



Media Release

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Insurers working with James Cook University on impact of cyclones on strata properties

Leading insurers IAG and Suncorp are partnering with the Cyclone Testing Station at James Cook University (JCU) to study the impact of tropical cyclones on strata properties in North Queensland.

The study is to help better understand the impact of wind-driven rain and water entry, which affects insurance costs for residents in strata properties, and is a major cause of damage to buildings.

IAG and Suncorp will share data with JCU to use in its research, which will provide designers, builders and insurers with a better understanding of the common drivers of claims costs in strata properties during cyclones. The study will also provide recommendations to help mitigate against the impacts of cyclones for residents.

JCU Director of the Cyclone Testing Station, Dr David Henderson, said it was vital to have government, business and the community involved to help identify ways to reduce the damage caused by wind-driven rain, and to help residents safeguard their homes.

“The damage from heavy wind-driven rain and water entry is a major cause of stress and anxiety during storms as owners are trying to stop the water damage, as opposed to sheltering away from windows,” Dr Henderson said.

“If we can determine cost effective measures for mitigating water entry for existing construction and enhancing industry standards that includes testing for future building systems, we are confident many in the community will benefit.”

Suncorp Insurance CEO, Mr Anthony Day, said Suncorp remained committed to identifying new ways to reduce the impact of cyclones on communities in the North.

“This is the latest in a range of initiatives we’re delivering as part of Suncorp’s Protecting the North program. It’s another important step in making North Queensland a safer and more resilient community,” Mr Day said.

IAG Chief Executive Australian Business Division, Ben Bessell, said severe damage from cyclones means families are relocated, apartments cannot be rented and businesses are unable to function while properties are being repaired.

“This initiative is a great step towards supplying and sharing more information that will empower residents to make more informed decisions and actively manage their risk to reduce the impact from wind-driven rain,” Mr Bessell said.

Insurance claims from Tropical Cyclone Marcia, which struck Queensland in February last year, will be used in the study.

A similar landmark study between Suncorp and JCU was carried out last year, examining home claims from Cyclone Larry in 2006 and Cyclone Yasi in 2011. The research found that homes could benefit from low cost improvements (or retrofits) to non-structural components like doors and

windows. This resulted in Suncorp launching the Cyclone Resilience Benefit to encourage and reward stronger North Queensland homes.

“We’re already acting on the research that focused on houses but we need to build on this and do more for strata buildings,” said Mr Day.

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