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Victoria's natural hazard hotspots revealed ahead of Storm Season

Melbourne's western suburbs claim top three spots

Hoppers Crossing in Melbourne's west was hit worst by natural hazard events last year, according to claims data from insurer AAMI.

AAMI has released its top ten Victorian suburbs for Natural Hazard claims (storm, flood, hail and bushfire) last year to kick off its storm season Resilience Week campaign.

Analysis of almost 20,000 natural hazard insurance claims handled by AAMI in Victoria in the year to June 2014, showed that the top ten natural hazard hotspots across the state were:

Top 10 Suburbs	
1. Hoppers Crossing	6. Werribee
2. Altona Meadows	7. Berwick
3. Point Cook	8. Rowville
4. Reservoir	9. Altona
5. Bentleigh East	10. Coburg

AAMI spokesperson, Reuben Aitchison, said: "While these were the top spots for damage last year, we know that storms and other natural hazards can be unpredictable and many parts of the state have copped it in recent years."

AAMI has identified Victoria's natural hazard claim hotspots to help prepare Victorians for the summer storm season.

"It's no secret that Victoria is a state of extremes when it comes to weather," said Mr Aitchison. "As recent as two months ago, SES volunteers were helping one part of the state which was being battered by a severe storm, while another part was experiencing snow, and then one week later we were struggling through 30 plus degree heat."

"While the suburbs we have identified all rank highly, we want everyone in Victoria to use our 'Resilience Week' to make themselves more aware of the risks they are exposed to, and be better prepared to face them during the summer months."

Throughout its 'Resilience Week', AAMI will use its Facebook page to share tips and information on what Victorians can do to be better informed, prepared and resilient this summer season – and encourages people to share their own tips and hints too.

"Summer storms, flooding and bushfires can be devastating, but if the tens of thousands of natural hazard claims we have handled in recent years have taught us anything, it's that there are things people can do around the home to better protect themselves and their possessions," Mr Aitchison said.

"Our message to Victorians this summer storm and bushfire season is simple: be informed, be prepared and be resilient – that way, you'll be in a better position to survive whatever Mother Nature has in store for the state this season."

[ENDS]

For further information or to arrange an interview:

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Note to Editors:

A spokesperson from VIC SES is available for interviews. SES Media contact: 1300 783 933
AAMI's Resilience Week tips and information can be seen at www.facebook.com.au/aami

AAMI's Top Tips to help Victorians prepare and protect their homes:

Storm

- Check gutters and downpipes as blocked gutters can send water flowing into your home during heavy rains.
- Check the roof for damaged or loose tiles, or raised corners of corrugated sheets. A roof in good repair is more likely to withstand high winds and keep water out.
- Trim overhanging branches. Do not attempt to trim trees near power lines.
- Remove or secure loose items around the garden which could be blown about in high winds. In strong winds, these things can become airborne and turn into missiles which can cause severe damage to your home, or even injure someone
- Keep a battery operated torch and AM radio handy in case of loss of electricity, as well as a first aid kit, spare water and canned food. Use the radio for power restoration updates and possible evacuation notices.
- Consider putting important documents like passports and birth certificates into a protective plastic envelope and have these ready in case you need to leave quickly.

Bushfire

- Cut back any overhanging trees or shrubs.
- Check the condition of external walls, cladding and seal any gaps.
- Check the condition of your roof and replace any damaged or missing tiles.
- Remove leaves from the roof, gutters and downpipes and fit quality metal leaf guards where possible.
- Consider purchasing a portable pump to use with your swimming pool or water tank.
- Enclose all under-floor areas.
- Have a non-combustible doormat.
- Install metal fly-wire or solid screens to external windows and doors.
- Keep your lawn short and the backyard tidy.
- Make sure you have a hose that can reach every part of your home.
- Store woodpiles and other flammable materials covered and away from the house.
- Consider putting together a small package of keepsakes and things you would hate to lose, in case you need to leave quickly.