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## Insurance assessors enter Margaret River bushfire zone

Insurance assessors are today entering bushfire-affected areas of Western Australia's Margaret River region to inspect dozens of damaged and destroyed properties, the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) said today.

ICA chief executive Rob Whelan said the industry was encouraged that the fires had been brought under control and congratulated firefighters for their extraordinary efforts of the past few days in helping prevent loss of life and more widespread destruction of property.

"We're still getting a picture of the extent of the damage, but very early estimates put the damage in the tens of millions of dollars," he said.

"The ICA has sent a senior manager to the area to work closely with state and local government authorities as the recovery process commences. Last week the ICA declared this a catastrophe for insurance response purposes, and insurance claims staff are standing by to handle inquiries and claims from affected policyholders."

Mr Whelan said any policyholders who may be having difficulty finding their insurance documents, have a general inquiry or who have queries about who their insurer may be, can contact the Insurance Council hotline on **1300 444 557** for assistance.

The Insurance Council reminds policyholders to:

- Make contact with your insurance company as soon as possible and seek advice about the claim process under your policy. Their staff are there to help
- Do not be concerned if insurance documents are not readily at hand. Insurance companies keep records electronically and only require the policyholders' name and address in order to locate a policy
- Contact your insurer before authorising repairs
- Make an inventory of possessions that have been damaged as a result of the fires. This will assist in the claim process.

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