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Fire and Rescue NSW reignites historic partnership with Insurance Council of Australia to safeguard communities

Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) and the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) have today joined forces in a commitment to work together to safeguard communities from fire risk and enhance safety across the state.

At the first 'Insurance Industry Forum' held at the City of Sydney Fire Station, representatives from FRNSW and the ICA came together to discuss key findings from recent research, share best practices and data, and develop actionable strategies to protect communities from fire.

With the NSW Government yesterday announcing it will impose strict new standards on lithium-ion batteries powered personal mobility devices, such as e-scooters and e-bikes, this will also form a part of the conversation and be the subject of a dedicated future forum – with both parties noting an increase in lithium-ion battery fires across the state.

This commitment is based on an almost 200-year-old relationship with the insurance industry, which established the first fire brigades in New South Wales back in 1836.

FRNSW Commissioner, Jeremy Fewtrell, said FRNSW is committed to taking a proactive approach when it comes to public safety, with a focus on the growing risk of emerging technology.

“This partnership with the ICA is not just a continuation of our current efforts, but a rekindling of a collaboration that dates back to the very origins of firefighting in New South Wales,” Commissioner Fewtrell said.

“We’re really keen to leverage the combined expertise of both organisations, especially when it comes to building a shared view of current and emerging fire risk and uplifting community education to minimise this risk to better protect people and their assets.

“This partnership, which establishes a foundation for future initiatives between FRNSW and ICA, will effectively protect lives, property, and the environment.

ICA CEO, Andrew Hall, said the partnership heralds a new era in fire safety education and risk reduction, and he’s proud the insurance industry has a seat at the table.

“Insurance companies not only play a critical role in understanding the risk factors policy holders face, they also are integral to helping communities recover from fire-related incidents,” Mr Hall said.

“As insurers, we have access to data about how fires start and what the causes are, and this partnership aims to help us better understand how we can utilise this data to drive improved community safety outcomes.

“This includes new and emerging technologies, such as personal mobility products powered by lithium-ion batteries. We’re seeing a growing number of fires from lithium-ion batteries, which is a real concern.

“Our communities are facing modern fire risks and this partnership will uncover modern solutions.

“We are committed to reducing fire related injury and fatality. Together, we are stronger and more capable of facing the challenges ahead.

“Because insurers price risk, we can work directly with customers – home owners, strata committee and businesses – to start highlighting best risk management practices for LI batteries and recharging of EVs. If we can work in lock-step with authorities like FRNSW, this will be an important step forward to ensuring we have a safer community.”

The collaboration coincides with the celebration of FRNSW's 140 years of service and is a significant milestone in the agency's efforts to reduce structure fires and other emergencies.

Key representatives from the fire service, and ICA member companies such as Allianz, Hollard, IAG, Munich Re, QBE, Strata Community Insurance and Suncorp will form part of the ongoing Insurance Industry Forum.

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About Fire and Rescue NSW

Fire and Rescue NSW is one of the world's largest urban fire and rescue services, serving the New South Wales community through a wide range of fire prevention, education, and emergency response activities.

About the Insurance Council of Australia

The Insurance Council of Australia is the representative body of the general insurance industry in Australia. Its members include over 90 percent of insurers in the Australian market, including home, motor, and business insurers.

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