



Insurance Council
of Australia

News release

Tuesday, 02 January 2024

Insurers warn cyclone and flood impacted communities to beware of ‘disaster chasers’

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) is urging vulnerable residents in North Queensland to be wary of exploitative “disaster chasers” operating in their community.

Disaster chasers are opportunistic individuals who offer quick-fix cleanup, repairs, and inspections, often demanding upfront cash payments for shoddy or incomplete work.

Some disaster chasers pressure homeowners to sign a contract on the spot for future repair work and may promise their insurer will pay.

This can leave the homeowner liable to pay a commission or inflated repair bills not covered by their insurance policy, as insurers will only pay for approved work that is covered by a policy.

Residents who believe they may have been approached by or signed with a disaster chaser should seek guidance from their insurer.

Tips for identifying and dealing with a [disaster chaser](#):

- An insurer will not send a tradesperson or builder to your home without notifying you and providing you with details
- Speak to your insurer before agreeing to any repairs or rebuilding work to make sure your insurer will cover the work
- A tradesperson or builder who is working for your insurer will not ask you for payment
- If in doubt, ask for identification such as a builder’s licence or driver’s licence, and ring your insurer to check
- If you sign a contract with a disaster chaser, you have a statutory 10-day cooling-off period. Your insurer can help you end the relationship with the disaster chaser.

Policyholders in North Queensland have lodged 6,083 insurance claims since 10 December 2023, however it’s too early to estimate the cost of the damage.

Quote attributable to Insurance Council of Australia CEO Andrew Hall:

Unfortunately, extreme weather events like cyclones and flooding often attract unscrupulous individuals who exploit the vulnerability of affected communities.

We urge insurance customers to be vigilant and protect themselves from these predatory practices.

Contact your insurer, verify credentials, and don't let untrustworthy individuals cloud your judgment.

Insurers are on the ground in far north Queensland to assist impacted customers and we urge residents to reach out to their insurer to help them get back on their feet.