

## Complacency could be costly this bushfire season

The tragic wildfires devastating parts of California this week are a timely reminder to prepare for the Australian bushfire season.

Queensland's bushfire season officially starts today. And with conditions already dire, the bushfire season in many parts of the north and west of New South Wales also starts today – two months early.

Record drought conditions have created swathes of tinder-dry fuel across parts of the country, and unseasonably warm weather has exacerbated the current risk. The Bureau of Meteorology statistics show rainfall has been below average in much of Queensland and NSW.

UnderstandInsurance.com.au spokesperson Lisa Kable says: "With early indicators pointing to severe bushfire danger in many parts of our country, Understand Insurance is encouraging home and business owners in rural areas and bush-fringe suburbs to urgently prepare their properties and personal evacuation plans.

"Unfortunately, some Australians become complacent about their bushfire risk. They shouldn't. Each year, bushfires cause millions of dollars in damage. Less than five months ago, bushfires that ravaged parts of NSW and Victoria destroyed 125 properties, with insurance losses of \$82.5 million.

"Householders living in bushfire-prone areas of Queensland and NSW should get their properties ready now. Preparation can be time consuming, so start sooner rather than later."

Queensland Rural Fire Service Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson urged communities to be proactive.

"Mowing the lawn, clearing gutters and ensuring there is clear access into and out of properties in the event of a fire are all steps that can be taken around the home," he said.

"These simple and effective measures will complement the work of firefighters and help protect the community this bushfire season."

Understand Insurance offers these tips for home safety:

- Make sure your home and contents insurance policies are current, and be familiar with policy inclusions and exclusions. Check if your policy covers temporary housing expenses and consider adding if it doesn't
- More than eight in 10 households are probably underinsured. Use the free building and contents calculators on the Understand Insurance website to ensure you're not underinsured, particularly if you've recently renovated your property:  
<http://understandinsurance.com.au/calculators>

# Media Release

Wednesday August 1, 2018



Understand  
Insurance

- Take an inventory of your possessions go to: <http://understandinsurance.com.au/calculators>
- Maintain the surrounds of your home, mow grass regularly, trim the garden
- Remove combustible items such as garden furniture, woodpiles and hanging baskets
- Trim branches that are overhanging your home, garage or sheds
- Clear gutters of leaves and twigs
- Have a hose that reaches all points of the property

Understand Insurance offers these tips for personal safety:

- Have personal protective clothing and equipment available for all family members: denim jeans, leather boots/shoes, a wide-brimmed hat, glasses/goggles, gloves, a non-synthetic mask/cloth, and a cotton or wool long-sleeved shirt
- Write a bushfire survival plan for your family. Ensure everyone knows what to do
- Be vigilant. Know what's going on, situations can change quickly. Tune in to the radio or TV regularly if you live in a bushfire-prone area. Your local ABC radio station usually serves as the local emergency broadcaster
- Have a small bag of essentials, such as medicines, important documents, water and phone chargers, ready to go
- Check on neighbours and pets

-ENDS-