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AAMI urges Victorians to prepare for dangerous bushfire season

Leading insurer AAMI is warning people across Victoria to prepare well and play it safe this summer, with an active bushfire season forecast.

AAMI spokesman, Reuben Aitchison, said recent seasonal forecasts from the Bureau of Meteorology and Country Fire Authority (CFA) are pointing to a hot and dry spring and summer across Victoria – which means perfect conditions for bushfires, and a likely earlier start to the season.

“Firefighters fought more than 4,600 blazes last year, and we can expect this year to be even more active.”

According to the latest South Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2014-15, the areas at highest risk of bushfire this season will be Central, North and Western Victoria.

“A significant number of homes in these areas face a high bushfire risk, including Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Seymour, which have bush and high population density, so it is vitally important that you and your family are prepared,” said Mr Aitchison.

AAMI research* reveals that as a direct result of bushfires around the country in the past year or so, just over half (57%) of Victorians living in an area of risk have done maintenance around their homes to prepare for the coming season, with 41% preparing a home bushfire survival plan. However, only one in five (22%)* of Victorians living in an area of risk have contacted their insurer to update or check their home and contents insurance.

Mr Aitchison warned that this can leave people in a very precarious position.

“While AAMI customers who have Complete Replacement Cover (CRC) can rest easy, most Australian home owners have a Sum Insured policy and it’s absolutely vital to check it is still accurate, especially given changes in building codes in recent years.” Mr Aitchison said.

“All too often people fail to factor in the significant increases that new building codes or bushfire building regulations can impose on the cost of rebuilding their home after a disaster. Sadly, we hear of too many cases where people are left tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars short of what it will cost to rebuild and replace everything they have lost.”

AAMI’s Top Bushfire Preparedness Tips:

- Check the condition of external walls or cladding and seal any gaps.
- If you own a swimming pool or water tank, consider purchasing a portable pump.
- Consider non-combustible fencing - this is more likely to withstand intense heat.
- 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.

- ENDS -

For further information or to arrange an interview:

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Note to Editors:

*Newspoll conducted an independent internet survey of 3,109 Australians, 18 years and over, across a full national sample in 2014, including 601 in Victoria. Of these 183 Victorians were living in an area at risk of bushfire. Data was collected in line with ISO 20252 – Market, Social and Opinion Research and has been weighted with current ABS population demographics to ensure any extrapolation of results is representative of age, sex and area.