



**Friday 30 October 2020**

## ***More than 1.3 million NSW households unprepared for severe weather as storm season begins***

*NRMA Insurance data reveals most storm affected regions, suburbs and towns in NSW as severe weather hits the state*

New community research<sup>1</sup> from NRMA Insurance reveals nearly two-thirds (62%) of NSW residents are worried severe weather such as storms are becoming more frequent and intense. But this community anxiety isn't being translated into action. Only 57% feel their home and family are prepared for severe weather this summer, and just 35% have recently taken steps to prepare. This means more than **1.3 million households<sup>2</sup> may be unprepared for severe weather this summer.**

NRMA Insurance Executive General Manager Claims, Luke Gallagher said: "With Australia currently experiencing a La Niña weather system, we could see more severe storms and more intense rain hitting NSW throughout storm season this year.

"The fact that over a million households in NSW may not be prepared for severe weather and dangerous storms this summer is a major concern."

The NRMA Insurance community research also found:

- 85% say they experience 'storm stress', with the top three areas of concern being potential damage to homes (53%), the ability to drive safely in difficult conditions (40%) and potential damage to vehicles (38%);
- 43% are worried that climate change is making storms more frequent and intense; and
- 40% also say they are nervous about the potential for severe weather this summer.

These insights from NSW residents are particularly concerning given the latest NRMA Insurance claims data<sup>3</sup> which reveals NSW experienced one of its most intense 'Storm Seasons' (October to March each year) earlier this year, with over half (54%) of all home claims in the 2019-20 financial year caused by storm damage.

Sydney's Hills District, the Sutherland Shire and Western Sydney were the hardest hit regions, while the regional town of Jerrabomberra (located on the ACT border) was the most impacted town or suburb in the state. February 2020 (86% of all home claims), January 2020 (59% of all home claims) and September 2019 (52% of all home claims) were particularly bad months for storm damage in NSW.

"We know that two in three NSW residents are yet to take steps to prepare their home for severe weather, so we've teamed up with NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) to ask people to complete one task every month to help make their homes safer," Mr Gallagher said.

"We urge NSW residents to put aside some time over the weekend to get ready for storms by clearing their gutters and downpipes. Gutters are one of the first parts of your home to flood in a storm so taking time now to prepare could make a big difference when a storm hits. Please be careful though, and if in doubt, hire a professional."

<sup>1</sup> Survey of 1,001 NSW residents conducted in October 2020

<sup>2</sup> Based on survey findings (57% feel prepared – 43% don't) and NSW dwellings numbers - latest [ABS census data \(2016\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Based on NRMA Insurance home claims data sourced for Financial Year 2019 to 2020



NSW SES Commissioner Carlene York said severe weather can happen at any time, so readiness is crucial.

“Our volunteers are always ready to spring into action and help when needed,” Commissioner York said.

“But it is equally important that communities do their part to make sure they themselves are prepared. Simple steps like removing loose items from your front and back yards, keeping cars away from trees and powerlines, or undercover where possible, and being equipped with an emergency kit can make all the difference.

“I encourage everyone to visit our website at [ses.nsw.gov.au](http://ses.nsw.gov.au) for resources and information on preparing yourself for storms and floods.

“If anyone needs help in a storm or flood, they can contact NSW SES on 132 500. If the situation is life threatening, call Triple Zero (000) immediately,” she said.

**NRMA Insurance has released a list of the top 10 most storm affected regions in NSW, and the top 10 most storm affected suburbs in Sydney over the past year.**

10 most storm-affected regions in NSW*	10 most storm-affected Sydney suburbs
1. Central Northern Sydney (e.g. The Hills District and Hornsby) – 12.7% of all storm claims	1. Castle Hill
2. St George and Sutherland Shire – 11.6% of all storm claims	2. St. Ives
3. North Western Sydney (e.g. Blacktown and Penrith) – 9.6% of all storm claims	3. Kellyville
4. The Central Coast – 7.3% of all storm claims	4. Caringbah
5. Newcastle and The Hunter – 6.1% of all storm claims	5. Miranda
6. South-West Sydney (e.g. Fairfield-Liverpool) – 5.7% of all storm claims	6. Baulkham Hills
7. The Northern Beaches (e.g. Manly and Dee Why) – 5.5% of all storm claims	7. Frenchs Forest
8. Mid-North Coast (e.g. Coffs Harbour, Taree, Kempsey) – 5% of all storm claims	8. Engadine
9. Wollongong and Illawarra – 4.8% of all storm claims	9. Wahroonga
10. Lower North Shore (e.g. Mosman, Ryde and Willoughby) – 4.6% of all claims	10. Kirrawee

\*(ABS regional definitions)

The official storm season runs from October through to March. This year, NRMA Insurance, in conjunction with NSW SES, has launched ‘First Saturday’, a call-to-action for every Australian to dedicate the first Saturday of every month to carry out one small task to make their homes safer. For more information, visit [nrma.com.au/firstsaturday](http://nrma.com.au/firstsaturday).

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