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## **Support for Storm Affected Businesses**

Businesses across parts of the Hunter region that have suffered losses due to storm damage or power outages since Wednesday evening are urgently assessing their insurance policies for potential compensation and financial assistance, says Business Hunter.

The timing of the storm and subsequent power outages during the busy holiday period has compounded challenges for businesses, with many relying on peak trading activity to support their annual performance. Additionally, Business Hunter recognises that power outages have disrupted remote work operations, with telecommunications services also impacted.

Business Hunter CEO, Bob Hawes said the storm has caused significant disruption to businesses and individuals alike.

“Businesses that have suffered loss as a consequence of storm damage or the power outage will be looking to their insurance policies to provide compensation for loss or other forms of financial assistance,” he said.

“While energy providers such as Ausgrid and Origin have compensation schemes in place for power outages, these typically exclude claims related to storm damage or third-party actions. The priority for Ausgrid currently is to restore services as soon as possible,” said Mr Hawes.

In cases where the state government declares a natural disaster, limited compensation pathways may become available through local government for individuals and businesses. However, these are often targeted at restoring public infrastructure and services rather than addressing individual or business losses.

“Business Hunter is actively engaging with government agencies and representatives to determine whether a natural disaster declaration will be made,” Mr Hawes said. “Such a declaration could unlock additional support mechanisms for those affected.”

Business Hunter also acknowledges the efforts of local members of parliament, who are in direct contact with the state government to expedite a resolution. “We hope that clarity on a disaster determination will come in the coming days as recovery efforts continue,” Mr Hawes added.

In the meantime, businesses are encouraged to contact their insurance providers to understand their coverage and keep detailed records of losses or damages for potential claims.

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