew Hall, CEO, Insurance Council of Australia:

Personal safety should be the number one priority as this extreme weather event continues to impact communities along the east coast.

It's too early to estimate the insurance damage bill as many property owners remain in evacuation centres and flood waters continue to rise in many areas, or in others recede slowly.

The insurance industry expects the number of claims to rise significantly as policyholders return to their homes and businesses.

Insurers are already assisting policyholders, and stand ready to provide on-the-ground assistance as soon as it is safe to do so.

Remember

- **Safety is the priority** – don't do anything that puts anyone at risk
- Only return to your property when emergency services give the go ahead
- If water has entered the property, don't turn on your electricity until it has been inspected by an electrician
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to lodge a claim and seek guidance on the claims process
- Property owners who have sustained roof damage should advise their insurer, your insurer will arrange emergency works to minimise any hazards and prevent further damage. This can include isolating damaged solar panels or electrical circuits and installing a roof tarp
- Don't worry if you can't find your insurance papers – insurers have electronic records and need only your name and address

What to do if your property has been impacted by flooding and storms

- You can start cleaning up but **first** take pictures or videos of damage to the property and possessions as evidence for your claim
- **Keep** samples of materials and fabrics to show your insurance assessor
- **Remove** water damaged goods from your property that might pose a health risk, such as saturated carpets and soft furnishings
- **Make a list** of each item damaged and include a detailed description, such as brand, model, and serial number if possible
- **Store** damaged or destroyed items somewhere safe
- **Speak** to your insurer before you attempt or authorise any building work, including emergency repairs, and ask for the insurer's permission in writing. Unauthorised work may not be covered by your policy
- **Do not throw away** goods that could be salvaged or repaired