

March 5, 2012

Insurers monitoring flooding in five states and territories

Insurers are monitoring flooding in five states and territories and are liaising with local emergency services and governments following heavy rainfall in the past few days.

Insurance Council of Australia CEO Rob Whelan said only a handful of claims had been received in the worst-hit areas, though the ICA was keeping a close eye on the situation.

“It is early days for some of these areas and it’s much too soon for us to estimate the extent of the damage,” Mr Whelan said.

“Many of these towns and cities are regularly threatened by rising rivers, and this highlights the need for local, state and federal governments to work together on investing in physical mitigation measures to reduce the threat to these communities.”

Mr Whelan said the ICA had declared a catastrophe for the inundation of south-west Queensland in late January and early February, with insurers anticipating \$111 million from 5657 claims for damage to properties, contents, vehicles and businesses.

However, this month’s floods have not had as great an impact and the ICA has not declared a catastrophe for any other weather-related events at this stage.

Residents of flood-affected areas are advised to check the terms of their insurance policy and call their insurer if they have any questions or need to lodge a claim.

Policyholders who are not sure about which insurer they’re with, or have general inquiries about the claims process, can call the ICA disaster hotline on **1800 734 621**.

The ICA offers the following general advice to policyholders affected by inundation:

Things to do to help the recovery process:

- Return to your property but only when emergency services declare it safe to do so
- Only enter your property when you are satisfied you are not at risk
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to check what your policy includes or excludes, and seek guidance on the claims process
- Start cleaning up
- Take pictures of damage to the property and possessions as evidence for your claim
- Remove and discard any water or mud-damaged goods that pose a health risk, such as saturated carpets and soft furnishings
- Keep samples of materials and fabrics to show the assessor
- Make a list of each item and include a detailed description, such as brand, model and serial number

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- Store damaged or destroyed items somewhere safe
- Speak to your insurer before authorising repairs. Emergency repairs should be undertaken only in the first instance to make the property safe

Things to be aware of in the recovery process:

- Do not do anything that puts your safety at risk
- Do not undertake major repairs or employ tradespeople without checking with your insurer – you may not be covered for unauthorised repairs
- Do not drive your vehicle if it is not roadworthy due to water damage
- Do not throw away goods that could be salvaged or repaired
- Do not be concerned if you can't find your insurance papers. Insurers have electronic records and need only your name and address

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