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80% of West Australians believe climate change is making weather worse

NRMA Insurance launches Wild Weather Tracker to help West Australians prepare for extreme weather

New research from NRMA Insurance has revealed West Australians are among the most concerned when it comes to the impacts of climate change in Australia. The insight follows a record-breaking WA summer, where the state was impacted by extreme heat and multiple bushfires.

NRMA Insurance today launched the Wild Weather Tracker (the Tracker) in Western Australia (WA), a seasonal analysis of insurance claims data showing the impact of severe weather and new research on community attitudes to disaster preparedness.

The research found 71% of West Australians are worried natural disasters are becoming more frequent and severe with 80% believing climate change is making weather worse. This follows a wild summer, with NRMA Insurance home claims for weather damage up 53% nationally compared to the previous year.

Nearly two-thirds of West Australians think their local Member of Parliament (MP) should be doing more to protect their community from the impacts of climate change and severe weather.

The fiery summer season in WA is in stark contrast to the east coast, where states like NSW experienced one of the wettest summers on record with flood events reaching as far as South Australia.

The Tracker, in its 4th edition for NSW, QLD and the ACT – encourages people to take regular steps to prepare and protect their homes, properties and vehicles from severe weather – and for the first time will be reporting on the weather patterns in WA and SA.

NRMA Insurance Executive Manager Natural Perils Mark Leplastrier said: “This past summer has been very difficult for so many communities in WA, which have been hit by record hot temperatures, a dire start to the fire season and outbreaks of storms in the state’s north.

“As the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report warns, severe weather events like floods and bushfires will occur more frequently and with a higher intensity. It is crucial that we all heed these warnings and consider how we can work together to both better prepare for and respond to severe weather.”

The NRMA Insurance research revealed that nearly half of West Australians (49%) do not have an emergency kit or emergency plan in place, while 43% of WA residents say they are not ready to respond if severe weather hits their suburb – this means 460,000 households don’t feel prepared¹.

“As recent events nationally have shown, severe and damaging wild weather can strike quickly and at any time. That’s why it’s important to do whatever you can to prepare, throughout the year. This includes having an emergency plan and kit and knowing how to stay safe when wild weather hits,” Mr Leplastrier said.

¹ Based on survey findings (57% feel prepared – 43% don’t) and WA dwellings numbers - latest ABS census data (2016)

At a time when extreme weather events are on the rise, shifting the focus from response to preparation is critical.

NRMA Insurance is the founding partner of the Australian Resilience Corp (ARC), developed with the Minderoo Foundation, which aims to encourage Australians to rally together and join what will become the largest network of volunteers to prepare and protect communities from fire and floods.

Minderoo Foundation Fire and Flood Resilience Initiative Lead Adrian Turner said: “We know that Aussies always want to pitch in and help and the Australian Resilience Corp is a meaningful way to make an impact by volunteering in the off-season to help communities prepare for fires and floods. This will ultimately help to reduce the devastation caused.”

Visit resiliencecorps.org.au to sign-up.

About the NRMA Insurance Wild Weather Tracker

The NRMA Insurance Wild Weather Tracker is released after every season outlining the volume of severe weather and natural disaster claims NRMA Insurance receives in NSW, QLD, the ACT, SA and WA. It tracks community research into the attitudes and behaviours regarding preparing for natural disasters and severe weather and includes expert advice from NRMA Insurance’s emergency response partners highlighting the critical steps people can take to protect their homes.

Research was conducted by Pure Profile on behalf of NRMA Insurance amongst 3,500 Australians (1,005 QLD residents, 1,005 NSW residents, 502 ACT residents, 505 SA residents and 505 WA residents) in February 2022.

About NRMA Insurance

NRMA Insurance is one of Australia’s most trusted general insurance providers – helping people protect the things they care about since 1920. It has a long proud history of working with communities to build their resilience against severe weather and keep people safer on the road.

More than three million customers across NSW, Queensland, ACT, WA, SA and Tasmania choose NRMA Insurance to protect their homes, vehicles, businesses, motorcycles, boats, pets and travel.

NRMA Insurance is backed by IAG, the largest general insurer in Australia and New Zealand and operator of some of Australia’s biggest insurance brands including CGU, SGIO, SGIC and WFI.

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