

3 April 2017

Suncorp launches drones to assess Lismore flood damage

Suncorp is using drones to survey the damage caused by floodwaters in Lismore, in northern New South Wales, to provide key information to its Customer Response Teams as they prepare and await the all clear to enter the region.

Suncorp has readied a Customer Response Team to enter Lismore and assist the community as soon as possible.

From Sunday afternoon, drones were used to fly over the disaster area and assess the severity and extent of the damage. They will continue to fly over the broader Northern Rivers region in the coming days. Suncorp's response to Cyclone Debbie is the first time the insurer has used drones in Australia.

Suncorp spokesperson Rob White said the drones would give the teams and assessors a better indication of the damage, and allow them to better plan the recovery.

"The drone imagery gives our teams important insights into the extent of the damage in areas that are still inaccessible due to closed roads and floodwaters," said Mr White.

"With this information, we can better coordinate our response so our teams can hit the ground running."

Suncorp has received more than 7500 claims from Cyclone Debbie in north Queensland, south-east Queensland and northern NSW. Mr White urged customers to lodge their claims as soon as possible.

"Our Customer Response Team will enter the area as soon as possible. But in the meantime, customers can still call and lodge their claims," said Mr White.

"You don't need to be at home or have a copy of your policy to lodge your claim – we'll have your details on file.

"We can also arrange emergency make-safe work, organise temporary accommodation for customers whose homes have been severely damaged and provide cash payments to make emergency purchases.

"Floodwater is extremely dangerous, so please ensure your safety is the number-one priority. Beware of fallen power lines and debris, and venomous snakes and spiders in homes."

Once the Customer Response Team is in Lismore, customers of AAMI, GIO, Apia, Shannons, Suncorp Insurance, Vero Resilium, CIL and Bingle will be able to visit to lodge their claim and speak face-to-face with claims managers.

Below is a link which you are welcome to use for footage and still images about Suncorp's use of drones and some flyover shots.

<https://spaces.hightail.com/receive/IO7CJ/bWljaGFibC5taWxsc0BzdW5jb3JwLmNvbS5hdQ==>

(Please note, video files are mp4 format.)

Tips for customers

If you have been able to safely return to your home:

- Ensure electricity and gas supplies are switched off before re-entering.
- Do your best to dry out your home or business by keeping it as ventilated as possible.
- Get wet contents out of the house and make a list of damaged items.

- Make sure you have all electrical appliances professionally tested prior to use. We can arrange this – let us know if you have a large number of these items when you lodge your claim.
- Boil tap water until supplies have been declared safe.
- Do not eat food that has been in contact with floodwater, or unrefrigerated.

Prepare for your claim:

- If you have damaged goods or contents, take a photo of them if possible.
- Feel free to throw away all food in your refrigerator – do not wait for an assessor to come to your home. Take a picture if possible.
- If your carpet is flood damaged, please rip it up and take it outside, but please keep a sample to help us replace it.
- Keep a record of model numbers or serial numbers of items you are throwing away to help us replace them.

Claims contact details:

- AAMI: 13 22 44 | GIO: 13 14 46 | Apia: 13 50 50 | Suncorp Insurance: 13 25 24

Ends

For more information, contact:

Media

For live crosses from Suncorp's Brisbane broadcast studio:

Ashleigh Paterson, 0407 925 665, ashleigh.paterson@suncorp.com.au

In Sydney: Rob White, 0411 881 887, rob.white@suncorp.com.au

In Sydney: Michael Mills, 0405 805 489, michael.mills@suncorp.com.au