

Thursday April 23, 2015

Insurers send assessors into catastrophe regions

Insurance companies are today sending assessors into storm-ravaged regions of New South Wales to accelerate the claims process.

Insurance Council of Australia CEO Rob Whelan said assessors were visiting policyholders where they could gain access, though many areas were still not easily accessible.

"Assessors are starting to work through claims in the affected areas, and they are prioritising those policyholders who have suffered the worst damage where they can reach the insured property," he said.

As of 10am today, insurance companies had received 24,250 claims and insurance losses were estimated at \$161 million.

Mr Whelan said: "Most of the claims received are for home and contents, mainly for light damage caused by rain and wind, with a small number of motor vehicle and commercial claims. These are early figures for this catastrophe, and insurers are standing by for many more claims to be lodged over the next few days.

"Thousands of households remain without power and it's understandable they're not immediately calling their insurer," Mr Whelan said.

"When they are able to do so, I encourage insured householders and business operators to contact their insurer and lodge a claim. Once claims have been lodged the insurers can start providing the assistance they offer in their policies.

"Households and businesses can help accelerate the claims process by taking pictures of the damage to show the insurer.

"However, it's important to contact your insurer before engaging any tradespeople or builders for repair work, even emergency repairs. Unauthorised work may not be covered by your policy. Be wary of people going door to door offering to perform building repairs for cash. These are often opportunistic shysters whose work is unlikely to be up to standard and won't be covered by insurance."

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE: The Insurance Council has activated a disaster hotline - **1800 734 621** – to help affected residents who are not sure which insurer they are with, or who have general inquiries about the claims process. **This is not a claims hotline and it cannot assist callers with information about government assistance.**

For ICA updates on the NSW storms via Twitter, follow @ICAUS.

For disaster recovery tips visit www.understandinsurance.com.au

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