



UNDER EMBARGO until 12.01am 15 November 2023

AAMI and New South Wales SES join forces urging homeowners to prepare now for summer storms

- ***AAMI data reveals almost half of New South Wales' Top 10 Storm battered suburbs are in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie***
- ***NSW SES volunteers called out to more than 24,000 storm-related incidents across New South Wales in past financial year***

With storm season upon us, and the Bureau of Meteorology warning Australians they're in for a wild ride this summer with severe weather, including not only bushfires but also thunderstorms and flooding possible – national insurer AAMI and the New South Wales State Emergency Service (SES) have revealed the state's worst storm damaged hotspots this past financial year.

AAMI's data also found that almost half of New South Wales' Top 10 storm battered suburbs were located in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, with a further three hotspots located on the Central Coast.

AAMI Insurance analysed more than 17,600* weather-related home insurance claims across New South Wales from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, to reveal the hardest hit suburbs.

Meanwhile, the NSW SES had the most storm-related incidents recorded on the Mid North Coast suburb of Port Macquarie. Newcastle and Lake Macquarie regions were among the top ten locations for the highest number of storm-related calls for assistance recorded by the NSW SES.

AAMI's Top 10 storm hotspots in New South Wales

Rank	Hotspot Suburb	Region
1.	Dubbo	Far West & Orana
2.	Bateau Bay	Central Coast
3.	Belmont	Newcastle & Lake Macquarie
4.	Port Macquarie	Mid North Coast
5.	Tuggerah	Central Coast
6.	Swansea	Newcastle & Lake Macquarie
7.	Merewether	Newcastle & Lake Macquarie
8.	Charlestown	Newcastle & Lake Macquarie
9.	Gosford	Central Coast
10.	Sanctuary Point	Southern Highlands & Shoalhaven

NSW SES Top 10 storm hotspots in New South Wales

Rank	Hotspot Suburb	Region
1.	Port Macquarie	Mid North Coast
2.	Dubbo	Far West & Orana
3.	Forbes	Central West
4.	Wahroonga	Upper North Shore
5.	Orange	Central West
6.	Swansea	Newcastle & Lake Macquarie
7.	Bowral	Southern Highlands
8.	Armidale	North Western
9.	Broken Hill	South Western
10.	St Ives	Upper North Shore

Quotes below attributable to AAMI Head of Home Claims in New South Wales Paul Callanan:

"Our home claims data showed that rain, followed by hail and flood were the most common causes of damage to homes across New South Wales.

"In July 2022, Sydney experienced widespread flooding impacting Bateau Bay, Tuggerah and Wisemans Ferry, which resulted in a large volume of claims.

"In October and November last year, heavy rainfall, damaging winds, hail and flooding impacted Tweed Heads, Moama and Urunga, as well as flooding in the Lachlan Valley, impacting Cowra and Forbes.

"In February this year, Dubbo and Bateau Bay experienced significant rain and hail.

"In April, thunderstorms brought large hail, the size of 5cm in diameter, impacting The Ponds, Bowral, Quakers Hill and Schofields.

"In May this year, widespread thunderstorms impacted coastal areas of NSW from the Central Coast to Greater Newcastle, resulting in more than 6,000 home insurance claims lodged. Impacted areas included Belmont, Charlestown, Merewether, Swansea, Newcastle, Tuggerah, Kotara, Bateau Bay, New Lambton and Waratah.

"As a result of these weather events, our customers experienced everything from water ingress, damaged roofs and flooding, and in some cases were displaced from their homes.

"Storms are a normal part of everyday life in New South Wales, which means damage from them can catch people off guard. Aussies tend to have a 'laissez faire' attitude when it comes to preparing for summer storms. However, what New South Welshmen realise is that storms can be a serious event and don't need to last long to cause severe damage to their homes.

"Although some areas of the state, particularly Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Central Coast copped a battering, storms by their nature are unpredictable and can happen anywhere and anytime, so it's vital to not be complacent and prepare your home now.

"Despite the heightened risk of bushfires from El Nino, we need to also be ready and prepare for wild weather brought by thunderstorms, damaging wind, hail and tropical cyclones."

According to AAMI Partner NSW State Emergency Service (SES) data, over the past financial year, Port Macquarie was the hardest hit suburb, with local SES volunteers responding to almost 600 incidents.

Quotes below attributable to NSW SES Assistant Commissioner Sean Kearns:

"Across the state, the NSW SES responded to more than 24,000 storm related incidents in the last financial year.

"Our more than 10,800 dedicated NSW SES volunteers partner with communities before, during and after emergencies to help prepare, educate and respond to floods and storms.

"While storms can happen at any time of year, we know there's an increased chance of storms between October and March when NSW sees a higher chance of strong winds and heavy rain which can cause damage to homes and properties.

"Our data indicates Port Macquarie was the suburb with the most storm related incidents recorded in the last financial year.

"Wahroonga, Swansea, Forbes, Dubbo, Armidale and Bowral were also among the top 10 suburbs for storm related incidents.

"Many of the incidents reported last financial year were due to leaking rooves, missing roof tiles and trees falling onto homes and cars due to heavy winds and rainfall.

"People can be prepared for storms by cleaning their gutters, downpipes and drains to avoid water overflowing under the eaves and into the roof of their homes.

"You can secure and put away any loose items around your backyard and balcony, to avoid strong winds picking up and throwing around outdoor items such as trampolines and roofing iron which can damage windows, roofs and cars.

"It's important to know your storm risk, have a plan in place, get your home ready, be aware of what you will do if disaster strikes, and look out for one another."

Top Tips to Prepare

“When times are tough, it can be hard to prioritise things like home maintenance, particularly spending money on improving the resilience of your home. However, many of these tasks don’t cost or take long, and can be well worth the investment to strengthen the resilience of their biggest asset,” Mr Kearns said.

These include:

- Securing and putting away loose items around your backyard or balcony.
- Trimming trees and branches that could fall onto your home or car.
- Cleaning your gutters, downpipes and drains of leaves and debris.
- Parking your vehicles under cover and away from trees or powerlines.
- Inspecting retaining walls
- Ensuring there’s no corrosion, loose fittings or rotting timber around your property.
- Inspecting your roof for damaged or loose tiles

To find out more about how to best prepare your home and family for storm season, visit [How To Prepare Your Home for Storms](#) or www.ses.nsw.gov.au.

For NSW SES assistance in floods and storms, call 132 500. For life-threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

[ENDS]

Notes to Editor

*Claims data collected from Suncorp Group’s network of brands including: AAMI, Suncorp Insurance, GIO, Apia and Bingle.

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