

## Why it pays to prepare your business for natural disasters



When trouble strikes, it pays to be prepared. That's the thinking that saw the Noosa Council set up a [Local Disaster Coordination Centre](#) in September 2024, just in time for the summer storm season.

Constructed from repurposed modular buildings, it's a multi-purpose facility which can be stood up at short notice, to provide support to local residents and businesses during and after extraordinary weather events.

Having access to a centralised response hub can make it easier for insurers to connect with customers and expedite their claims, according to Steadfast Technical Manager Annette O'Brien.

"We're seeing more insurance companies sending teams in to work 'on the ground' so they can see what's going on and, in some instances, offer cash settlements straight up," she says.

The assessors' job is made significantly easier if businesses can produce detailed notes of their assets and have kept the receipts.

"Having that information at the ready helps business owners get speedier support and certainty – that means they can forge ahead with the recovery process faster," O'Brien says.

## Understanding the perils of under-insurance

Unfortunately, for small business owners who don't have adequate cover, the after-effects of a natural disaster can be every bit as catastrophic as the event itself.

Having your premises damaged or destroyed by the elements can mean you're unable to trade for an extended period and, if you're not appropriately insured or amply resourced, repairing or rebuilding may be beyond your means.

"It's important businesses understand how much it would actually cost them to remove debris and repair or replace what's lost and how much revenue they stand to lose if they don't have business interruption cover," O'Brien says.

That's where insurance brokers have a vital part to play. They can help you identify the type and level of cover that's right for your needs and source cost effective policies to safeguard your operations and assets.

## Preparing for the worst

Meanwhile, being prepared for the worst can help your business bounce back faster from bushfires, floods, storms and cyclone events.

That starts with understanding the risks you face and developing a response plan detailing the actions you'll take, should a disaster unfold.

Ideally, you'll include specific procedures for evacuation, communication and data recovery. Conducting regular drills or simulations will ensure your employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

"Knowing what they should be doing ahead of time makes it safer and less stressful for everyone in the event of a disaster," O'Brien says.

There's also lots you can do to make your premises more resilient. Keeping them in good order – gutters and roof cleaned and well maintained, drains clear and doors and windows adequately sealed – can prevent or minimise the impact of flooding and help reduce the chances of buildings catching alight, in the event of a bushfire.

"Staying on top of maintenance can minimise damage and make the insurance claims process more straightforward," O'Brien says.

## Securing your supply chain

Even if your business doesn't take a direct hit, damage and disruption from a natural disaster can threaten your operations in other ways.

If a key supplier is knocked out of action, for example, you may not be able to source the goods and services you need to supply *your* customers.

That's where contingency planning comes into play. Identifying alternative suppliers and maintaining 'buffer stock' – perhaps stored at an alternative location – can help prevent you being caught short as a result of supply chain disruption.

## Securing the cover that will help your business recover

When natural disaster strikes, having the right type and level of insurance cover can be do or die. If you'd like help assessing your policies to ensure they're fit for purpose, contact your Steadfast broker today.

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