

Response ID ANON-DUXZ-42RA-4

Submitted to Northern Australia Insurance Inquiry
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About you

What is your name?

Name:
Charlotte Marie Desiree Doger de Speville

What is your email address?

Email:
[REDACTED]

What is your suburb/town and postcode? (Only one is required.)

Suburb/town::
[REDACTED]

Postcode::
[REDACTED]

If you live in northern Australia, please tick all descriptions that apply to you.

[REDACTED]

What type of residence do you live in?

[REDACTED]

What insurance do you currently have? Please tick all descriptions that apply to you.

[REDACTED]

What is important in your decisions about insurance?

1. How important is the price ('premium') in your decision?

You could also tell us: Did you know about the price of insurance in your town before you moved there? Has price changed a lot? Have you tried to get a lower price? :

Price is most important. Insurance was affordable when we bought our property and build our house in 1985. Now we shop around to find the best price and just changed our insurance again, this year.

2. How much choice of insurers do you have?

You could also tell us: Where you live, how much choice is there between insurers? Do you think different insurers offer different policies (i.e. is coverage different)? :

Where we live in Speewah, some insurance will not insure us as we live in cyclonic area. There are some insurances willing to insure us at a price and yes there are variations in policies. There are some inclusions that are unnecessary an exclusions that are necessary.

3. What are you covered for?

You could also tell us: Can you get the sort of insurance you want? Do you want flood insurance? How confident are you that you know what you are covered for and what limits you have? If you have made a claim, were you covered for what you thought you were?:

We cannot get the insurance we actually need. We do not need flood or tsunami cover as living on top of a hill precludes those events happening. All we really need is insurance cover for fire and cyclone damage. We've put a limit of \$350K on the house as we do not believe that the building can be totally destroyed during a cyclone or a fire unless caused by a bush fire. Our house has been built to withstand category 2 cyclonic conditions and the only damage that can happen would be caused by flying debris through windows or a tree falling on the house. We never made an insurance claim so far.

4. How important is customer service and claims handling reputation?

You could also tell us: How much does an insurer's reputation matter? How much does customer service matter? Have you seen an insurer behaving in a way that you think is unfair or confusing?:

Never having made a claim, we cannot elaborate on the above questions but reputation and size of the insuring company and cost do have a bearing on our

choice.

5. Have you seen an insurer behaving in way that you think is unfair or confusing?

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Only as reported in the media as we never made a claim.

6. Has an insurer told you that they won't insure you or renew your insurance policy? If they have, what were the reasons they gave you?

6. Has an insurer told you that they won't insure you or renew your insurance policy? If they have, what were the reasons they gave you?:

Yes insurers have refuse to insure our house and contents but the reason were that they don't insure in cyclonic areas or they are too small to insure in cyclonic areas. We've never had a case of refusal to renew otherwise.

How you get information about insurance and how easy it is to understand?

7. What information does your insurer give you and how useful is it?

You could also tell us: Does your renewal notice say if price has changed and the reason? Does it say how premiums are calculated? What could insurers do to make it easier to understand their products? :

We were never given a reason why prices have changed so drastically in the past 4 years and assumed that we are made to pay for disasters happening somewhere else. When I asked my insurance why the renewal cost jumped from \$1800 to \$2500, I was told that the government regulations stipulated that their estimated cost of rebuilding had to increase by 6% every year. So we shopped around for a new insurance.

8. Where else do you see or look for information?

You could also tell us: How much effort is it to look for better or cheaper policies? What sort of advertising do you see? Have you used websites, tools or calculators? If you live in Queensland, have you heard about or used the North Queensland Home Insurance website? What did you think about it?:

We took some time to shop around for insurance. We had to describe our house type of building, security and construction and got a verbal quote and a written quote emailed to us. That's when we found out that some insurance would not insure as we were in a cyclonic area.

We did not use North Queensland Home Insurance website as we did not know it existed.

9. Have you used, or thought about using, a broker? Why or why not?

You could also tell us: Did it make it easier for you to get a policy that you were more confident suited your needs?:

Never used a broker as we did not think of it.

10. Is there information to meet the needs of all consumers?

You could also tell us: Who can you ask if you need help understanding insurance? Is there information for people who are unable to read or write or use a language other than English? Do insurers have an office in your area or do they visit? Is mail, phone or internet access an issue in remote areas?:

Don't know where to ask to understand how home insurance work. We can read and write and understand English so we never thought about people who are unable to read or write or understand English. We do have various insurance offices in Cairns, about 35Km from where we live. We never had insurance people visit our premises and have no issues with mail, phone or internet access.

11. What special information do owners or managers of strata units need?

You could also tell us: How difficult is it to get clear and useful information about strata insurance? How transparent is the information provided to strata unit owners?:

Don't know.

12. Have you seen examples of tools, technology or information in other industries that should be used to make insurance easier to understand?

Have you seen examples of tools, technology or information in other industries that should be used to make insurance easier to understand?:

No.

Have you switched insurers?

13. Have you considered switching insurance in recent years? Did you go ahead and switch? Why or why not? Please tell us about your experience.

You could also tell us: Did you consider switching policies with the same insurer, to a different insurer, or both? How did you find and compare policies? How many quotes did you compare? Was it a lot of effort? How does the use of standard definitions, such as for 'flood', make it easier to compare? Was your focus on price or coverage or both? Did you use a broker to help you? :

We have switched insurance this month purely on premium grounds and coverage. Did not use a broker.

What can households and insurers do to make insurance more affordable?

14. Have you considered renovating or altering your home, or building a new home to, to reduce the risk of storm or cyclone damage? Did you go ahead?

You could also tell us: How did you find out about building for your local conditions? How did you decide that it was a 'worthwhile' investment? If you made any alterations, did this have any impact on your insurance premium? Has it already, or will it, save you money in the long run?:

I was and is a registered architect. I designed the house with the help of a structural engineer and built it to withstand Cat 2 cyclonic conditions. Insurances know that. Premium kept going up regardless.

15. What are insurers doing to make it easier and could they do more?

You could also tell us: Would your premium be lower if you made your house or belongings safer? Can you pay fortnightly or monthly and how much extra does it cost to do so? Does your insurer offer Centrepay to eligible customers? Have you seen new or different policies to target particular consumers, such as tenants, households on a low income, or people with only a small amount to insure? :

Insurers are not there to be helpful even though they know that we are pensioners.

16. What are you doing to manage the cost of insurance?

You could also tell us: Have rising premiums motivated you to spend more effort looking for better policy options? Have you, or would you, reduce your level of coverage to save? Who else can you get help from?:

Shop around and if premium become too high, stop insuring.

Other issues

17. If you have a view or experience to share that you haven't already covered in another question, please tell us about it. (Optional)

If you have a view or experience to share that you haven't already covered in another question, please tell us about it.:

Our view is that insurances should inspect the premises they propose to insure, assess the risk of damage that could occur to that property and tailor the premium accordingly. Not base premium on postcode as is the case at present and spread the the risk of disasters that occur somewhere else on the people who lives in cyclonic areas generally.