

Friday November 27, 2015

Insurance claims from South Australian bushfires pass \$60 million

Disaster specialists from the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) have arrived in South Australia's Mid North to help residents impacted by multiple bushfires burning across the region.

As at 9.30am South Australian time, insurers had received 415 claims from policyholders with insured losses estimated at \$61 million. More claims are expected.

35 homes have been destroyed and another 42 damaged, but ICA CEO Rob Whelan said the region's agricultural sector had been hardest hit.

"These fires have had a devastating impact on the farming community with crop, stock and commercial assets making up the overwhelming bulk of the losses so far," said Mr Whelan.

"The ICA's Catastrophe Taskforce has received reports of significant livestock losses, including thousands of pigs, sheep and chickens.

"We once again remind farmers who need to euthanise animals that they can typically do this, but should seek advice from their insurer without delay."

Mr Whelan said the industry had focused its resources on helping South Australians affected by the fires following yesterday's declaration of an insurance catastrophe.

"ICA disaster specialists flew into South Australia yesterday, and have already been speaking to policyholders affected by the fires," he said.

"ICA resources will be present at local evacuation centres today, while those needing urgent advice on the claims process can call our **24 hour disaster hotline – 1800 734 621**.

"With the bushfires still burning and fears the number of fatalities may still rise, insurance assessors are waiting for advice from the emergency services about when it is safe to enter affected areas."

The ICA offers the following general advice to affected policyholders:

- If you have evacuated, do not return home until you are advised it is safe to do so
- Do not be concerned if insurance documents are not readily at hand. Insurers keep records electronically and require only your name and address in order to find a policy
- Take pictures of damage to your property and possessions as evidence for your claim assessor
- Make an inventory of damaged possessions. This will help insurers process your claim

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- Remove and discard fire-damaged goods that may pose a health risk.
- Speak to your insurer before you attempt or authorise any building work, including emergency repairs

More information on recovering from a bushfire can be found at:

<http://understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-disasters/bushfires>

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