



News release

Insurance Council
of Australia

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No time to slow down land use planning reforms for extreme weather

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) have come together to call on local, state and federal governments to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards and progress much needed reforms against a backdrop of growing housing challenges.

Experts from government, financial services, property and community gathered in Brisbane at the co-hosted **2024 National Industry Roundtable: Land Use Planning and Resilience** to say “the time is now” for action on land use planning reforms. The landmark forum highlighted the critical need for industry and government to work together to protect lives and properties from intensifying flooding, bushfires and cyclones by ensuring that low-risks areas of the country are prioritised for new development.

Effective planning is crucial for risk reduction, as building in high-risk areas exposes more homeowners to extreme weather events and widens the insurance protection gap.

Releasing a joint communique to help inform future land use planning settings, the industry bodies outlined key recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of land use planning in managing extreme weather risk, including:

- prohibiting further development in high-risk flood-prone locations;
- enhancing and adapting building standards, and;
- taking a strategic approach to implementing home buyback programs where risks are not able to be mitigated.

Quotes attributable to Insurance Council of Australia CEO Andrew Hall:

Insurance is the backstop for people’s greatest financial asset, their home. More frequent and severe disasters, a growing population, and an expansion of development into high-risk zones, is locking more risk into our financial system and putting communities in harm’s way.

The ICA has long emphasised the importance of using a nationally consistent baseline of current and future extreme weather risk to inform where we build homes in the future, and identify which existing homes need to be relocated, retrofitted or raised to reduce community vulnerability.

We must urgently reduce risk where we can and ensure that our planning systems are robust and forward-looking to protect our communities and assets.

Quotes attributable to Planning Institute of Australia CEO Matt Collins:

Good land-use planning can help make our communities more resilient to natural disasters, so critical that planners have the tools we need like up-to-date mapping and modelling.

PIA strongly supports the need for high-quality strategic plans that clearly identify areas where we can’t manage the risks from threats like flood and fire, with clear indications of where we simply shouldn’t be building.

We don’t just need more resilient homes – we need to plan for the surrounding landscape.

The decisions we make on where to live and invest in the future should use the best available data and modelling, and we need governments to invest in these critical inputs.

Today's roundtable builds on the work of last year's inaugural roundtable in Sydney, as more frequent and intense extreme weather events continue against the backdrop of rising demand for housing due to population growth and constrained supply.

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