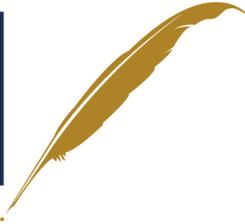




National Insurance Brokers Association.



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Disasters increase interest in good insurance advice

There has been a big jump in inquiries to the National Insurance Brokers Association's call centre and broker location website in the wake of a series of natural disasters which have caused over \$1 billion in insurance losses in Australia over the last 12 months.

NIBA's free "[Need a Broker](#)" service has been accessed more than 108,000 times in the last year. The service puts consumers and business owners in touch with NIBA member brokers located near them, or with those who specialise in their areas of need.

The call centre is handling over 2,000 enquiries each month on average, while the website is receiving more than 7,000 hits per month – around 235 hits per day – from members of the public.

NIBA CEO, Dallas Booth, said the use of the call centre, in particular, had increased markedly in the last 12 months. There were 24,072 enquiries between November 2012 and end of October 2013, compared to 14,555 enquiries over the previous 12-month period.

"Unfortunately it often takes a series of devastating natural disasters for many people to consider whether they have adequate insurance cover and whether they need some expert advice on what that cover should be," he said.

Since the beginning of this year, communities in Queensland and NSW have suffered more than \$1 billion in insured losses from damage associated with Tropical Cyclone Oswald, and bushfires around Coonabarabran in NSW, south-eastern Tasmania and more recently in the Blue Mountains have caused more than \$300 million damage, according to the Insurance Council of Australia.

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Mr Booth said with the recent disasters fresh in people's minds and amid predictions of a bad bushfire season, many householders were seeking advice from insurance brokers whose role was to represent the buyer not the insurer and get the best deal for the policyholder.

"Prudent householders are wondering which policy is best for them. Brokers know what's available in the market and are qualified to give professional advice tailored to a policyholder's personal needs, including the appropriate level of cover.

"At this week's insurance forum held in the Blue Mountains, and attended by NIBA, many people who had lost their properties were unaware that new regulations covering building in bushfire zones will add about \$80-\$100,000 to the cost of rebuilding."

He said this sort of information could not be obtained from comparison websites which had begun to proliferate and which were the subject of warnings by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

Some comparison websites only compared a limited number of products, didn't provide a clear explanation of how they ranked products and referred to special offers without explaining how they were selected.

Mr Booth said the key questions to consider when buying insurance were:

- What do you own, what are the risks you face, what is the most likely type of loss you may suffer? How much insurance do you need to buy?
- Which insurance policies offer cover for the risks you face? Which insurance companies provide better insurance policy terms and conditions than others?
- What will the insurance cost? What is the most cost effective insurance cover for your personal circumstances?

Consumers can find a professional, qualified insurance broker in their local area by contacting www.needabroker.com.au, or by calling 1300 53 10 73.

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NIBA is a not-for-profit, independent industry association representing 500 firms and more than 2600 intermediaries, who handle almost 90% of the commercial insurance transacted in Australia. Brokers play a major role in insurance distribution, handling \$17 billion in premiums annually and placing around half of Australia's total insurance business.