

**3 March, 2016**

## **HOMEOWNERS REWARDED FOR PROTECTING HOMES**

Suncorp Insurance customers in north Queensland can now be rewarded with premium reductions of up to 20 per cent in some cases for strengthening their homes against cyclones.

Suncorp's Cyclone Resilience Benefit is now available in Rockhampton and north in communities along the coast, including Mackay, Townsville and Cairns.

Launching the Benefit as part of its *Protecting the North* initiative, Suncorp Insurance CEO Anthony Day said customers in these cyclone-prone areas can now report certain improvements made to their homes, over the phone or online, and expect a premium reduction.

"The level of reduction will vary. For a pre-1980s home in an area assessed as having the highest cyclone risk we could see some reductions of up to \$600 off a \$3,000 Suncorp premium, if the owner has undertaken the full range of improvements such as fixing old roofs and covering windows," Mr Day said.

"Suncorp Bank is also helping eligible customers, offering them reduced-rate personal loans to carry out the upgrades."

Mr Day said that with insurers rewarding cyclone-resilient homes, there is an opportunity for Government to sponsor a targeted home retrofit program that would help create jobs and make the economy more resilient.

"Prevention is always better than cure, and mitigation is better than rebuilding and recovering. More mitigation would help drive great community benefits like keeping people safe, creating jobs and growing the economy."

Mr Day said for every dollar spent on low-cost retrofits, the community will save up to \$13. Some low-cost retrofits will even pay for themselves after only one category four cyclone.

"There's a growing chorus of inquiries calling for a greater mitigation effort and we should be acting now rather than waiting for another cyclone to hit," he said.

"That way, we can start reducing now the \$10 billion annual damage bill that natural disasters are expected to cost Australia by 2023.

"Suncorp is proud to protect what matters for Queenslanders and our *Protecting the North* initiative tackles north Queensland's biggest natural hazard threat head on – the risk of cyclone impacts on homes and families.

"We've done this by funding ground-breaking research with Townsville's Cyclone Testing Station that's now recognised by the Federal Government as a key climate adaptation measure.

"The Cyclone Resilience Benefit is not a silver bullet to the challenges confronting the region, but it's an example of what can be achieved if industry, governments and communities work together on finding solutions.

"We're passionate about mitigating the risk of natural disasters and have a strong track record of reducing premiums when this occurs – we've already done it in places like Roma, St George and Charleville."

Mr Day said Suncorp was already receiving extremely positive feedback from customers during the testing phase with many eligible customers receiving several hundred dollars off their premiums.

**See next page for key points about the Cyclone Resilience Benefit.**

## Key points on the Suncorp Insurance Cyclone Resilience Benefit:

- The Cyclone Resilience Benefit is a premium reduction available on eligible Suncorp Insurance home and landlord insurance premiums where properties include certain features and measures which can reduce the risk of damage caused by cyclones. The reduction is compared to what the Suncorp premium would otherwise have been without those features and measures in place.
- Properties are eligible if they are located north of the Tropic of Capricorn and within 100 kilometres of the coast. Customers should check with Suncorp Insurance to see if their property falls within an eligible location.
- Customers will be able to answer, by phone or online, questions about work done to strengthen their home against cyclone, as well as what they do to prepare their home each cyclone season.
- The size of the premium reduction will vary from property to property based on the cyclone risk for the location, and the features or mitigation measures present. In some cases, it may be possible to obtain a premium reduction of up to 20 per cent in areas we consider to be the highest cyclone risk locations if:
  - The property was constructed before 1980; and
  - The homeowner has carried out a combination of the following steps:
    - An upgraded roof (from upgrades to the screws and strap connections in the roof through to full replacements)
    - Deadbolt locks on all external doors
    - Use window protection (e.g. cyclone shutters or plywood covering)
    - Roller door bracing installed
    - Shed bracing installed
    - Carry out cyclone preparation work ahead of each cyclone season
- On average, answering the questions should take about five minutes.
- The cyclone resilience benefit has been developed based on landmark *Protecting the North* research conducted by Suncorp and James Cook University's Cyclone Testing Station which found older homes are more prone to damage but there were also actions that can help protect newer homes above and beyond the Building Code.
- For customers seeking to undertake this work, Suncorp Bank is also offering a reduced-rate personal loan to help finance cyclone upgrades.
- Suncorp Home and Landlord Insurance issued by AAI Limited ABN 48 005 297 807 trading as Suncorp Insurance. Read the Product Disclosure Statements before buying this insurance and consider whether it is right for you. Call 13 11 55 for a copy.

To access more information about Suncorp Insurance's Cyclone Resilience Benefit, customers can contact 13 11 55 or visit <http://www.suncorp.com.au/cyclone-resilience>

## ENDS

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