

Brisbane hail storm: One year on

Suncorp has finalised more than 90% of customer claims totaling more than \$343 million, since last November’s mega hail storm.

The storm was the largest seen in Brisbane in the past 30 years, with hail stones the size of cricket balls leaving a path of destruction. More than 33,500 claims (11,400 home; 22,100 motor) were lodged as a result of the storm, which took less than half an hour to cross the city.

Thanks to the enormous efforts of staff and local contractors, almost 30,000 customers are back in their homes and back on the road one year after the event.

Suncorp Insurance spokesperson, Melissa Cronin, said Suncorp had pulled out all the stops in the immediate aftermath of the storm.

“In the 24 hours immediately after the event, more than 10,000 motor claims were lodged – and within three weeks we had assessed more than 17,400 hail damaged vehicles,” Ms Cronin said.

“We also had our repairers complete more than 3,000 home ‘make safes’ in the immediate aftermath.

“We’ve continued to work incredibly hard throughout the year to ensure we get our customers back in their homes and back on the roads as quickly as possible.”

Ms Cronin said that while the vast majority of claims had been finalised, some repair work was continuing.

“The true spirit of Brisbane shone through in the immediate aftermath of the event, with a large number of our customers who had relatively minor damage putting their neighbours and others who were more heavily impacted first by holding off on making a claim.

“We’ve continued to receive claims from this event as recently as last month,” Ms Cronin said.

Key stats from the Brisbane hail storm

- To date, 29,800 claims have been completed (10,200 home claims; 19,600 motor claims).
- More than 33,500 claims (11,400 home claims; 22,100 motor claims) have been lodged as a result of the November hail storm, totalling more than \$343 million.
- A record 10,000 customers lodged claims on the first day of the event.
- In less than three weeks after the storm, Suncorp assessors and motor repair specialists assessed more than 17,400 hail damaged vehicles.
- 6,600 (94%) of total loss claims were paid to customers within two months of the event.
- Top suburbs for claims:

	Motor	Home
1.	Woolloongabba (920 claims)	Moorooka (1,003 claims)
2.	Brisbane (858 claims)	Annerley (947 claims)
3.	Annerley (815 claims)	Highgate Hill (457 claims)
4.	Moorooka (773 claims)	Fairfield (405 claims)
5.	Chermside (751)	New Farm (385 claims)

- An additional 2,500 customers lodged a claim for the hail storm during 2015. This is quite typical following a major hailstorm as some of the damage is so minor that it goes unnoticed until a professional review of the home or car has been conducted. A small percentage of these claims are being finalised.

With another storm season upon us, and the south east already experiencing hail and severe storms, Ms Cronin is encouraging all Brisbane residents to be prepared.

“It’s important to be prepared – read your insurance policy carefully and ask questions if you’re not sure. Make sure it reflects the true value of your assets and covers the risks in your area. Don’t just hope you’re covered, know you’re covered.”

Suncorp Insurance’s top tips for storm season include:

- Check gutters and downpipes. Backed up 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 overgrown tree branches. Check with your local council if you’re unsure about which trees / branches you can cut. 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 together a small package of keepsakes and things you would hate to lose, in case you need to leave quickly.
- Have some blankets stored in the boot of your car which can be used to cover it up and protect it in the event you’re stranded during a hail storm.

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