

Saturday January 18, 2020

## Insurers welcome government-funded bushfire clean-up arrangement for NSW communities

Statement attributable to Rob Whelan, CEO, Insurance Council of Australia (ICA):

*The insurance industry welcomes the Berejiklian Government's commitment to engage contractors and fully fund the removal of debris and site clearance for all bushfire-affected homeowners in New South Wales.*

*This arrangement treats all affected property owners fairly and equally. It should result in faster and safer site clean-up for many, and help ensure greater community safety in the removal and transport of potentially hazardous materials.*

*Where there are urgent safety issues, individual insurers may decide to conduct their own site clean-up at no expense to the policyholders or the insurer.*

*Government-funded clean-up will also enable insurers to maximise the funds available in their customers' policies for rebuilding.*

*In line with the industry's longstanding commitment to use local trades, the ICA suggests that government should encourage private-sector clean-up contractors to appoint suitably qualified local trades.*

*The ICA welcomes the Commonwealth's financial involvement in this arrangement with NSW and encourages all state governments to adopt similar models to assist communities in their bushfire recoveries.*

*Government-funded cleanup was a notable component of recovery efforts following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and is widely regarded as best practice after a natural disaster.*

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