

Tuesday January 14, 2020

Insurance Council launches local trades register to aid bushfire recovery, opens insurance customer hubs

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) today opened an online register to help local tradespeople and builders play a significant role in rebuilding their regional communities.

Qualified and reputable builders and tradespeople who have the capacity to work on property repairs and rebuilds are invited to register their details at www.disasters.org.au.

The register will collect key information, including the town or region in which the builder or tradesperson operates, available skills and qualifications, and key contact details.

This information will be publicly available for use by insurance companies to source additional tradespeople for property rebuilding and repairs. It may also be used by residents, businesses and government agencies that are seeking reputable tradespeople for privately funded construction.

ICA Head of Risk and Operations Karl Sullivan said: “Insurers are committed to using local trades and builders where feasible. This register helps qualified and reputable building industry professionals nominate for work in their local area.

“Employing and contracting local professionals and suppliers during the rebuilding phase of bushfire recovery is an essential component in ensuring the economic viability of communities, including the preservation of jobs and supporting local businesses and service providers. Building professionals will still need to provide competitive quotes when contracting for work.

“Experience from recent natural disasters shows insurers predominantly use local trades for most rebuilding and repair works. For example, insurers employed more than 2000 local trades and builders and supported dozens of suppliers and service providers following last year’s catastrophic floods in Townsville.”

Mr Sullivan urged residents to heed last week’s warning from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission to watch out for unscrupulous tradespeople and repairers, or firms offering to assist them with their insurance claim. The Consumer Action Law Centre has also called for a crackdown on exploitative claims management services.

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Bushfire claims update:

Insurers have received 13,750 bushfire catastrophe-related claims since November 8, with losses estimated at \$1.34 billion.

The ICA is anticipating a sharp increase in claims this week as household property assessments are undertaken and large commercial claims are lodged.

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The ICA is hosting insurance hubs to assist customers in southern New South Wales. Disaster recovery specialists from the Insurance Council and insurance companies will assist policyholders with insurance questions and help with the insurance claim process.

Venues are subject to change depending on capacity and availability. Hubs will also be established in bushfire zones in South Australia and Victoria in the next week. For more information call the Insurance Council's catastrophe hotline on 1800 734 621 or visit the Insurance Council of Australia's Facebook page.

Batemans Bay Insurance Hub

Batemans Bay Soldiers Club
6 Beach Rd, Batemans Bay
Opens Wednesday 10am
Thursday-Friday 9am-5pm

Bega Insurance Hub

Bega Council Chambers
Zingel Place, Bega
9am-5pm

Cobargo Insurance Hub

Cobargo Hotel
41 Princes Hwy, Cobargo
Opens Wednesday 10am

Nowra Insurance Hub

Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre
42 Bridge Street, Nowra
9am-4pm

Ulladulla Insurance Hub

Civic Centre
81b Princes Hwy, Ulladulla
9am-4pm

Hubs will open in Victoria shortly.

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