

Thursday 24 March 2022

## **NRMA Insurance releases its fourth Wild Weather Tracker and calls for urgent disaster mitigation funding**

**NRMA Insurance today called on the Federal Government to urgently allocate greater investment to disaster mitigation projects to protect lives, property and critical infrastructure across the country as it releases its fourth Wild Weather Tracker.**

New research in the NRMA Insurance Wild Weather Tracker report (Tracker) has revealed an unprecedented summer of extreme weather, with the recent severe storms and floods devastating communities in southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales. While South Australia experienced a flood emergency in January and parts of Western Australia sweltered through the hottest summer on record, resulting in bushfires across the state.

The Tracker shows the huge impact of severe weather across the country, with a 53% increase on home claims over summer (compared to last summer), prior to the devastating impacts of the recent floods. More than two-thirds (67.5%) of all home claims nationally were caused by wild weather. The proportion was even higher in the ACT (85%), QLD (74%) and NSW (70%).

Since the catastrophic storms and floods across Australia's east coast in February and March, NRMA Insurance has received more than 24,000 claims, however, the full impact is still being determined. This will be outlined in the autumn edition of the Tracker in June 2022.

NRMA Insurance Group Executive Julie Batch said the benefits of greater upfront investment in disaster mitigation are clear and the time for action is now.

"For more than a decade NRMA and its parent company IAG have outlined that greater investment in mitigation can save lives, property and critical infrastructure which is critical for protecting communities and reducing the impacts of severe weather and natural disasters," Ms Batch said.

"This was backed by the Productivity Commission in 2015 which recommended a \$200 million investment in mitigation and resilience projects per year, matched by the states and territories.

"We welcome recent progress in this area, in particular the Queensland Government's Resilient Residential Recovery package, but we need greater cooperation across all levels of government to get these projects happening in vulnerable communities across the country.

"I recently spent time in Lismore and spoke with devastated residents trying to rebuild their lives after facing multiple disasters. Now is the time to get the necessary funding into communities and allow mitigation projects to get underway.

“Combining mitigation investments with improved land use planning and strengthening building codes will better protect communities while having flow on benefits such as making insurance more affordable.”

## **Australians increasingly worried about the impact of wild weather and climate change**

The Tracker monitors severe weather claims in communities across NSW, QLD, the ACT and for the first time, has expanded to include SA and WA in the latest report. The Tracker is released after every season to highlight the impact of wild weather and to help encourage people to take regular steps to prepare and protect their homes, properties and vehicles.

New research in the Tracker reveals growing community concern about extreme weather with 72% of Australians worried that natural disasters are becoming more frequent and severe, while 78% of Australians believe climate change is making severe weather worse.

This sentiment is backed by the [Severe Weather in a Changing Climate](#) report which IAG’s Natural Perils team developed with US-based NCAR. It found that extreme tropical cyclones, storms, hail, floods and bushfires are becoming more frequent in a warmer climate - and that communities in Australia are now experiencing this firsthand.

NRMA Insurance’s Executive Manager Natural Perils Mark Leplastrier added: “We must take the opportunity to build back to better standards and consider the future risks of an area when planning or zoning; otherwise individuals, communities, businesses and governments are left more vulnerable to widespread destruction time and again.

“To better protect communities, we need everyone who brings expertise in understanding the impacts of severe weather events to be at the same table, sharing their data and insights.

“That means insurers, banks, governments, councils and builders who can provide input and clear information before people make important decisions like buying a house. Improving education around this will achieve fairer outcomes for these vulnerable communities.”

With La Niña expected to linger longer than expected, heavier than usual rainfall and elevated flood risk is forecast for the start of autumn. Mr Leplastrier warns that it’s important for people across the country to be vigilant against the threat of further wild weather.

## **Australians feel unprepared for wild weather and most don’t have plans in place**

The NRMA Insurance research of over 3,500 Australians<sup>1</sup> (conducted in mid-February before the flood emergency) also found:

- 39% of Australians don’t feel prepared to respond in the event of wild weather or a natural disaster.
- Only 38% think their local Federal MP is doing enough to protect their community from the impacts of climate change and severe weather.

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<sup>1</sup> Online research of 3,522 people across NSW (1,005), QLD (1,005), the ACT (502), SA (505) and WA (505) – conducted by Pure Profile in February 2022

# Media Release



- More than half of those surveyed (51%) do not have an emergency kit or emergency plan in place.

“As individuals, we are not powerless. Every household can play a role in being better prepared for severe weather. This includes having an emergency plan and kit and knowing how to stay safe when wild weather hits,” Mr Leplastrier said.

NRMA Insurance is the founding partner of the Australian Resilience Corps, developed by 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. Visit [resiliencecorps.org.au](https://resiliencecorps.org.au) to sign-up.

**Download the NRMA Insurance Wild Weather Tracker [here](#).**

*Summary fact sheets for each state and territory outlining the impacts of wild weather this summer and regionalised findings of the consumer research are provided separately and available on request.*

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**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.